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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Monsignor Donn Heiar, St. John Vianney Catholic Church, Janesville, Wisconsin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, You know our needs. You have entrusted to us a great nation founded on life and liberty. We stand before You, ready to fulfill a mission that will give glory to Your name and ensure the dignity of all humanity. We plead for Your wisdom.

Give us the courage to open our eyes to see. Give us the fortitude to endure when the demands of our office seem overwhelming. Bless us with prudence when all pathways seem troublesome. Help us to discern and seek the common good when comfort and expedience tempt and beckon.

Challenge our minds and steady our hand and remind us that all good things come from You. Transform our lives, and we will remember that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is the greatest work we will perform on behalf of all people.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CHABOT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

CALL OF THE HOUSE

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 7 of rule XX, I move a call of the House.

The SPEAKER. Under clause 7(b) of rule XX, the Chair confers recognition for that purpose.

A call of the House was ordered.

The call was taken by electronic device, and the following Members responded to their names:

[Roll No. 580]

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—421

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Boehner
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond

Printed on recycled paper.

Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—14

Amodei
Clarke (NY)
Cummings
Edwards
Fattah
Hinojosa
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Meeks
Payne
Rooney (FL)
Sarbanes
Wilson (FL)
Young (AK)

□ 0934

The SPEAKER pro tempore. On this rollcall, 421 Members have recorded their presence.

A quorum is present.

FAREWELL ADDRESS

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform you that I will resign as Speaker of the House effective upon the election of my successor. I will also resign as Representative from Ohio's Eighth District at the end of this month.

I leave with no regrets, no burdens. If anything, I leave the way I started—just a regular guy, humbled by the chance to do a big job. That is what I am most proud of. I am still just me, the same guy who came here 25 years ago as a small-business man and spent all these 25 years trying to just be me.

Now, sometimes my staff thought I was too much like me, but it really is the thing I am most proud of. I am the same regular guy who came here to try to do a good job for my district and my country.

Before I go, I want to express what an honor it has been to serve with all of you. The people's House is, in my view, the great embodiment of the American Dream. Everybody here comes from somewhere, and everybody here is on some mission.

I come from a part of the world where we are used to working. As far back as I can remember, I was working. My staff was asking me the other day: Well, you know, on November 1st, you're not going to have a job. When was the last time you didn't have a job?

I thought about it and thought about it and thought about it. I thought, well, I had to be 8 or 9 years old because I was throwing newspapers back then and working in my dad's bar. As a matter of fact, I used to work from 5 a.m. on Saturday morning until 2 p.m. for $2. Not $2 an hour. $2.

I never thought about growing up as the easy way or the hard way. It was just the Cincinnati way. Our city takes its name from the great Roman general Cincinnatus, a farmer who answered the call of his nation to lead and then surrendered his power to go back to his plow.

For me, it wasn't a farm. It was a small business. And it wasn't so much a calling as it was a mission—a mission to strive for a smaller, less costly, and more accountable Federal Government here in Washington.

How did we do? Here are some facts. For the first time in nearly 20 years, we have made some real entitlement reforms, saving trillions of dollars over the long term.

We have protected 99 percent of the American people from an increase in their taxes. We are on track to save taxpayers $2.1 trillion over the next 10 years, the most significant spending reductions in modern times. We have banned earmarks altogether. Sorry.

We have protected this institution. We have made it more open to the people. Every day in this capital city there are hundreds of kids from the toughest neighborhoods who are finally getting a chance at a decent education.

I am proud of these things, but the mission is not complete. And the truth is it may never be. One thing I came to realize over the years that I have been here is that this battle over the size and scope and cost of our government in Washington has been going on for more than 200 years, and the forces of the status quo go to an awful lot of trouble to prevent change from happening.

Real change takes time. Yes, freedom makes all things possible, but patience is what makes all things real. So believe in the long, slow struggle. Believe in this country's ability to meet her challenges and to lead the world. And, remember, you can't do a big job alone, especially this one.

So I am grateful to my family, Deb and my two girls. My two girls were 3 and 1 when I first ran for office. Now they are a lot older. So they have been through a lot. You all know what your families go through. It is one thing for us to take the bricks and the boards and everything that gets thrown at us, but it is another thing for our families. Their skin isn't as thick as ours.

I am also grateful to all of my colleagues: my fellow leaders, Mr. MCCARTHY and Mr. SCALISE, Ms. MCMORRIS RODGERS; and many on my side of the aisle, our committee chairs, people I have worked with for a long time.

But I am just as grateful to Ms. PELOSI, Mr. HOYER, Mr. CLYBURN, and Mr. BECERRA and others for all of the work that we have done together. Over these last 5 years, we have done an awful lot of work together. There was probably more work done across the aisle over the last 5 years than in the 25 years that I have served in this institution.

Now, as much as I enjoy working with all of you, some of you still could learn to dress better. You know who you are. I saw one of the culprits, one of the usual suspects who shows up here once in a while without a tie. This morning he didn't look dressed very well, but he did have a tie on.

I am grateful to the people who work in this institution every day, whether it is the Reading Clerks or—you know, there are a lot of people, thousands of people, who allow us to do our jobs and to help make this institution what it is. Whether it is the people you see here today or the people in the CAO's office or the Capitol Police or legislative counsel, there really are thousands of people who really do allow us to do our job.

I am grateful to my staff. Now, you all know I am a big believer in staff. None of us can be what we are without a good staff, and I certainly would never have gotten to this job without having built a great team. So I really am grateful to my staff. As they like to say to each other, once you are part of Boehnerland, you are always a part of Boehnerland, and that certainly goes for me as well.

I am especially grateful to all my constituents and the volunteers over the years. That includes a student at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in 1990, who was putting up campaign signs for me. His name was PAUL RYAN. I don't think he could pronounce my name back in 1990 when he was putting up yard signs for me.

But, as Cincinnatus understood, there is a difference between being asked to do something and being called to do something. PAUL is being called. I know he will serve with grace and with energy, and I want to wish him and his family all the best.

□ 0945

My colleagues, I have described my life as a chase for the American Dream. That chase began at the bottom of the hill, just off the main drag in Reading, Ohio, right outside of Cincinnati. At the top of the hill was a small house with a big family, a shining city in its own right.

The hill had twists. The hill had turns, and even a few tears. Nothing wrong with that. But let me tell you, it was just perfect.

Never forget, we are the luckiest people on the Earth. In America, you can do anything that you are willing to work for, willing to work hard at, and anything can happen if you are willing to make the necessary sacrifices in life.

If you falter—and you will—you can just pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and go do it again, because hope always springs eternal. And if you just do the right things for the right reasons, good things will happen.

And this, too, can really happen to you.

God bless you, and God bless our great country.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the Speaker's announcement of October 29, 2015, the Chair will receive nominations for the Office of Speaker.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS).

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, today, in the people's House, it gives me great honor to nominate the people's Speaker.

You don't need to look any further than the architecture of Washington, D.C., to see what our Founders envisioned. It is not by mistake that the dome over the Congress is the very center of the Federal city. The White House and the Supreme Court are set about us, satellites to the supreme power of the people expressed in this legislative body.

In the House, we are eager for a fresh start that will make us more effective to fulfill our obligation to reflect the will of the people and to reestablish the balance of power.

There is no better person to lead us in that calling than the man I am about to nominate. He was first elected to the House at the ripe old age of 28, and he has served here now for almost 17 years.

We all remember when he led the House Budget Committee: the visionary proposals, the lengthy debates. And who could forget those PowerPoints?

He is now the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. But he is more than a chairman to us. He is more than a colleague. He is our friend. He is a leader.

Through it all, he has never forgotten his roots. He lives on the same block he grew up on in Janesville, Wisconsin. There is no place he would rather be than at home with his family.

He will continue to put the people of this country first. And I can say, in all candor, he did not seek this office. The office sought him.

As chair of the House Republican Conference, I am directed by the vote of that Conference to present for election to the Office of Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 114th Congress the Representative from the State of Wisconsin, the man from Janesville, the Honorable PAUL D. RYAN.

The SPEAKER. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to my friend, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), on his nomination by his colleagues.

At this time, as chairman of the Democratic Caucus of this House, I wish to place in nomination the name of a proven leader for the Office of Speaker of the House of Representatives:

A leader who has accomplished, in this Chamber and for this country, what few can match;

A leader who, as Speaker of this House, secured passage of landmark economic recovery package legislation in 2009 which transformed a diving economy, losing 800,000 jobs each month, to one which has now created more than 13 million jobs over the last 67 consecutive months of job growth;

A leader who, as Speaker, accomplished what 70 years of Congresses could not, enactment of our lifesaving health security law, which has put 18 million more Americans in control of their and their children's health care;

A leader who had the foresight, in 2008, to fight for the biggest investment in our troops since World War II, with the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and the largest investment in our veterans' health care and benefits in the 77-year history of the VA;

A leader who was not afraid to take on the challenge of fixing our broken immigration system and secured passage of the DREAM Act in 2010.

Mr. Speaker, leadership is about making the tough choices and getting things done. It means knowing how to build a majority, not just with the members of your own political party, but with the 435 elected Members of the House of Representatives so we can get things done. This leader understands that and knows how to get things done, even while serving in the minority in this House.

That is why, less than 24 hours ago, this leader succeeded in breaking through the gridlock in this House and secured the votes needed to avert a senseless government shutdown and a perilous default on the payment of America's bills. Thanks to this leader, 16.5 million seniors will not suffer a $55-per-month increase in their Medicare premiums and Congress will not cut the Social Security benefits of 11 million disabled Americans by 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, that is leadership, and that is what Americans expect from those they elect. That is why it is my privilege, as chairman of the House Democratic Caucus and as directed by the colleagues of the Democratic Caucus, to nominate for election to the Office of Speaker of the House of Representatives, from the 12th District of the great State of California, the Honorable NANCY PATRICIA D'ALESANDRO PELOSI.

The SPEAKER. The names of the Honorable PAUL D. RYAN, a Representative from the State of Wisconsin, and the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, a Representative from the State of California, have been placed in nomination.

Are there further nominations?

There being no further nominations, the Chair appoints the following tellers:

The gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER);

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY);

The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR); and

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

The tellers will come forward and take their seats at the desk in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

The roll will now be called, and those responding to their names will indicate by surname the nominee of their choosing.

The Reading Clerk will now call the roll.

The tellers having taken their places, the House proceeded to vote for the Speaker.

The following is the result of the vote:

[Roll No. 581]

RYAN (WI)—236

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Boehner
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce

Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

PELOSI—184

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

WEBSTER (FL)—9

Brat
Clawson (FL)
Gohmert
Gosar
Jones
Massie
Posey
Weber (TX)
Yoho

COLIN POWELL—1

Cooper

COOPER—1

Graham

LEWIS—1

Sinema

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—0

NOT VOTING—3

Meeks Ryan (WI) Webster (FL)

□ 1046

The SPEAKER. The tellers agree in their tallies that the total number of votes cast is 432, of which the Honorable PAUL D. RYAN of the State of Wisconsin has received 236, the Honorable NANCY PELOSI of the State of California has received 184, the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER of the State of Florida has received 9, the Honorable JIM COOPER of the State of Tennessee has received 1, the Honorable JOHN LEWIS of the State of Georgia has received 1, and the Honorable Colin Powell has received 1.

Therefore, the Honorable PAUL D. RYAN of the State of Wisconsin, having received a majority of the votes cast, is duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Chair appoints the following committee to escort the Speaker-elect to the chair:

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY)

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI)

The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE)

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER)

The gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS)

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN)

The gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN)

The gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA)

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER)

The gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY)

The gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS)

The gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL)

The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX)

The gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN)

The gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER)

The gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO)

The gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS)

The gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS)

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS)

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN)

The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY)

And the Members of the Wisconsin delegation:

Mr. SENSENBRENNER
Mr. KIND
Ms. MOORE
Mr. DUFFY
Mr. RIBBLE
Mr. POCAN
Mr. GROTHMAN

The committee will retire from the Chamber to escort the Speaker-elect to the chair.

The Sergeant at Arms announced the Speaker-elect of the House of Representatives of the 114th Congress, who was escorted to the chair by the Committee of Escort.

□ 1100

Ms. PELOSI. My dear colleagues of the 114th Congress of the United States, today, as every day, we come to this floor strengthened and inspired by the support of our colleagues, the trust of our constituents, and the love of our families.

My special thanks to my husband, Paul; our five children; our nine grandchildren; and the entire Pelosi and D'Alesandro families for their support.

My deep gratitude to the people of San Francisco for the continued honor they give me to represent them here.

My heartfelt thanks to my Democratic colleagues for extending me the honor of being nominated to be Speaker of the House. Thank you, my colleagues.

Today, we bid farewell to a Speaker who has served his constituents and this Congress with honor for 25 years, Speaker JOHN BOEHNER.

In his story, we are reminded of the enduring, exceptional promise of America—this hardworking son of an Ohio bartender and owner who grew up to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives. JOHN BOEHNER talked about the American Dream. JOHN BOEHNER, you are the personification of the American Dream.

As you all know, Speaker BOEHNER was a formidable spokesman for the Republican agenda. My Republican colleagues, I am sure you know—and I can attest—to the fact that he was always true and loyal to the members of his Conference in any negotiations we ever had.

Although we had our differences and often, I always respected his dedication to this House and his commitment to his values. Thank you, JOHN, for your leadership and courage as Speaker.

Your graciousness as Speaker extended and was reflected in your staff under the leadership of Mike Sommers, whom we all respect. Thank you to JOHN BOEHNER's staff.

I know I speak for everyone here, Democrats and Republicans, when I thank you for making the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis such a beautiful and meaningful experience for all of us.

Today, we extend our thanks and congratulations to Debbie; your daughters, Lindsay and Tricia; and the entire Boehner family, now including grandson, Allister.

Let's hear it for the family of JOHN BOEHNER.

On behalf of House Democrats and personally, I wish you and your family all of God's blessings in the glorious years ahead.

Last month, we witnessed something truly special when Pope Francis made history addressing a joint session of Congress. Standing right here, Pope Francis called on us to seek hope,

peace, and dialogue for all people and reminded us of our duty to find a way forward for everyone. ''A good political leader,'' His Holiness said, ''is one who, with the interest of all in mind, seizes the moment in a spirit of openness and pragmatism.''

Pope Francis echoed the principles of our Founders that placed at the heart of our democracy the saying, ''E Pluribus Unum,'' from many, one. The Founders could never have imagined how vast our country would become, how diverse and many we would be—ethnically, gender identities, beliefs, and priorities—but they knew we had to be one.

Every day in this House and across the country we pledge allegiance to one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

This is the beauty of America, that for all of our honest differences, perspectives, and priorities aired and argued so passionately on this floor, we are committed to being one nation. Despite our differences—in fact, respecting them—I look forward to a clear debate in this marketplace of ideas, the people's House of Representatives.

So, my fellow colleagues, we have a responsibility to act upon our shared faith in the greatness of our country. We have a responsibility to be worthy of the sacrifices of our troops, our veterans, and our military families. We have a responsibility to make real the promise of the American Dream for all.

There is important work before the Congress. We must do more to promote growth, decrease the deficit, create good-paying jobs, and increase the paychecks of America's working families.

Today, in this House, a page is turned. A new chapter has begun. Today, the gavel passes to a proud son of Wisconsin, the first Speaker from Wisconsin.

PAUL RYAN has had the full breadth of experience on Capitol Hill, from a young staffer to a Tortilla Coast waiter—shall I say that again?—Tortilla Coast waiter—to a Congressman, to being a sincere and proud advocate for his point of view as chairman of the Budget Committee, as a respected leader and chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and in a minute, he will be the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, today, on behalf of House Democrats, I extend the hand of friendship to you.

Congratulations to you, PAUL, and to Janna; your children, Liza, Charlie, and Sam; your mother, who is here—how proud she must be—and the entire Ryan family, whom we all know mean so much to you.

Mr. Speaker, God bless you and your family. And God bless the United States of America.

This is the people's House. This is the people's gavel. In the people's name, it is my privilege to hand this gavel to the Speaker-elect of the House, Congressman and Honorable PAUL D. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Thank you, Madam Leader.

Before I begin, I would like to thank all of my family and friends who flew in from Wisconsin and from all over for being here today.

In the gallery I have my mom, Betty; my sister, Janet; my brothers, Stan and Tobin; and more cousins than I can count on a few hands.

Most importantly, I want to recognize my wife, Janna; and our children: Liza, Charlie, and Sam.

I also want to thank Speaker BOEHNER. For almost 5 years, he led this House. For nearly 25 years, he served it. Not many people can match his accomplishments, the offices he held, the laws he passed.

But what really sets JOHN apart is he is a man of character, a true class act. He is, without question, the gentleman from Ohio. So please join me in saying one last time, ''Thank you, Speaker BOEHNER.''

Now I know how he felt. It is not until you hold this gavel, stand in this spot, look out and see all 435 Members of this House, as if all America is sitting right in front of you—it is not until then that you feel it, the weight of responsibility and the gravity of the moment.

As I stand here, I can't help but think of something Harry Truman once said. The day after Franklin Roosevelt died, Truman became President. He told a group of reporters, ''If you ever pray, pray for me now.''

When they told me yesterday what had happened, I felt like the Moon, the stars, and all the planets had fallen on me. We should all feel that way. A lot is on our shoulders. So if you ever pray, let's pray for each other, Republicans for Democrats and Democrats for Republicans.

□ 1115

And I don't mean pray for a conversion, all right? Pray for a deeper understanding. Because when you are up here, you see it so clearly. Wherever you come from, whatever you believe, we are all in the same boat.

I never thought I would be Speaker, but early in my life, I wanted to serve this House. I thought this place was exhilarating because here you can make a difference. If you had a good idea, if you worked hard, you could make it happen. You could improve people's lives. To me, the House of Representatives represents what is the best of America: the boundless opportunity to do good.

But let's be frank. The House is broken. We are not solving problems. We are adding to them. I am not interested in laying blame. We are not settling scores. We are wiping the slate clean.

Neither the Members nor the people are satisfied with how things are going. We need to make some changes, starting with how the House does business. We need to let every Member contribute, not once they have earned their stripes, but now.

I come at this job as a two-time committee chair. The committees should retake the lead in drafting all major legislation. If you know the issue, you should write the bill.

Let's open up the process. Let people participate, and they might change their mind. A neglected minority will gum up the works. A respected minority will work in good faith. Instead of trying to stop the majority, they might try to become the majority. In other words, we need to return to regular order.

Now, I know this sounds like process. It is actually a matter of principle. We are the body closest to the people. Every 2 years, we face the voters and sometimes face the music. But we do not echo the people; we represent the people. We are supposed to study up and do the homework that they cannot do. So when we do not follow regular order, when we rush to pass bills that a lot of us don't understand, we are not doing our job. Only a fully functioning House can truly represent the people; and if there were ever a time for us to step up, this would be that time.

America does not feel strong anymore because the working people of America do not feel strong anymore. I am talking about the people who mind the store and grow the food and walk the beat and pay the taxes and raise the family. They do not sit in this House. They do not have fancy titles, but they are the people who make this country work, and this House should work for them.

Here is the problem. They are working hard. They are paying a lot. They are trying to do right by their families, and they are going nowhere fast. They never get a raise. They never get a break. The bills keep piling up and the taxes and the debt. They are working harder than ever before to get ahead, and yet they are falling further behind. They feel robbed. They feel cheated of their birthright. They are not asking for any favors. They just want a fair chance, and they are losing faith that they will ever get it.

Then they look at Washington, and all they see is chaos. What a relief to them it would be if we finally got our acts together. What a weight off of their shoulders. How reassuring it would be if we actually fixed the Tax Code, put patients in charge of their health care, grew our economy, strengthened our military, lifted people out of poverty, and paid down our debt. At this point, nothing could be more inspiring than a job well done. Nothing could stir the heart more than real, concrete results.

The cynics will scoff. They will say it is not possible. You better believe, we are going to try. We will not duck the tough issues; we will take them head-on. We are going to do all we can do so that working people get their strength back and people not working get their lives back. No more favors for the few. ''Opportunity for all,'' that is our motto.

I often talk about a need for a vision. I am not sure I ever really said what I

meant. We solve problems here, yes. We create a lot of them, too. But at bottom, we vindicate a way of life. We show by our work that free people can govern themselves. They can solve their own problems. They can make their own decisions. They can deliberate, collaborate, and get the job done.

We show that self-government is not only more efficient and more effective, it is more fulfilling. In fact, we show it is that struggle, that hard work, that very achievement itself that makes us free. That is what we do here.

We will not always agree, not all of us, not all of the time, but we should not hide our disagreements. We should embrace them. We have nothing to fear from honest differences honestly stated. If you have ideas, let's hear them. I believe that a greater clarity between us can lead to greater charity among us, and there is every reason to have hope.

When the first Speaker took the gavel, he looked out at a room of 30 people, representing a nation of 3 million. Today, as I look out at each and every one of you, we represent a nation of 300 million.

So when I hear people say that America doesn't have it, we are done, we are spent, I don't believe it. I believe with every fiber of my being that we can renew the American idea. Now our task is to make us all believe.

My friends, you have done me a great honor. The people of this country, they have done all of us a great honor. Now let's prove ourselves worthy of it. Let's seize the moment. Let's rise to the occasion. And when we are done, let us say that we left the people—all the people—more united, happy, and free.

Thank you.

I am now ready to take the oath of office.

I ask the Dean of the House of Representatives, the Honorable JOHN CONYERS, Jr., of Michigan, to administer the oath of office.

Mr. CONYERS then administered the oath of office to Mr. PAUL D. RYAN of Wisconsin, as follows:

> Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

Mr. CONYERS. Congratulations, Mr. Speaker.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO INFORM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 503

Resolved, That the Clerk be instructed to inform the President of the United States that the House of Representatives has elected Paul D. Ryan, a Representative from the State of Wisconsin, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESOLUTION TO INFORM THE SENATE THE ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 504

Resolved, That a message be sent to the Senate to inform that body that Paul D. Ryan, a Representative from the State of Wisconsin, has been elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESIGNATIONS AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS AND JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY) laid before the House the following resignations as a member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the Joint Committee on Taxation:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, October 29, 2015.

Hon. KAREN HAAS,
Clerk of the House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MS. HAAS: As a result of my election today as Speaker, this letter is to inform you that I resign as Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means and from further service on that Committee. I also resign as Chairman and a member of the Joint Committee on Taxation.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN,
Chairman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignations are accepted.

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would take this occasion to note that the Speaker's announced policies with respect to particular aspects of the legislative process placed in the RECORD on January 6, 2015, will continue in effect for the remainder of the 114th Congress.

□ 1130

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces that the Speaker has delivered to the Clerk a letter dated October 29, 2015, listing Members in the order in which each shall act as Speaker pro tempore under clause 8(b)(3) of rule I.

RECALL DESIGNEE

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 29, 2015.

Hon. KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House of Representatives, The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM CLERK: I hereby designate Representative Kevin McCarthy of California to exercise any authority regarding assembly, reassembly, convening, or reconvening of the House pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 1, clause 12 of rule I, and any concurrent resolutions of the current Congress as may contemplate my designation of Members to exercise similar authority.

In the event of the death or inability of that designee, the alternate Members of the House listed in the letter bearing this date that I have placed with the Clerk are designated, in turn, for the same purposes.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS DURING THE 114TH CONGRESS

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 29, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable Jeff Denham, the Honorable Mac Thornberry, the Honorable Fred Upton, the Honorable Andy Harris, the Honorable Barbara Comstock, and the Honorable Luke Messer to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through the remainder of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointments are approved. There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015, TO MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2015

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Monday, November 2, 2015, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

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

There was no objection.

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

STATUS REPORT ON CURRENT SPENDING LEVELS OF ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FY 2015, 2016, AND THE 10-YEAR PERIOD FY 2016 THROUGH FY 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, October 29, 2015.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: To facilitate application of sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, I am transmitting an updated status report on the current levels of on-budget spending and revenues for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and for the 10-year period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. This status report is current through October 27, 2015. The term ''current level'' refers to the amounts of spending and revenues estimated for each fiscal year based on laws enacted or awaiting the President's signature.

Table 1 in the report compares the current levels of total budget authority, outlays, and revenues to the overall limits, as adjusted, that were filed in the Congressional Record on April 29, 2014 for fiscal year 2015, and to the limits contained in the conference report on S. Con. Res. 11, as agreed to on May 5, 2015, for fiscal year 2016, and for the 10-year period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. This comparison is needed to implement section 311(a) of the Congressional Budget Act, which creates a point of order against measures that would breach the budget resolution's aggregate levels. The table does not show budget authority and outlays for years after fiscal year 2016 because appropriations for those years have not yet been considered.

Table 2 compares the current levels of budget authority and outlays for legislative action completed by each authorizing committee with the ''section 302(a)'' allocations filed on April 29, 2014 for fiscal year 2015, and to the limits contained in the conference report on S. Con. Res. 11, as agreed to on May 5, 2015, for fiscal year 2016 and for the 10-year period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. For fiscal year 2015, ''legislative action'' refers to legislation enacted after the adoption of the levels set forth in the Congressional Record on April 29, 2014. For fiscal year 2016 and the 10-year period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025, ''legislative action'' refers to legislation enacted after the adoption of the levels set forth in the conference agreement on S. Con. Res. 11. This comparison is needed to enforce section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act, which creates a point of order against measures that would breach the section 302(a) allocation of new budget authority for the committee that reported the measure. It is also needed to implement section 311(b), which exempts committees that comply with their allocations from the point of order under section 311(a).

Tables 3 and 4 compare the current status of discretionary appropriations for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 with the ''section 302(b)'' suballocations of discretionary budget authority and outlays among Appropriations subcommittees. The comparison is needed to enforce section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act because the point of order under that section equally applies to measures that would breach the applicable section 302(b) suballocation. The tables also provide supplementary information on spending in excess of the base discretionary spending caps allowed under section 251(b) of the Budget Control Act.

Table 5 compares the levels of changes to mandatory programs (CHIMPs) contained in appropriations acts with the permissible limits on CHIMPs as specified in sections 3103 and 3104 of S. Con. Res. 11. The comparison is needed to enforce a point of order established in S. Con. Res. 11 against fiscal year 2016 appropriations measures containing CHIMPs that would breach the permissible limits for fiscal year 2016.

Tables 6 and 7 display the current level of advance appropriations for fiscal years 2016 and 2017, respectively, of accounts identified for advance appropriations under section 601 of H. Con. Res. 25 (113th Congress), in force and effect pursuant to H. Res. 5 (114th Congress), and under section 3304 of S. Con. Res 11. These tables are needed to enforce a point of order against appropriations bills containing advance appropriations that are: (i) not identified in the statement of managers or (ii) would cause the aggregate amount of such appropriations to exceed the level specified in the budget resolution.

In addition, letters from the Congressional Budget Office are attached that summarize and compare the budget impact of enacted legislation that occurred after adoption of the budget resolution against the budget resolution aggregates in force.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Herz or Jim Bates at (202) 226–7270.

Sincerely,

TOM PRICE, M.D.,
Chairman.

TABLE 1.—REPORT TO THE SPEAKER FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET, STATUS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2015, 2016, AND 2016–2025 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET REFLECTING ACTION COMPLETED AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015

[On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars]

	Fiscal Year 2015 [1]	Fiscal Year 2016 [2]	Fiscal Years 2016–2025
Appropriate Level:			
Budget Authority	3,033,319	3,040,743	n.a.
Outlays	3,027,686	3,092,541	n.a.
Revenues	2,535,978	2,675,967	32,233,099
Current Level:			
Budget Authority	3,037,055	3,154,888	n.a.
Outlays	3,047,157	3,167,136	n.a.
Revenues	2,453,570	2,676,111	32,237,119
Current Level over (+) / under (−)			
Appropriate Level:			
Budget Authority	+3,736	+114,145	n.a.
Outlays	+19,471	+74,595	n.a.
Revenues	−82,408	+144	+4,020

n.a. = Not applicable because annual appropriations Acts for fiscal years 2017 through 2025 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

[1] Section 115(b) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (BBA) required the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget in the House of Representatives to file aggregate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2015 for purposes of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. The spending and revenue aggregates for fiscal year 2015 were filed on April 29, 2014. The current level for this report begins with the budgetary levels filed on April 29, 2014, as adjusted, and makes changes to those levels for enacted legislation.

[2] The FY2016 Concurrent Resolution on the Budget was agreed to in S. Con. Res. 11 and the accompanying report, H. Rept. 114–96. The current level for this report is measured relative to the on-budget levels filed in H. Rept. 114–96.

TABLE 2.—DIRECT SPENDING LEGISLATION, COMPARISON OF AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE ACTION WITH 302(a) ALLOCATIONS FOR BUDGET CHANGES, REFLECTING ACTION COMPLETED AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015

[Fiscal Years, in millions of dollars]

House Committee	2015		2016		2016–2025	
	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays
Agriculture:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−1,645	−347	−302,149	−300,020
Legislative Action	+263	+238	0	0	+2	+2
Difference	+263	+238	−1,645	+347	+302,151	+300,022
Armed Services:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legislative Action	−121	−104	0	0	0	0
Difference	−121	−104	0	0	0	0
Education and the Workforce						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−10,633	−5,017	−249,574	−229,658
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difference	0	0	+10,633	+5,017	+249,574	+229,658
Energy and Commerce:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−54,654	−49,173	−1,379,704	−1,369,488
Legislative Action	+6,935	+6,935	+5	+5	+56	+56
Difference	+6,935	+6,935	+54,659	+49,178	+1,379,760	+1,369,544
Financial Services:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−7,334	−6,712	−62,254	−62,056
Legislative Action	+121	+121	0	0	0	0
Difference	+121	+121	+7,334	+6,712	+62,254	+62,056
Foreign Affairs:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difference	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homeland Security:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−180	−180	−22,630	−22,630

TABLE 2.—DIRECT SPENDING LEGISLATION, COMPARISON OF AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE ACTION WITH 302(a) ALLOCATIONS FOR BUDGET CHANGES, REFLECTING ACTION COMPLETED AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015—Continued

[Fiscal Years, in millions of dollars]

House Committee	2015		2016		2016–2025	
	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	−3,160	−3,160
Difference	0	0	+180	+180	+19,470	+19,470
House Administration:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−31	−2	−298	−53
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difference	0	0	+31	+2	+298	+53
Judiciary:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−14,419	−868	−24,949	−23,055
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difference	0	0	+14,419	+868	+24,949	+23,055
Natural Resources:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−569	−261	−32,678	−32,483
Legislative Action	+98	+94	0	0	0	0
Difference	+98	+94	+569	+261	+32,678	+32,483
Oversight and Government Reform:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−9,188	−9,026	−193,961	−193,896
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difference	0	0	+9,188	+9,026	+193,961	+193,896
Science, Space and Technology:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difference	0	0	0	0	0	0
Small Business:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legislative Action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difference	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation and Infrastructure:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−12,114	0	−197,706	0
Legislative Action	+8,068	+8,068	+130	0	+1,300	0
Difference	+8,068	+8,068	+12,244	0	+199,006	0
Veterans' Affairs:						
302(a) Allocation	0	0	−31	−31	−1,925	−1,925
Legislative Action	+1	+151	−2	+388	−1	+644
Difference	+1	+151	+29	+419	+1,924	+2,569
Ways and Means:						
302(a) Allocation	0	−15	−59,559	−59,529	−1,600,290	−1,599,790
Legislative Action	+368	+332	+445	+175	−5,164	−5,132
Difference	+368	+347	+60,004	+59,704	+1,595,126	+1,594,658

TABLE 3.—DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015—COMPARISON OF CURRENT STATUS WITH APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE 302(a) ALLOCATION AND APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE 302(b) SUB ALLOCATIONS AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

[Figures in Milllons] [1]

	302(b) Allocations H. Rept. 113–474		302(b) for GWOT		Current Status General Purpose [1]		Current Status GWOT		General Purpose less 302(b)		GWOT less 302(b)	
	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA	20,880	21,716	0	0	20,666	21,603	0	0	−214	−113	0	0
Commerce, Justice, Science	51,200	61,518	0	0	50,103	61,099	0	0	−1,097	−419	0	0
Defense	490,944	522,774	79,445	36,839	490,194	520,271	64,000	30,476	−750	−2,503	−15,445	−6,363
Energy and Water Development	34,010	37,831	0	0	34,202	38,061	0	0	+192	+230	0	0
Financial Services and General Government	21,285	22,750	0	0	21,820	23,158	0	0	+535	+408	0	0
Homeland Security	45,658	44,712	0	0	46,108	45,339	213	170	+450	+627	+213	+170
Interior, Environment	30,220	30,191	0	0	30,416	32,308	0	0	+196	+2,117	0	0
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education	155,702	159,922	0	0	158,247	169,426	0	0	+2,545	+9,504	0	0
Legislative Branch	4,258	4,219	0	0	4,300	4,235	0	0	+42	+16	0	0
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs	71,499	76,100	0	0	71,808	76,427	221	0	+309	+327	+221	0
State, Foreign Operations	42,381	42,319	5,912	3,142	40,007	44,149	9,258	2,233	−2,374	+1,830	+3,346	−909
Transportation, Housing & Urban Development	52,029	118,732	0	0	53,770	119,039	0	0	+1,741	+307	0	0
Full Committee Allowance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Total	1,020,066	1,142,784	85,357	39,981	1,021,641	1,155,115	73,692	32,879	+1,575	+12,331	−11,665	−7,102

Comparison of Total Appropriations and 302(a) allocation	General Purpose		GWOT	
	BA	OT	BA	OT
302(a) Allocation	1,021,641	1,144,101	85,357	39,981
Total Appropriations	1,021,641	1,155,115	73,692	32,879
Total Appropriations vs. 302(a) Allocation	0	+11,014	−11,665	−7,102

Memorandum	Amounts Assumed in 302(b)		Emergency Requirements		Disaster Funding		Program Integrity	
Spending in Excess of Base Budget Control Act Caps for Sec. 251(b) Designated Categories	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA	0	0	25	7	91	40	0	0
Commerce, Justice, Science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Defense	0	0	112	119	0	0	0	0
Energy and Water Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Services and General Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homeland Security	6,438	322	0	0	6,438	322	0	0
Interior, Environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education	0	0	2,742	933	0	0	1,484	1,277
Legislative Branch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State, Foreign Operations	0	0	2,526	468	0	0	0	0
Transportation, Housing & Urban Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	6,438	322	5,405	1,527	6,529	362	1,484	1,277

[1] Spending designated as emergency is not included in the current status of appropriations shown in this table.

TABLE 4.—DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016—COMPARISON OF CURRENT STATUS WITH APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE 302(a) ALLOCATION AND APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE 302(b) SUB ALLOCATIONS AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015

[Figures in Millions] [1]

	302(b) Allocations H. Rept. 114–198		302(b) for GWOT		Current Status General Purpose [1]		Current Status GWOT		General Purpose less 302(b)		GWOT less 302(b)	
	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA	20,650	22,064	0	0	20,650	21,762	0	0	0	−302	0	0
Commerce, Justice, Science	51,374	62,026	0	0	51,374	62,026	0	0	0	0	0	0
Defense	490,226	515,775	88,421	45,029	490,226	515,775	88,421	45,029	0	0	0	0
Energy and Water Development	35,402	36,195	0	0	35,402	36,195	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Services and General Government	20,250	22,092	0	0	20,250	21,957	0	0	0	−135	0	0
Homeland Security	39,333	49,169	0	0	46,046	44,897	0	0	+6,713	−4,272	0	0
Interior, Environment	30,170	31,891	0	0	30,170	31,891	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education	154,536	170,377	0	0	154,536	167,196	0	0	0	−3,181	0	0
Legislative Branch	4,300	4,243	0	0	3,337	3,510	0	0	−963	−733	0	0
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs	76,056	78,242	532	2	76,056	78,242	532	2	0	0	0	0
State, Foreign Operations	40,500	47,055	7,334	3,767	40,500	46,960	7,334	1,519	0	−95	0	−2,248
Transportation, Housing & Urban Development	55,269	118,792	0	0	55,269	118,792	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full Committee Allowance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Total	1,018,066	1,157,921	96,287	48,798	1,023,816	1,149,203	96,287	46,550	+5,750	−8,718	0	−2,248

Comparison of Total Appropriations and 302(a) allocation	General Purpose		GWOT	
	BA	OT	BA	OT
302(a) Allocation	1,018,066	1,157,921	96,287	48,798
Total Appropriations	1,023,816	1,149,203	96,287	46,550
Total Appropriations vs. 302(a) Allocation	+5,750	−8,718	0	−2,248

Memorandum	Amounts Assumed in 302(b)		Emergency Requirements		Disaster Funding		Program Integrity	
Spending in Excess of Base Budget Control Act Caps for Sec. 251(b) Designated Categories	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT	BA	OT
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA	0	0	−2	0	0	0	0	0
Commerce, Justice, Science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Defense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Energy and Water Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Services and General Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homeland Security	0	0	0	0	6,713	336	0	0
Interior, Environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education	1,484	1,277	0	0	0	0	1,484	1,277
Legislative Branch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State, Foreign Operations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation, Housing & Urban Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	1,484	1,277	−2	0	6,713	336	1,484	1,277

[1] Spending designated as emergency is not included in the current status of appropriations shown in this table.

TABLE 5.—CURRENT LEVEL OF FY 2016 CHIMPS SUBJECT TO S. CON. RES. 11, SECTION 3103 LIMITS (IN MILLIONS) AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015

Appropriations Bill	Budget Authority
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA	0
Commerce, Justice, Science	0
Defense	0
Energy and Water Development	0
Financial Services and General Government	0
Homeland Security	0
Interior, Environment	0
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education	0
Legislative Branch	0
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs	0
State, Foreign Operations	0
Transportation, Housing & Urban Development	0
Total CHIMP's Subject to Limit	0
S. Con. Res. 11, Section 3103 Limit for FY 2016	19,100
Total CHIMP's vs. Limit	−19,100

CURRENT LEVEL OF FY 2016 CRIME VICTIMS FUND CHIMP SUBJECT TO S. CON. RES. 11, SECTION 3104 LIMIT (IN MILLIONS) AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015

	Budget Authority
Crime Victims Fund CHIMP	0
S. Con. Res. 11, Section 3104 Limit for FY 2016	10,800
Total CHIMP's vs. Limit	−10,800

TABLE 6.—2016 ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS PURSUANT TO SECTION 115(c) OF THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013 AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015

[Budget Authority, millions]

Section 601(d)(1) Limits	2016
Appropriate Level	58,662
Enacted Advances:	
Accounts Identified for Advances:	
Department of Veterans Affairs:	
Medical Services	47,603
Medical Support and Compliance	6,144
Medical Facilities	4,915
Subtotal, enacted advances [1]	58,662

TABLE 6.—2016 ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS PURSUANT TO SECTION 115(c) OF THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013 AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015—Continued

[Budget Authority, millions]

Section 601(d)(1) Limits	2016
Enacted Advances vs. Section 601(d)(1) Limit	0
Section 601(d)(2) Limits	**2016**
Appropriate Level	28,781
Enacted Advances:	
Accounts Identified for Advances:	
Postal Service	41
Employment and Training Administration	1,772
Education for the Disadvantaged	10,841
School Improvement Programs	1,681
Special Education	9,283
Career, Technical and Adult Education	791
Tenant-based Rental Assistance	4,000
Project-based Rental Assistance	400
Subtotal, enacted advances [1]	28,809
Enacted Advances vs. Section 601(d)(2) Limit	+28
Previously Enacted Advance Appropriations	**2016**
Corporation for Public Broadcasting [2]	445
Total, enacted advances [1]	87,916

[1] Line items may not add to total due to rounding.
[2] Funds were appropriated in the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2014 P.L 113–76.

TABLE 7.—2017 ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS AS AUTHORIZED BY S. CON. RES. 11 AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015

[Budget Authority, millions]

Section 3304(c)(2) Limits	2017
Appropriate Level	63,271
Enacted Advances:	
Accounts Identified for Advances:	
Department of Veterans Affairs:	
Medical Services	0
Medical Support and Compliance	0
Medical Facilities	0
Subtotal, enacted advances [1]	0
Enacted Advances vs. Section 601(d)(1) Limit	−63,271

TABLE 7.—2017 ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS AS AUTHORIZED BY S. CON. RES. 11 AS OF OCTOBER 27, 2015—Continued

[Budget Authority, millions]

Section 3304(c)(2) Limits	2017
Section 3304(c)(1) Limits	**2017**
Appropriate Level	28,852
Enacted Advances:	
Accounts Identified for Advances:	
Employment and Training Administration	0
Education for the Disadvantaged	0
School Improvement Programs	0
Special Education	0
Career, Technical and Adult Education	0
Tenant-based Rental Assistance	0
Project-based Rental Assistance	0
Subtotal, enacted advances [1]	0
Enacted Advances vs. Section 601(d)(2) Limit	−28,852
Previously Enacted Advance Appropriations	**2017**
Corporation for Public Broadcasting [2]	445,000,000
Total, enacted advances [1]	445,000,000

[1] Line items may not add to total due to rounding.
[2] Funds were appropriated in Public Law 113–235.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, October 29, 2015.

Hon. TOM PRICE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The enclosed report shows the effects of Congressional action on the fiscal year 2016 budget and is current through October 27, 2015. This report is submitted under section 308(b) and in aid of section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended.

The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the technical and economic assumptions of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016.

Since our last letter dated May 21, 2015, the Congress has cleared and the President has signed the following acts that affect budget authority, outlays, or revenues for fiscal year 2016:

An act to extend the authorization to carry out the replacement of the existing medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Denver, Colorado, to authorize transfers of amounts to carry out the replacement of such medical center, and for other purposes (Public Law 114–25);

Defending Public Safety Employees' Retirement Act and the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–26);

Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–27);

Steve Gleason Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–40);

Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–41);

Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114–53);

Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–55);

Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–58); and

Protecting Affordable Coverage for Employees Act (Public Law 114–60).

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,
Director.

Enclosure.

FISCAL YEAR 2016 HOUSE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT THROUGH OCTOBER 27, 2015

[In millions of dollars]

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Previously Enacted: [a]			
Revenues	n.a.	n.a.	2,676,733
Permanents and other spending legislation	1,972,212	1,905,523	n.a.
Appropriation legislation	0	500,825	n.a.
Offsetting receipts	−784,820	−784,879	n.a.
Total, Previously enacted	1,187,392	1,621,469	2,676,733
Enacted Legislation: [b]			
An act to extend the authorization to carry out the replacement of the existing medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Denver, Colorado, to authorize transfers of amounts to carry out the replacement of such medical center, and for other purposes (P.L. 114–25)	0	20	0
Defending Public Safety Employees' Retirement Act and the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–26)	0	0	5
Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–27)	445	175	−766
Steve Gleason Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–40)	5	5	0
Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–41) [b]	0	0	99
Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–55)	130	0	0
Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–58)	−2	368	0
Protecting Affordable Coverage for Employees Act (P.L. 114–60)	0	0	40
Total, Enacted Legislation	578	568	−622
Continuing Resolution:			
Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114–53)	1,008,053	602,405	0
Entitlements and Mandatories:			
Budget resolution estimates of appropriated entitlements and other mandatory programs	958,865	942,694	0
Total Current Level [c]	3,154,888	3,167,136	2,676,111
Total House Resolution [d]	3,040,743	3,092,541	2,675,967
Current Level Over House Resolution	114,145	74,595	144
Current Level Under House Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Memorandum:			
Revenues, 2016–2025:			
House Current Level	n.a.	n.a.	32,237,119
House Resolution [e]	n.a.	n.a.	32,233,099
Current Level Over House Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	4,020
Current Level Under House Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

Notes: n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = Public Law.

[a] Includes the following acts that affect budget authority, outlays, or revenues, and were cleared by the Congress during this session, but before the adoption of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016: the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2014 (P.L. 114–1); the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 114–4) and the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–10).

[b] Pursuant to section 314(d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, amounts designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 shall not count for purposes of Title III and Title IV of the Congressional Budget Act. The amounts so designated for 2016, which are not included in the current level totals, are as follows:

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015	0	917	0
Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2016	700	775	0
Total, amounts designated as emergency requirements	700	1,692	0

[c] For purposes of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act in the House, the resolution, as approved by the House of Representatives, does not include budget authority, outlays, or revenues for off-budget amounts. As a result, current level does not include these items.

[d] Periodically, the House Committee on the Budget revises the totals in S. Con. Res. 11, pursuant to various provisions of the resolution:

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Original House Resolution:	3,039,215	3,091,442	2,676,733
Revisions:			
Adjustment for Program Integrity Spending	1,083	924	0
Adjustment for Senate Amendment to H.R. 1295, the Trade Preferences Extension Act, 2015	445	175	−766
Revised House Resolution	3,040,743	3,092,541	2,675,967

[e] Periodically, the House Committee on the Budget revises the 2015–2024 revenue totals in S. Con. Res. 11, pursuant to various provisions of the resolution.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, October 29, 2015.

Hon. TOM PRICE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The enclosed report shows the effects of Congressional action on the fiscal year 2015 budget and is current through September 30, 2015. This report is submitted under section 308(b) and in aid of section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended.

The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the allocations, aggregates, and other budgetary levels printed in the Congressional Record on April 29, 2014, pursuant to section 115 of the Bipartisan Budget Act (Public Law 113–67).

Since our last letter dated May 21, 2015, the Congress has cleared and the President has signed the following acts that affect budget authority, outlays, or revenues for fiscal year 2015:

Construction Authorization and Choice Improvement Act (Public Law 114–19);

An act to extend the authorization to carry out the replacement of the existing medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Denver, Colorado, to authorize transfers of amounts to carry out the replacement of such medical center, and for other purposes (Public Law 114–25);

Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–27): and

Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–41).

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,
Director.

Enclosure.

FISCAL YEAR 2015 HOUSE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

[In millions of dollars]

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Previously Enacted: [a]			
Revenues	n.a.	n.a.	2,533,388
Permanents and other spending legislation	1,882,631	1,805,294	n.a.
Appropriation legislation	0	508,261	n.a.
Offsetting receipts	−735,195	−734,481	n.a.
Total, Previously enacted	1,147,436	1,579,074	2,533,388
Enacted Legislation: [b]			
Lake Hill Administrative Site Affordable Housing Act (P.L. 113–141)	0	−2	0
Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014 (P.L. 113–159)	0	−15	2,590
Emergency Afghan Allies Extension Act of 2014 (P.L. 113–160)	5	5	6
Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2015 (P.L. 113–164) [c]	−4,705	−180	0
Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113–183)	0	10	0
IMPACT Act of 2014 (P.L. 113–185)	22	22	0
Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113–235) [b]	1,878,696	1,424,582	−178
An act to amend certain provisions of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (P.L. 113–243)	0	0	−28
Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2013 (P.L. 113–276)	−20	−20	0
Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (P.L. 113–291)	−15	0	0
An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions and make technical corrections, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes (P.L. 113–295)	160	160	−81,177
Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–1)	121	121	1
Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 114–4)	47,763	27,534	0
Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–10)	7,354	7,329	0
Construction Authorization and Choice Improvement Act (P.L. 114–19)	0	20	0
An act to extend the authorization to carry out the replacement of the existing medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Denver, Colorado, to authorize transfers of amounts to carry out the replacement of such medical center, and for other purposes (P.L. 114–25)	0	130	0
Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–27)	38	7	−1,051
Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–41) [b d]	8,068	8,068	19
Total, Enacted Legislation	1,937,487	1,467,771	−79,818
Entitlements and Mandatories:			
Budget resolution estimates of appropriated entitlements and other mandatory programs	−47,868	312	0
Total Current Level [e]	3,037,055	3,047,157	2,453,570
Total House Resolution [f]	3,033,319	3,027,686	2,535,978
Current Level Over House Resolution	3,736	19,471	n.a.
Current Level Under House Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	82,408
Memorandum:			
Revenues, 2015–2024:			
House Current Level	n.a.	n.a.	31,167,723
House Resolution [g]	n.a.	n.a.	31,206,399
Current Level Over House Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Current Level Under House Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	38,676

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

Notes: n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = Public Law.

[a] Includes the following acts that affect budget authority, outlays, or revenues, and were cleared by the Congress during the 2nd session of the 113th Congress but before publication in the Congressional Record of the statement of the allocations and aggregates pursuant to section 115 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (P.L. 113–67): the Agricultural Act of 2014 (P.L. 113–79), the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (P.L. 113–89), the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act (P.L. 113–94), and the Cooperative and Small Employer Charity Pension Flexibility Act (P.L. 113–97).

[b] Pursuant to section 314(d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, amounts designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 shall not count for purposes of Title III and Title IV of the Congressional Budget Act. The amounts so designated for 2015, which are not included in the current level totals, are as follows:

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Resolution, 2014 (P.L. 113–145)	0	75	0
Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014 (P.L. 113–146)	−1,331	6,619	−42
Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015	5,405	1,452	0
Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015	0	1,147	0
Total, amounts designated as emergency requirements	4,074	9,293	−42

[c] Sections 136 and 137 of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2015 provide $88 million to respond to the Ebola virus, which is available until September 30, 2015. Section 139 rescinds funds from the Children's Health Insurance Program. Section 147 extended the authorization for the Export-Import Bank of the United States through June 30, 2015.

[d] Section 2002 of the Surface Transportation and Veterans Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015 transferred $8,068 million from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund. Pursuant to section 3302 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016, general fund transfers to the Highway Trust Fund are considered to be new budget authority and outlays for budget enforcement purposes in the House of Representatives.

[e] For purposes of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act in the House, the resolution, as approved by the House of Representatives, does not include budget authority, outlays, or revenues for off-budget amounts. As a result, current level does not include these items.

[f] Periodically, the House Committee on the Budget revises the budgetary levels printed in the Congressional Record on April, 29, 2014, pursuant to section 115 of the Bipartisan Budget Act (Public Law 113–67):

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Original House Resolution	3,025,306	3,025,032	2,533,388
Revisions:			
Adjustment for Disaster Designated Spending	6,438	322	0
Pursuant to section 115(e) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013	0	1,030	0
Adjustment for the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014	0	−15	2,590
Adjustment for Program Integrity Spending	1,484	1,277	0
Adjustment for the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015	91	40	0
Revised House Resolution	3,033,319	3,027,686	2,535,978

[g] Periodically, the House Committee on the Budget revises the 2015–2024 revenue totals printed in the Congressional Record on April, 29, 2014 pursuant to section 115 of the Bipartisan Budget Act (Public Law 113–67).

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on October 28, 2015, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 313. To amend title 5, United States Code, to provide leave to any new Federal employee who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disability, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, November 2, 2015, at noon for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3328. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Methoxyfenozide; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0591; FRL-9934-14] received October 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3329. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Revisions to Air Plan; Arizona; Stationary Sources; New Source Review [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0187; FRL-9930-43-Region 9] received October 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3330. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Teflubenzuron; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0600; FRL-9933-25] received October 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3331. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Southwest Fisheries Science Center Fisheries Research [Docket No.: 120416011-5836-02] (RIN: 0648-BB87) received October 26, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SHUSTER: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 3763. A bill to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–318). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3857. A bill to require the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Financial Stability Oversight Council to carry out certain requirements under the Financial Stability Act of 2010 before making any new determination under section 113 of such Act, and for other purpose; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CHABOT (for himself, Mr. GOODLATTE, and Mr. SMITH of Texas):

H.R. 3858. A bill to reauthorize the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund and to create a fund to compensate U.S. victims of state sponsored terrorism who hold final judgments from Article III courts and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PERRY (for himself and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 3859. A bill to make technical corrections to the Homeland Security Act of 2002; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, and Mr. BUCSHON):

H.R. 3860. A bill to preserve the companionship services exemption for minimum wage and overtime pay, and the live-in domestic services exemption for overtime pay, under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, and Mr. BLUM):

H.R. 3861. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion for employer-provided educational assistance to employer payments of qualified education loans; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. RUSH, Ms. NORTON, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. FOSTER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. WALZ, Mr. TAKAI, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. CICILLINE, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. LEE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio):

H.R. 3862. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to support community college and industry partnerships, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ISRAEL (for himself, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. NADLER, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. SIRES, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. MENG, Mr. CAPUANO, and Mr. ENGEL):

H.R. 3863. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide assistance for common interest communities, condominiums, and housing cooperatives damaged by a major disaster, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. JEFFRIES (for himself and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia):

H.R. 3864. A bill to prevent certain monitoring and interception by Federal authorities of Federal prisoner communications that are subject to attorney-client privilege; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia (for himself, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. WAGNER, Ms. KUSTER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. DOLD, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. LANCE, Mr. SALMON, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. TURNER, Mr. GUINTA, Mr. BYRNE, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. HIMES):

H.R. 3865. A bill to provide for alternative and updated certification requirements for participation under Medicaid State plans under title XIX of the Social Security Act in the case of certain facilities treating infants under one year of age with neonatal abstinence syndrome, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. NORCROSS (for himself, Mr. PALLONE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. SIRES, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. LANCE):

H.R. 3866. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1265 Hurffville Road in Deptford Township, New Jersey, as the ''First Lieutenant Salvatore S. Corma II Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ZINKE:

H.R. 3867. A bill to authorize the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System and the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System in the State of Montana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCALISE:

H. Con. Res. 89. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that a carbon tax would be detrimental to the United States economy; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MCCARTHY:

H. Res. 503. A resolution authorizing the Clerk to inform the President of the election of the Speaker; considered and agreed to. considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCARTHY:

H. Res. 504. A resolution to inform the Senate the election of the Speaker; considered and agreed to. considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HINOJOSA (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. VELA, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. POLIS, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. POCAN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. LEE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H. Res. 505. A resolution honoring the 50th anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia (for himself, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. COURTNEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. BEYER, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. LEE, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. GRAYSON, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. HONDA, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. HAHN, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. TAKAI, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. COHEN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. MENG, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SIRES, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr.

KILMER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CLAY, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. FARR, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. HIGGINS, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. NORCROSS):

H. Res. 506. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of considering legislation that would reinforce the goals of the working families agenda; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, House Administration, Oversight and Government Reform, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3857.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8, clause 18, of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CHABOT:

H.R. 3858.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 3, and Article I, section 8, clause 18.

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 3859.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department of Officer thereof.

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 3860.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States; the power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes.

To preserve the companionship services exemption for minimum wage and overtime pay, and the live in domestic services exemption for overtime pay, under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 3861.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of, and the Sixteenth Amendment to, the United States Constitution.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

H.R. 3862.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. ISRAEL:

H.R. 3863.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the powers granted to the Congress by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. JEFFRIES:

H.R. 3864.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

US Const. Art. I, Sec. 8, Cl. 18 (''Congress shall have the power . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution . . . all other Powers vested in this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.'').

By Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia:

H.R. 3865.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. NORCROSS:

H.R. 3866.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ZINKE:

H.R. 3867.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 & 18 of the United States Constitution

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 499: Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.R. 816: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 1197: Mr. TIPTON and Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 1258: Mr. DIAZ-BALART and Ms. GRAHAM.

H.R. 1282: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1304: Mr. MASSIE and Mr. AMASH.

H.R. 1342: Mr. TAKANO, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. JEFFRIES, and Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 1427: Mr. LANCE.

H.R. 1439: Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 1464: Mr. TAKAI.

H.R. 1567: Mr. HECK of Washington and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1608: Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 1625: Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 1733: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 1853: Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. WALBERG, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. MCSALLY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. WESTERMAN, and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.

H.R. 2017: Mr. BILIRAKIS and Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 2216: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 2342: Mr. WITTMAN, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 2366: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 2461: Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 2515: Mr. NOLAN, Mr. MEEHAN, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.

H.R. 2553: Ms. BONAMICI and Ms. EDWARDS.

H.R. 2563: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 2568: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 2660: Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 2692: Mr. GARAMENDI and Mr. VARGAS.

H.R. 2894: Ms. KUSTER.

H.R. 3068: Mr. MEEKS, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 3198: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 3229: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 3286: Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H.R. 3411: Mr. PERLMUTTER and Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 3487: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 3524: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.

H.R. 3629: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 3643: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 3760: Mr. GRAYSON and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 3761: Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 3785: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. LEE, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. HASTINGS, and Ms. CLARKE of New York.

H.R. 3805: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 3829: Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H. Res. 220: Mr. GUINTA, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. RUSH.

H. Res. 293: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. PERRY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. KEATING.

H. Res. 343: Mr. PETERS, Mr. GIBSON, and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H. Res. 467: Mr. BEYER, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. MCNERNEY.

H. Res. 494: Mr. UPTON, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, and Mr. POE of Texas.

H. Res. 500: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015 No. 160

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Gracious God, You are worthy of our praise. Let Your Name be honored on Earth as it is in Heaven. Fill our lawmakers with a spirit of reverence for You and Your purposes. As they seek Your wisdom, direct their steps through the unfolding of Your Divine providence. May no weapon formed against them be able to prosper. Lord, continue to do great things for and through them, causing justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. Thank You that we can come to You in weakness and find strength.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

FISCAL AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I said that the Senate would take up the fiscal agreement after the House acted, and we are. This agreement isn't perfect. I share some concerns other colleagues have raised. But here is the bottom line. This is a fully offset agreement that rejects tax hikes, secures long-term savings through entitlement reforms, and provides increased support for our military. All this is at a time when we confront threats in multiple theaters.

Each of these items was a Republican goal heading into the negotiation. Each of these items was achieved in the agreement before us. I am encouraged that it would enact the most significant reform to Social Security since 1983, resulting in $168 billion in long-term savings. I am encouraged that it would repeal more of ObamaCare. I am encouraged that it would help provide resources our troops so desperately need in an era of diverse and very challenging global threats—when we see ISIL consolidating gains in Iraq and Syria; when we see the forces of Assad marching alongside Iranian soldiers and Hezbollah militias, supported by Russian aircraft overhead.

Colleagues know that I will respect whatever choice they ultimately make when this agreement comes up for a vote. There are valid differences of opinion, and that is OK. But I ask every colleague to also consider what this fully offset agreement would mean for the men and women who voluntarily put themselves in harm's way so that we may live free.

Commanders tell us that additional resources are required—required to ensure their safety and preparedness. This fully offset agreement would help provide them—along with enacting the most significant Social Security reform in over three decades, along with repealing another piece of ObamaCare, and along with refusing to raise taxes by a penny. I hope Senators will join me in voting for it.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN BOEHNER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, allow me to say a few words about the Speaker of the House. There is a lot you can say about JOHN BOEHNER. He loves his breakfast every morning at Pete's Diner. He is a fan of the tie dimple. He is one of the most genuine guys you will ever, ever meet. I know because we have fought many battles together in the trenches. He never breaks his word. He never buckles in a storm.

What is amazing is how we have had such a frictionless relationship, especially when you consider that old House saying: The other party—that is just the opposition. But the Senate—that is the enemy.

That may have been true of past House and Senate leaders, but it wasn't true for us. Though you might not expect it, I am a little more Bourbon and JOHN is a little more Merlot. I lecture on Henry Clay. John sings ''Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah.'' But I have always considered JOHN an ally. I have always considered JOHN a friend. It is hard not to like him, and it is hard not to admire what John has accomplished in his career.

As a concerned Ohioan, he took on a scandal-plagued incumbent in a primary and won. As a freshman Congressman, he took on money laundering schemes and banking scandals involving powerful Members and prevailed. As an engineer of the Contract with America, he took on Democrats' decades-long power lock and triumphed.

As an ex-member of leadership once considered politically dead, he knew he had more to offer and convinced his colleagues that he did. As the inheritor of a diminished and dispirited House minority, he dared to believe conservatives could rise again and help grow the largest Republican majority since

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

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bob-haired flappers were dancing the Charleston back in the 1920s.

JOHN BOEHNER has wandered the valley. JOHN BOEHNER has also been to the mountaintop. JOHN BOEHNER has slid right back into the valley, and then ascended to great heights yet again. He does it all with hard work. He does it with an earnestness and an honesty I have always admired.

When JOHN talks about struggling to make it, it is not some platitude. When JOHN gets choked up about Americans reaching for their dreams, it is not some act. This is a guy who had to share a bathroom with 11 brothers and sisters. Imagine that. This is a guy whose parents slept on the pullout sofa. This is a guy who worked hard behind the bar and eventually found his way atop the rostrum. Maybe that is why he is so humble. Maybe that is why when he orders breakfast at Pete's, they don't call him Mr. Speaker; they call him ''John-John.''

Here is what I know about Speaker JOHN BOEHNER. He says the code he lives by is a simple one: Do the right thing for the right reasons, and the right things will happen. I have always found that to be true. I found it to be true in our battles fighting side by side for conservative reform, sometimes from a position deep in the minority. We had our share of Maalox moments. That is for sure. But he always strived to push forward.

As I said about JOHN BOEHNER the day he announced his retirement, grace under pressure, country and institution before self—these are the things that come to mind when I think of him. I wish Speaker BOEHNER the very best in retirement. I thank him for always working hard to do the right thing—for his family, for his district, for his party, and for his country. Farewell, my friend.

PAUL RYAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Though we bid farewell to one Speaker today, we know we will soon be saying hello to a new one. The House will vote later this morning on the nomination of Congressman PAUL RYAN. I think it is appropriate to wait for that vote to occur before making full comments. But I also think it goes without saying that PAUL RYAN is one of the most respected guys around here. Everyone knows he is smart. Everyone knows he is serious. I look forward to working closely with him in pursuit of conservative solutions for our country.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 597

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 597) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last night the House of Representatives passed the bipartisan budget agreement that will keep our Government open, funded, and free from default. Now, 100 percent of the Democrats in the House of Representatives voted for this, and 68 percent of Republicans voted against it. Let's pause just a minute and understand what I said: 68 percent of the Republicans in the House of Representatives voted to default on the full faith and credit of our great country. So 68 percent of the Republicans voted to close our government.

This legislation is now before the Senate. I urge all of my colleagues to support this responsible agreement. It is not perfect, as my friend the Republican leader said. No legislation is. But this budget agreement accomplishes two major priorities the Democrats have long supported. It promotes economic growth by providing relief from sequestration's damaging cuts for 2 years, and it ensures that we invest equally in the middle class and the Pentagon. The budget agreement is good for the middle class, good for the economy, and good for the country.

I thank the people who worked so hard to make this agreement what it is today. The agreement was among President Obama, Speaker BOEHNER, MITCH MCCONNELL, Leader PELOSI, and I helped. I applaud and commend the President of the United States. He was firm, he was resolute, and he was—as usual—very smart. I appreciate the good work that he did to help us get to the point where we are now.

To reach these negotiations, each of us had discussions with each other. We also know that a lot of the work was done by our staffs—our respective staffs. My chief of staff, Drew Wilson, represented the Senate Democrats in these negotiations. The Senate Democratic caucus is aware of Drew's expertise, hard work, fairness, and openness. Drew was ably assisted by Gary Myrick—indispensable Gary Myrick, who is the Democratic Secretary, as well as a number of people on my team of senior policy analysts who helped a great deal. Kate Leone—I don't think there is anyone in the Senate who doesn't know who Kate Leon is. She is the expert on health care. Bruce King, Ellen Doneski, Ayesha Khanna, Trey Reffett, Tyler Moran, George Holman, Gavin Parke, Alex McDonough, and utility man Bill Dauster all worked literally night and day to get this to the point where we were able to be here on the floor today, seeking support for it.

I am so grateful for the wonderful staff that I have, but there were others involved. Senator MCCONNELL's negotiator in this was Hazen Marshall. Hazen Marshall is a good person. He was resolute. He carried forward what the Republican leader wanted, but, like my staff, you never get exactly what you want. Everybody enjoyed working with him.

Dave Stewart was Speaker BOEHNER's negotiator on this. I care a great deal about Dave Stewart. David is a good man, and we all admire the work that he has done. I hope the new Speaker to be, PAUL RYAN, will use his good offices. He is very good. He is a talented man.

Dick Meltzer was Leader PELOSI's able negotiator. I have to commend NANCY PELOSI. I so admire this good woman. She is a stalwart in the House of Representatives. She will go down in history as one of the great leaders of that body. I admire her, appreciate her friendship, and extend to anyone within the sound of my voice my appreciation for the work that she did on this bill.

As to the White House, I have already indicated the President did a wonderful job on this, but he also assigned two really terrific, good, outstanding people. I can't say enough about them. Brian Deese was one of the White House negotiators, along with Katie Fallon. Katie is a woman whom we all know in the Senate. She worked for Senator SCHUMER for a number of years, and she worked for the Democratic Policy Committee. She was on the committee for a number of years. We admire her very much. She was so helpful with everything we did in this legislation. She was always easy to get ahold of. She was easy to reach.

It is now time for this important legislation to pass the U.S. Senate.

I have to say a few words about Speaker BOEHNER. I have to admit that I was skeptical when he said that he wanted to clean out the barn before he left, but he found a way to clean out the barn by passing a clean debt limit and a 2-year budget agreement, which should go a long way to returning the appropriations process to the way it should work.

I will always consider him my friend, and I will miss him. I wish him the very best in everything he does in the future. I listened to his final remarks on the House floor, which were very moving. It wasn't only JOHN BOEHNER who shed a tear over there today, but many Members of the House of Representatives and a number of us who watched his final speech shed a tear or two.

There has been a lot of talk about the appropriations process. I have been

an appropriator since I came to the Senate. I was very fortunate as a brand new Senator, which was many decades ago, to be on the Appropriations Committee. What an honor.

The Appropriations Committee's work is not as it used to be. We have to get back to doing individual appropriations bills.

I say to my Republican friends: Let's do the appropriations bills. Let's get rid of these foolish riders that they stick on appropriations bills. We need to understand that there is a time and place for doing that. There is authorization. Do the bills, authorize stuff, but don't mess up the appropriations process. Next year, we will be happy to support individual appropriations bills that come to the floor. We don't need motions to proceed. We will be happy to move to the bill as long as they get rid of those vexatious riders that have nothing to do with the bill brought before us. The Defense appropriations bill doesn't need something dealing with women's health in the sense of directly attacking Planned Parenthood. We don't need on Commerce, State, Justice something that basically does away with the Environmental Protection Agency. There are many examples that I could use. Let's get to doing appropriations bills the way we used to. I want to do them. We don't need to have a motion to proceed as long as my Republican colleagues get rid of these foolish, ideological amendments that have nothing to do with the bill before us.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families released a stunning report detailing the sharp increase in the number of Nevada children who have health insurance. At one time, we were the most underinsured State in the country for health insurance.

According to the Georgetown study, the number of Nevada children without health insurance fell by 35 percent in just 1 year. In 2013, 15 percent of children in Nevada lacked health insurance coverage. One year later, that number fell to 9.3 percent.

Reading directly from that report:

> States with the sharpest declines in the rate of uninsured children were Nevada, Colorado, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Rhode Island. Nevada's decline was considerably larger than any other State.

A 35-percent increase in the number of insured children in 1 year is remarkable. It means more children have access to the care they need to stay healthy. A number of these children will be able to go to the doctor for the first time in their lives. It is yet further proof that the Affordable Care Act is working in Nevada and across America.

Again, I say to my friends, the Republicans: Let's start working together to improve health care. We want to work with you. If there is a problem you see with ObamaCare, let's work together. We have been able to make some improvements in this law, and we want to make more improvements. We just need cooperation from our Republican friends.

The spike in the number of insured Nevada children is also due to the foresight of the Governor of the State of Nevada. Brian Sandoval is a Republican. He is a proud Republican who supported the State's Medicaid expansion option. He took on all the naysayers.

Why did Brian Sandoval do this? Is he really one of ours? He did this because he thought it was the right thing to do for the State of Nevada, and it has been proven that, in fact, is true. By expanding Medicaid in Nevada, many, many more parents were able to secure affordable health care for their kids. Quite frankly, Governor Sandoval's courage stands in stark contrast to many of his fellow Republicans.

Governors in a number of States dominated by Republican State legislatures have refused to expand coverage to the needy. These Republicans have blocked expanded coverage despite the fact that it means fewer Americans and their children have access to the health care they need. This means that people are dying as a result of this.

Two States with the highest rates of uninsured children, Alaska and Texas, have rejected Medicare expansion, and others have done the same. There were many Republicans in Nevada who wanted to go the same route. The Republican State legislature within the Nevada congressional delegation opposed all efforts to increase access to health care. They have voted to repeal ObamaCare time and time again, but Governor Sandoval was not swayed by the cynics in his own party. He refused to let politics stand in the way of children's health, and today Nevada's children are better for it.

I repeat, the Affordable Care Act is helping American families, it is helping Nevada families, and it is working especially well in States that are actually using the law as it was intended.

I hope more Republicans will follow Governor Sandoval's examples, thus helping their States and their constituents by expanding access to quality health care. I am an admirer of Governor Sandoval, and that is saying a lot. His opponent in the last election was my son. But I have to say this: In spite of the fact that my son came in second, Brian Sandoval has done an outstanding job as Governor. I admire him and appreciate what he has done. I don't agree with everything he has done. I had some disagreements with what he did in the legislature. None of us are perfect, and he certainly isn't, but I appreciate what he has done for the betterment of the State of Nevada.

LATINA EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, earlier this year we recognized Equal Pay Day—a day that highlights the disparaging wage gap between women and men in the United States. Equal Pay Day marks the day when women's wages finally catch up with men's wages from the previous year.

On average, American women make about 77 cents for every $1 that their male colleagues make while doing the very same job. This unjust and immoral reality is even more pronounced for women of color.

Tomorrow is Latina Equal Pay Day, the point at which wages of Latina women in America catch up to men's earnings from the previous year. It is today. They have had to work all of this time to catch up. The fact that a Hispanic woman must work a full year, plus 9 months and 30 days, just to make what her male co-workers make is certainly unacceptable.

In Nevada, Latina women earn 53 cents for every $1 their fellow male workers make. It is not just a problem in Nevada; it is a problem nationwide. Nationwide they earn 55 cents for every $1 a man makes for doing the exact same work. All told, the wage gap that Latina women face results in a loss of over $25,000 a year for these women. That is $25,000 that could be used to help these women sustain their families.

To make matters worse, the wage gaps that exist between Latina women and their male counterparts disproportionately affect Hispanic families. Why? Because Latina women are more likely to be the primary breadwinners for their families. Thirty percent of all Hispanic families in the United States are headed by a single mother, and 40 percent of married Latina women earn more than 50 percent of their family's income.

As legislators, it is our duty to seek the well-being of all Americans. Democrats don't take that responsibility lightly. We understand that when wages of women do not reflect their hard work, it undermines the strength of families and communities throughout the Nation. That is why we have continually and consistently fought to secure equal pay for equal work.

Five times in 5 years Republicans have stood in the way of equal pay for women. They have stood in the way of equal wages for their own sisters, daughters, and wives. Even Republican women—that is Republican Members of Congress—have refused to address this important issue. The proposal that Republicans have put forward falls short of ensuring real equal pay protections and ignores the realities women face in fighting for fair pay. In so doing, Republicans have proudly placed their stamp of approval on unequal paychecks across America.

The wage gap Latina women endure is a disgrace to this Nation. No woman should make less than a man who does the exact same work. Latina women

deserve the hard-earned wages for which they work. They also deserve elected officials who will advocate on their behalf.

As we recognize Latina Equal Pay Day, I call on Republicans to support a pay equity bill that empowers women to receive equal pay they have so rightly earned, not just because it strengthens families and benefits our country but because it is the right thing to do.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

TRADE ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 1314, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 1314, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell amendment No. 2750, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2751 (to amendment No. 2750), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to refer the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2752, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2753 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2752), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2754 (to amendment No. 2753), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today we are kicking off a debate on major bipartisan legislation. Chairman HATCH and I are also involved in an important Senate Finance Committee hearing. He will be here a little bit later today.

I ask unanimous consent that our colleague, Senator DURBIN from Illinois, be allowed to speak after I do. I believe that his remarks will also be completed before Chairman HATCH arrives.

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

Mr. WYDEN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Chairman HATCH and I will be managing this bill, and we want our colleagues to know that we are anxious to give everyone an opportunity to speak out on this extraordinarily important issue. If Senators who wish to speak come down and consult with the Finance staff—majority and minority—in our respective cloakrooms, we are going to work very hard to accommodate all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Here, in my view, is what this issue is all about. Fiscal battles in the Congress come and go, but nothing should ever be allowed to threaten America's sterling economic reputation, and this legislation will preserve it. Without this agreement, the Congress is staring at a potential debt default—a debt default that would be literally days away, when the Treasury would lose its authority to borrow in order to make payments.

By now, I think a lot of Senators understand the disastrous consequences of default: housing costs shooting upward, retirement accounts shrinking, jobs disappearing, and consumer confidence dropping. We also understand that no one can get particularly thrilled by the prospect of raising the debt ceiling. Yet it is a job that must be done.

Our country is an economic rock in tumultuous seas, and we certainly have disagreements. Disagreements practically come with every news cycle and election. But what doesn't change is that our country pays its debts and we pay them on time. That is why this legislation is so important.

The bipartisan compromise reduces the threats of a potential government shutdown in December. When this becomes law, the pin, in effect, goes back in the grenade, where it belongs. That is positive news, as we look for some predictability and certainty, and we all hear from our businesses, our employers, and our citizens that this is so important.

Congress ought to look at this compromise, in my view, as a springboard to a full and productive debate over the budget in the upcoming 2 years. The fact is, last-minute deals have become too commonplace and they have left a lot of important policy reforms and policy improvements on the cutting room floor.

For example, with America's West getting hotter and drier each year, our broken system of budgeting for wildfires is in drastic need of improvement. The same goes for many programs and services that are a lifeline for rural America. Fortunately, this legislation lays the groundwork for the Congress to go back to having robust budget debates that can actually solve these challenges.

With my time this morning, I wish to address some specific elements of the bill, starting with what I see as several particularly constructive policies.

First, the legislation staves off the full brunt of the automatic budget cuts known in the corridors of Washington as sequestration. This policy was designed in effect to be painful from the get-go, and it would weaken Medicare, the lifeline for older people, and other domestic programs. It was supposed to be considered so god-awful that it would vanish 2 years after it began, but it continues to haunt budget debates to this day.

It is important that this legislation eases the burden by $80 billion over 2 years. That means more opportunities to invest in education, in medical and scientific research, in housing assistance, in public health, and more.

Second, this bipartisan plan is going to prevent a big spike in Medicare costs for millions of older people. Several weeks ago, the news came down that seniors were facing a hike in premiums and deductibles in Medicare Part B, the outpatient portion of Medicare, of potentially more than 50 percent. That would amount to an increase of hundreds of dollars—perhaps more—in a year when Social Security benefits are not expected to grow. From my years as codirector of Oregon's Gray Panthers, I can tell my colleagues that for many seniors living on a fixed income, that would have really hit them like a wrecking ball.

When we got those initial reports, several of my Democratic colleagues and I got together and introduced legislation that would fully shield older people from this huge financial hit. Following our work, the bipartisan compromise before the Senate includes a version of this important fix. It is not as generous as the proposal my colleagues and I introduced. There are questions about how it will affect the landscape a few years down the road. But, make no mistake about it, this approach goes a long, long way toward protecting seniors, particularly the dual eligibles—seniors eligible for Medicare and Medicaid—and this is a very important part of this legislation.

Third, the budget compromise takes an extraordinarily important step to shore up one of our country's most vital safety net programs: the Social Security Disability Insurance Program. Without a fix, what is called SSDI—Social Security disability insurance benefits—that workers have earned would have been slashed by 20 percent, and that 20-percent cut would have hit those affected very quickly.

This proposal is going to follow what has been a frequently used bipartisan approach of shifting funding within the Social Security Program to make sure that those who depend on this program are protected through 2022. I introduced legislation earlier this year, along with 28 of our colleagues, which would have gone further by guaranteeing that the program remain solvent through 2034, but this compromise package strengthens the program for several years, and we will have a chance to come together—hopefully on a bipartisan basis—and go even further.

Fourth, the budget package makes real progress on what is called complying with our tax laws—tax compliance. It is important to note that these are not tax hikes. This is a question of enforcing tax law so that when taxes are owed, they are actually paid.

In the tax compliance area, there are several important proposals that are

going to crack down on taxpayers who seek to dodge their responsibilities and pass the buck to other Americans. For example, enforcing the tax laws with respect to large partnerships has been a challenge for some time. There are more than 10,000 of these complex businesses in our country. More than 500 of them have at least 100,000 partners. So there has not been an effective way to conduct audits under the current rules because the rules are basically decades old and haven't kept up with the times. In my view, the proposal before the Senate makes meaningful improvements. More taxpayers will pay what they owe instead of using sleight-of-hand approaches to dodge their responsibilities.

We all understand that the Tax Code almost boggles the mind in terms of its complexity. I think it would be fair to say there may be more work that goes into getting this policy right as it relates to partnerships and several of the other issues, and my colleagues and I on the Finance Committee intend to keep giving the scrutiny the partnership issue deserves on an ongoing analysis.

Those are four specific areas of progress in this compromise that staves off a risky budgetary battle.

I do feel it is important to share one of my concerns with the bill at this time, and it is a provision that really has little to do with the budget. It is called section 301, and it allows debt collectors to make robocalls directly to Americans' cell phones. Here is my view. Debt collectors should not be gifted broad permission to harass our citizens, particularly through robocalls, running up costly charges in many cases. The Federal Communications Commission has limits on the number and duration of calls, and they are not sufficient. In a healthier budget process, this kind of proposal would get weeded out. So I would like to say to our colleagues in the Senate, both Democrats and Republicans, that I am going to do everything I can to reverse this action in the weeks ahead.

Finally, in my capacity as ranking member of the Finance Committee, I wish to discuss how these fiscal agreements ought to be financed in the future. Medicare and Social Security absolutely cannot become the honey pots that Congress raids whenever it needs to pay for legislation. If we go around the country—to Oregon, to Illinois, to Georgia, to the Dakotas, to Texas—and we ask typical Americans what they want their representatives in Congress to do, protecting Medicare and Social Security is right at the top of the list. I hear it in every townhall meeting. I have had more than 700 of them in my home State. And I have to believe many colleagues in South Dakota and Illinois and elsewhere hear the same thing.

There is a longstanding tradition that says changes in Medicare policy should be for strengthening Medicare in the future. The same principle goes for Social Security. Yet, twice now, these vital programs have been used to fund budget deals, and Medicare sequestration is sticking around long past its original expiration date.

This legislation preventing a calamitous default is coming down to the wire. I would tell colleagues that this is a must-pass bill. I support it, and I urge Democrats and Republicans to do so as well.

I would also say as we talk about where we go from here that it is important to recognize that Medicare and Social Security must not be used as ATMs for other spending in the future. The bottom line has to be that the process of reaching a budget and keeping the lights on in this wonderful institution—the people's branch—keeping the lights on in the process of reaching a budget has to change. The Congress cannot continue to just go from crisis to crisis to crisis. It is our job as lawmakers, working in a bipartisan way, to set the right temperature in our economy with smart, forward-looking policies that help our businesses succeed and give everybody in America—I want to emphasize that; everybody in America—the opportunity to get ahead. It is pretty hard to do when we lurch from one crisis to another.

Let's use this legislation as an opportunity to get back to writing the budget in a bipartisan fashion through the traditional approaches that have been used in what is called regular order, pass this bill now so as to ensure that America's sterling economic reputation is intact, and then let's look to the future around some of the principles I have laid out.

Again, Chairman HATCH will be here in a bit. He and I, as the managers of the bill, want to make it clear we want to try to accommodate as many colleagues as we can, and we ought to be able to. I look forward to the remarks of the distinguished senior Senator from Illinois. I believe that before too long Chairman HATCH will be here as well.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday the senior Senator from Arizona, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, came to the floor to speak to an issue and mentioned my name several times during the course of his remarks on the floor. I come here this morning to respond to the senior Senator from Arizona.

The issue is a decision by the Department of Defense on October 7 of this year to place the University of Phoenix, a for-profit university, on probation and prohibit the company from enrolling new Department of Defense tuition assistance and MyCAA beneficiaries. Under this Department of Defense order, the company—University of Phoenix—was barred from accessing military bases. This is a serious action, and there is a reason for it.

The senior Senator from Arizona came to the floor to protest this decision by the Department of Defense and to also protest other actions that have been taken relative to other for-profit universities. I come this morning to respond.

What is at stake is something that is very essential. When men and women volunteer for our military and hold up their hands and say ''I am willing to die for this country,'' they make a promise and we make a promise. Our promise is that if you will serve this country and risk your life for America, we will stand by you when you come home. If you are injured, we will provide medical care. If you want to pursue education and training, we will help you do it; in fact, we will help your family do it. And there are many other benefits that we rightly promise to these members of the military.

Department of Defense tuition assistance and the GI bill, which has been characterized as the GI bill since World War II, is really the vehicle that gives to many of these servicemembers, while they are serving and after they have completed their service, a chance to build their lives. They are generous programs, and they should be. MyCAA is generous to their families, and it should be. But these are virtually once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. We hope these members of the military choose well in terms of the courses they need to take and the training they need to prepare for their lives after they have served our country. We have a responsibility when it comes to those who are currently in the service to monitor the activities of the schools that are offering education and training as part of these programs. We would be derelict in our responsibility if we did not.

The Department of Defense wrote a memorandum of understanding to all schools saying: If you want to offer Tuition Assistance program training and education, if you want to offer training for the families of servicemembers, here are the rules to play by. And I think virtually every institution of higher learning knows going in to follow the rules, whatever the institution may be.

Let me say a word about the University of Phoenix. This is not just another for-profit school; it is the largest by far. At the height of its enrollment, the University of Phoenix, a for-profit university largely offering online courses, had as many as 600,000 students. That is dramatically more than the combined enrollment of all the Big Ten colleges and universities. Over the years—in the last 5 years, the size of their student body has declined; it is now slightly over 200,000. As an individual institution, it is the largest in America, and it certainly is the largest of the for-profit colleges and universities. You can hardly escape the advertising, the naming rights to the stadium where the Arizona Cardinals play their football games in Arizona. They have advertising on television, radio,

and billboards. It is a company that markets in every direction and as a consequence has built a large student enrollment.

How about the University of Phoenix in terms of dollars it receives? That is interesting. Unlike universities and colleges around the United States, whether in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Illinois, or wherever, these for-profit universities get a substantial portion of their revenue directly from the Treasury through Pell grants and student loans. Dramatically higher percentages of their revenue come from Treasury than virtually any other college or university. This is unique to the for-profit college and university sector. They are the most heavily subsidized for-profit private businesses in America today.

Let me give an example of what I am talking about. Eighty-two percent of the revenue going to the University of Phoenix—$2.7 billion—comes out of title IV. When it comes to Department of Defense tuition assistance, University of Phoenix is the fourth largest recipient in the United States—$20 million. Under the GI bill, it is the largest recipient from the Department of Defense and the Treasury—$346 million. Their CEO, Mr. Cappelli, is paid $8 million a year in total compensation, which is dramatically more than virtually any other university president in the ordinary course of higher education—what is a record.

University of Phoenix students cumulatively owe more in student debt than any educational institution in America. University of Phoenix students owe $35 billion in student loans. Only half of the University of Phoenix borrowers are paying down their debt 5 years after graduation or after they have dropped out of school. Phoenix's overall 3-year repayment rate—that means how many borrowers are making payments on their debt after 3 years—is 41 percent. Less than half of the University of Phoenix students and graduates after 3 years are paying back. Their 5-year repayment rate is 47 percent. Nearly one out of every two students who graduated or dropped out in 2009 has defaulted within 5 years. The University of Phoenix's 5-year cohort default rate—students who graduated in 2009 and defaulted by 2014—is 45 percent. The Arizona location—which includes online students across the country—the 4-year bachelor's-seeking graduation rate is 1 percent and the 6-year bachelor's-seeking graduation rate is 10 percent.

In the for-profit college and university industry, there are three numbers to remember. Ten percent of the students graduating from high school go to these for-profit schools. Twenty percent of all the Federal aid for education goes to these schools. Why? They are very expensive. The tuition they charge is dramatically more than colleges and universities across the country. But here is the number to remember: As an industry, 40 percent of all the student loan defaults are students who attend for-profit colleges and universities. Why? It is so darned expensive that students can't continue the education and drop out or they complete the education and many times find that the diploma is worthless.

Let's go back to the Department of Defense. We want to protect our men and women in uniform from being exploited by any college or university, for-profit or not. The Department of Defense wrote a memorandum of understanding and said: If you want to offer courses to our men and women in uniform, here are the rules to play by.

On October 7, the Department of Defense announced that they placed the University of Phoenix on probation and prohibited them from enrolling new servicemembers in the DOD Tuition Assistance and MyCAA Programs. They barred them from accessing military bases. The decision, the Department said, was based on violations of the memorandum of understanding, which I described this morning, based on their own review.

Yesterday the senior Senator from Arizona came to the floor to protest the decision by the Department of Defense. There were several things he said during the course of his floor statement which I would like to address.

The senior Senator from Arizona claimed that the Department of Defense's ''actions were taken without due process'' and based on ''an outside investigative report.'' The Senator went on to say that it ''wasn't a department investigation. There was no scrutiny.'' He said that on the floor to protest the Department of Defense decision.

Here are the facts. The Department of Defense conducted nearly 4 months of review of the University of Phoenix's practices after the report by the Center for Investigative Reporting raised allegations relating to the company strategy using corporate sponsorship of events on military bases to skirt the Federal rules on recruitment that had been spelled out in the memorandum of understanding.

The Department of Defense placed the University of Phoenix on probation when its review ''revealed several violations of the Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding.'' DOD also gave the company 14 days to provide the Department of Defense with materials in response to the decision.

To argue that there was no due process in this is betrayed by the facts.

The senior Senator from Arizona went on to say: ''If the University of Phoenix is guilty of some wrongdoing, I want to be one of the first to make sure that proper penalties are enacted.''

Here is the fact: The Department of Defense confirmed that the University of Phoenix is guilty of wrongdoing. The Department of Defense's notice to the university stated that ''it conducted a review of the agreements between the University of Phoenix and the DoD, as reflected in the DoD MOU. . . . This review revealed several violations of the DoD MOU attributed to the University of Phoenix, including, but not limited to, transgression of Defense Department policies regarding use of its official seals or other trademark insignia and failure to go through the responsible education advisor for each business related activity requiring access to the DoD installations. . . .'' They go on to say that they found that ''the frequency and scope of these previous violations of the DoD MOU is disconcerting.''

Despite this, the senior Senator from Arizona is urging the Department of Defense to ignore what they found in their investigation and to reverse their decision putting the company on probation.

The senior Senator from Arizona went on to call Phoenix's violations ''minor breaches in decorum'' and ''technical in nature.''

The Department of Defense found that the University of Phoenix violated terms of its memorandum of understanding—a legal document laying out the rules and standards every institution must adhere to in order to be eligible to participate in voluntary military education programs. For instance, this document specifies that the base's education officer, not the base commander, is the sole approving authority for any and all access to the base. In their violation of this memorandum of understanding provision, the Department of Defense called the University of Phoenix's violations disconcerting in their frequency and scope.

The company had a corporate strategy of spending millions of dollars to sponsor events on military bases to skirt Department of Defense rules and the 2012 Executive order that was designed to prohibit institutions from recruiting servicemembers on military bases.

Mr. President, let me spell out some of the things that were being done by the University of Phoenix. Remember what we are talking about. This university is receiving $20 million a year through DOD tuition assistance and $346 million through the GI bill. Of course, it is a big profit center for them to continue this pursuit of the military, and they spent a lot of money to support it, and that is what got them in trouble.

The University of Phoenix spent over $250,000 in the last 3 years just in one location—Fort Campbell, KY—sponsoring 89 events. One event featured a performer named Big Smo; that alone cost $25,000. Across the country, the University of Phoenix sponsored events on military bases, including rock concerts, Super Bowl parties, father-daughter dances, Easter egg hunts, a chocolate festival, and even brunch with Santa.

The University of Phoenix paid the Department of Defense to have its staff serve as exclusive résumé advisers in

Hiring Our Heroes job fairs and workshops, many on military bases. A Center of Investigative Reporting hidden camera documented that all of the résumé workshop materials, presentation slides, and sample ''successful'' résumés were labeled with University of Phoenix marketing, and trainers urged attendees to go to the University of Phoenix Web site for more information.

The University of Phoenix used ''challenge coins''—which the Senator from Arizona raised on the floor—with DOD seals and logos to show its close relationship with the military without receiving prior approval. The Senator from Arizona noted that other schools have done the same thing, including, he mentioned, Southern Illinois University. This Senator is not going to send a letter to the DOD protesting if they hold SIU or any school accountable for the same conduct as the University of Phoenix. The senior Senator from Arizona did, and I think he ought to reflect on that for a moment.

The senior Senator from Arizona says the University of Phoenix has a long history of serving nontraditional students, such as Active-Duty military and others. According to Paul Reickhoff of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the university of Phoenix ''is constantly reported as the single worst by far'' when it comes to for-profit colleges taking advantage of its members.

The Senator from Arizona says the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Education Department, and the California attorney general, Kamala Harris, drove another for-profit school, Corinthian, out of business without ever proving misconduct, and now we are attempting to do the same to the University of Phoenix.

The fact is, there are ongoing investigations into the University of Phoenix by the Federal Trade Commission related to unfair and deceptive practices, including military recruitment and the handling of student personal information. There is an investigation underway of the University of Phoenix by the Department of Education's inspector general related to marketing, recruitment, enrollment, financial aid processing, fraud prevention, student retention, personnel training, attendance, academic grading, et cetera.

There is an ongoing investigation into the University of Phoenix by the Security and Exchange Commission relating to insider trading, and not one but three different state attorneys general are investigating the University of Phoenix for unfair and deceptive practices. The Senator from Arizona comes and protests that we are involved in some sort of ideological grandstanding—that is what he said, ideological grandstanding—ignoring the evidence which I have presented this morning about the investigations into the University of Phoenix going on across agencies, State and Federal, and the investigation by the Department of Defense that led to this decision.

He also went on to say yesterday in his remarks:

> Last year, the Education Department, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—

And an individual named Ms. Harris—

> mounted a coordinated campaign that drove for-profit Corinthian College out of business without ever proving misconduct.

They were able to drive a college out of business. What a coincidence that he would make that statement on the floor of the Senate yesterday, the same day it was reported that a Federal judge in Chicago ordered Corinthian College—now bankrupt—to pay $530 million to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, resolving a yearlong lawsuit against the for-profit chain for allegedly steering students into predatory student loans.

The CFPB Director, Richard Cordray, said in a statement, ''Today's ruling marks the end of our litigation against a company that has severely harmed tens of thousands of students, turning dreams of higher education into a nightmare.'' I don't understand how the Senator from Arizona could come to the floor the same day this Federal decision was reported and raise this issue without some knowledge of what the Corinthian Colleges were doing. What they were doing was lying. They were misrepresenting to the Federal Government how many students were employed after they graduated. It turns out Corinthian was paying employers several thousand dollars to hire their students—graduates—for a month or two so they could report to the Federal Government they had jobs.

Of course, when the money ran out from Corinthian, the students lost those part-time jobs. Corinthian was caught. They were asked to provide information to refute what I have just said. Instead of doing that, they started dissembling and going out of business. They were also steering students to what they called genesis loans at Corinthian College. Students were paying outrageous tuition and fees for bachelor's degrees, $60,000 or $75,000, and then they were facing genesis loans, they called them, with interest rates as high as 15 percent.

This industry does have good schools and good courses in the for-profit business sector, I am sure, but there has clearly been misconduct. We have to call them on it and hold them responsible. It is our Federal Government that virtually acknowledges the accreditation of these schools that offer Pell grants and direct student loans to their students, creating the impression among students and families that these are perfectly good colleges and universities. We have a responsibility to students and families across this Nation to police their ranks when there is misconduct. In this case, the Department of Defense looked closely and decided that the University of Phoenix was involved in misconduct. That is why they reached their decision.

There was a letter that was prepared by a number of organizations—I will not read all of their names—but it was sent October 27 this week to the Honorable Ashton Carter, the Secretary of Defense, thanking the Department for their recent action when it came to the University of Phoenix. These organizations went on to catalog the things I have said this morning. They also talk about the students these organizations have worked with. This letter says servicemember complaints regarding the University of Phoenix fall into three categories: servicemembers who were signed up for loans without their knowledge or permission after being promised they would incur no loans, servicemembers who were misled about the cost of tuition increases at the University of Phoenix, servicemembers who were misled about the accreditation and transferability of University of Phoenix credits.

Yesterday, the senior Senator from Arizona cited three students. I would like to read from this letter. They note three students who were members of the military commenting on the University of Phoenix. First, Cody Edie, of the U.S. Marines said:

> I was told these credits would transfer anywhere nationwide but as I began my transition from active duty I found out they will not transfer to the schools in my home state. I wasted my time and 15 credits for nothing.

A statement from Erin Potter, U.S. Army:

> I was told by the University of Phoenix that I would be eligible for grants that I did not have to pay back. I came to find out they enrolled me in loans and now I cannot afford the payments.

From Dennis Chamberlain, U.S. Army:

> I attended the University of Phoenix to obtain my bachelors degree. I racked up close to $20,000 in debt to attain my degree. I feel they targeted me for my military student aid. I struggle every month paying back the student loans I could have avoided. I was shot twice in Afghanistan by shrapnel from RPGs.

The letter is signed by about 20 different organizations: the Air Force Sergeants Association, the Association of the U.S. Navy, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Blue Star Families, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

I ask unanimous consent to have this letter printed in the RECORD.

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

OCTOBER 27, 2015.

Hon. ASHTON CARTER,
Secretary of Defense,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY CARTER: We write to thank you and your staff for the Department's recent action to enforce its Tuition Assistance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Phoenix. The MOU is the Department's main tool for implementing Executive Order 13607 and its directive to protect service members from deceptive recruiting, including surreptitious recruiting on military installations.

In these difficult financial times, protecting the integrity of the Tuition Assistance program is essential to preservation of

the program and its goal of military readiness and professional development for our men and women in uniform. In this context, the Department's action to enforce the MOU is a prudent measure, and we feel more needs to be done to protect the integrity of the program. Failure to take swift and serious action against violations of the MOU harms service members, taxpayers, and the program itself, and sends the wrong message to other MOU signatories about the acceptability of violations.

The Department's investigation concluded that ''the frequency and scope'' of the University's violations was ''disconcerting,'' including ''transgression of Defense Department policies regarding use of its official seals or other trademark insignia and failure to go through the responsible education advisor for each business related activity requiring access to the DoD installations.'' The Department's letter to the University also raised concern that ''several additional provisions'' of the MOU may have been violated if allegations are substantiated about deceptive marketing, recruiting, and billing of U.S. military personnel raised in the law enforcement inquiries of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and California Attorney General. We also would draw to your attention similar allegations that also, if substantiated, would violate provisions of the MOU, raised in ongoing investigations of the Attorneys General of Delaware, Florida, and Massachusetts; the Enforcement Division of the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission; the Mid-Atlantic Region of the U.S. Education Department's Office of Inspector General; and the whistleblower suit brought by University of Phoenix military recruiters filed in the federal district court in Kentucky.

Although signatories to the MOU promise to eliminate unfair and deceptive marketing and recruiting, such practices continue. For example, many of our organizations are helping service members and veterans who experienced deceptive recruiting, and nearly 1,000 of these attended the University of Phoenix. Their experiences over the past decade, and through 2015, demonstrate a pattern consistent with the allegations made by current law enforcement investigations. Service members' complaints regarding the University of Phoenix tend to fall into three categories: (1) service members who were signed up for loans without their knowledge or permission, after being promised they would incur no loans; (2) service members who were misled about the cost and tuition increases at University of Phoenix; and (3) service members who were misled about the accreditation and transferability of University of Phoenix credits. Below is a small sampling of complaints about the University of Phoenix from service members who used Tuition Assistance. The first student attended the University as recently as 2015:

''I was told these credits would transfer anywhere nationwide but as I begin my transition from active duty, I found out they will not transfer to the schools in my home state. I wasted my time and 15 credits for nothing.''—Cody Edie, U.S. Marines E–4

''I was told by University of Phoenix that I would be eligible for grants that I did not have to pay back. I came to find out they enrolled me in loans and now I cannot afford the payments.''—Erin Potter, U.S. Army E–5

''I attended University of Phoenix to attain my bachelors degree. I racked up close to $20,000 in debt to attain my degree. I feel they targeted me for my military student aid. I struggle every month paying back the student loans I could have avoided. I was shot twice in Afghanistan by shrapnel from RPGs.''—Dennis Chamberlain, U.S. Army 0–3

Because the Department's action affects only prospective students, we also urge you to alert service members currently enrolled at the University about the probation and current law enforcement investigations, and remind them about the availability of the Department's complaint system. Doing so would aid those students and enhance the Department's ability to identify MOU infractions. As you may know, the University was required by SEC rules to notify its investors of these actions; current students deserve to be informed as well.

We thank you for your efforts to protect the integrity of the Tuition Assistance program and to protect service members from deceptive recruiting practices. We hope the Department will continue to take action against violations and consider that reinstatement following a short probation could indicate to other MOU signatories that violations are met with little repercussion.

Sincerely,

Air Force Sergeants Association, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations, Association of the U.S. Navy, Blue Star Families, Campaign for America's Future, Children's Advocacy Institute, Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of California, Consumers Union, Empire Justice Center, Higher Ed Not Debt, Institute for Higher Education Policy, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, League of United Latin American Citizens, National Association of Consumer Advocates, National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients), Paralyzed Veterans of America, Public Law Center, Student Debt Crisis, Student Veterans of America, The Education Trust, The Institute for College Access & Success, University of San Diego Veterans Legal Clinic, Veterans Education Success, Veterans for Common Sense, Veterans Student Loan Relief Fund, VetJobs, VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association, Vietnam Veterans of America, Working America, Young Invincibles.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am going to wrap up. I read carefully what the senior Senator from Arizona had to say yesterday. I hope I have addressed each of the major points he raised. There was indeed an investigation. There were standards which the University of Phoenix agreed to follow and then failed to follow. There is an effort underway to make sure we protect the men and women in the military and their families from exploitation when it comes to their GI bills. We should continue that effort.

I hope my friend and colleague from Arizona who has made a record in the Senate of speaking up, standing up to avoid those misuses of Federal funds, will continue in that same vein when it comes to this issue. We want money well spent. We want our men and uniform well served.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the chairman of the Senate agriculture committee is on the floor, and I thank him for his tenacity and diligent work on behalf of America's farmers and rural communities.

I have discussed with the chairman his concerns about crop insurance provisions in the fiscal agreement and their impact on farmers, concerns which are shared by our counterparts in the House of Representatives. I also have concerns about the changes to crop insurance and what it will mean to the future farmers in my State. We have a big agricultural community in Kentucky, and I have certainly heard from them in great numbers over the past couple of days.

Farming has been a long tradition in my State. Kentucky is made up largely of smaller family farms—farms that have been passed down from generation to generation. These folks rely heavily on the notion that a bad-crop-yield year will not stop their ability to continue farming because of the certainty provided through this crop insurance program.

It is our joint understanding that the House leaders will work to reverse these crop insurance changes and find bipartisan alternative deficit reduction savings when they consider the omnibus appropriations bill later this year.

So I assure my friend from Kansas and the other Members of our conference who care about this that I will work closely with him to support the House in these efforts.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, will the distinguished leader yield?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise to engage in this colloquy that our distinguished Republican leader has already mentioned or stressed. I also thank our majority whip, the Senator from Texas, and the senior Senator from South Dakota, Mr. THUNE, with regard to a commitment made between all of us on the floor.

This commitment is in reference to the obvious need to remedy the language adversely affecting our Nation's farmers and ranchers that is now included in the Bipartisan Budget Act. This provision, section 201, included in the underlying bill, should it go into effect, would greatly damage the crop insurance program as we know it, not to mention the farmers who purchase this crop insurance.

The commitment we have reached is to reverse these damaging cuts and policy changes to the crop insurance program in order to protect our producers' primary risk management tool and their No. 1 priority. In all of the great talk and effort that we had to pass the farm bill—over 400 days—the No. 1 issue to farmers, ranchers, and every commodity group and every farm organization was crop insurance.

This legislative action—or fix, if we want to call it that—will take place in consideration of the year-end spending bill. I have been working very closely

with House Agriculture Committee Chairman MIKE CONAWAY, who has reached a similar position with the House leadership. It was a tough trail, but MIKE got it done.

We have all agreed here to restore these funds to the program and reverse this policy and do so with support from the House and the Senate.

I yield to our distinguished majority whip.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I express my gratitude to the majority leader and to the chairman of the agriculture committee in the Senate, as well as to the two Senators from South Dakota, Mr. THUNE and Mr. ROUNDS, for their cooperation and their commitment to address this issue.

I particularly wish to join the chairman of the agriculture committee, Senator ROBERTS, in commending MIKE CONAWAY, a good Texan, who is chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, whom I know cares very deeply about this issue.

Texas is a huge agricultural State and 98 percent of our agricultural production is run by families and employs one out of every seven Texans. Texas ranchers and farmers are no strangers to the perils caused by drought and other weather-related events beyond their control.

With the current regulatory environment and unforeseen perils they face, I understand the necessity and the viability of the crop insurance program to their livelihoods.

So I wish to say that I too stand ready to support our colleagues, working together to find a solution to this important problem.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I yield to my distinguished friend and colleague from South Dakota, the senior Senator from South Dakota, Mr. THUNE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from Kansas, who is the distinguished chairman of the agriculture committee, on which I serve, as well as the leader and the whip in the Senate.

I rise in support as well of restoring what would be some very devastating cuts to an important program, the crop insurance program. The cuts were supposed to be imposed by the budget agreement that was reached and that we are going to be voting on later today.

Crop insurance plays a critical role in supporting South Dakota agriculture. It is my State's No. 1 industry. Crop losses due to drought, wind, hail, and excessive moisture provide the greatest challenges to economic survival and sustainability in production agriculture. Crop insurance provides the only viable risk management tool to meet those challenges. So it is imperative that we preserve crop insurance and maintain its viability.

I support the agreement that has been discussed on the floor today. I will work with the leader, the chairman, my Senate colleagues, and my colleague from South Dakota, Senator ROUNDS, who has been involved in these discussions, to make sure we find a reasonable alternative to the unworkable cuts to crop insurance that are found in section 201 of the Bipartisan Budget Act.

I thank the majority leader, the whip, and the chairman of our agriculture committee for their commitment to our farming families and rural economies across this great country. I also thank those who have worked in the House to come to a point where we can have this discussion and move forward in a way that will preserve what is a very important program for production agriculture in this country.

I ask the chairman of the agriculture committee, Senator ROBERTS, through the Presiding Officer, if the House has reached a similar agreement in terms of the discussion that we are having in the Senate today.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I thank my friend for the question. I respond to my friend that, yes, the chairman, MIKE CONAWAY, has reached a bipartisan agreement with the House leadership and also the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, Mr. ROGERS from Kentucky. So there is bipartisan agreement with the House leadership, and it is now time for the Senate to respond.

I also echo the comments of the senior Senator from South Dakota, with the help of Senator ROUNDS, and I would be remiss in not mentioning virtually every member of the ag committee who has been involved in this effort as well. I appreciate the work of my colleagues and the work of our ranking member, Senator STABENOW. I especially want to thank her for raising this issue and helping to find an agreement.

I note that I have worked my entire career to build crop insurance as a public-private partnership that best protects our producers, taxpayers, and consumers, not to mention a very hungry and malnourished world. This agreement reached today continues in that effort to fulfill that mission. I thank the majority leader, the majority whip, and Senator THUNE for their commitment. I also thank many of our colleagues who helped reach this solution today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, the legislation that passed in the House last night and that I expect we will be voting on soon in the Senate.

Anyone who hasn't been living in a cave for the last few weeks is aware of the controversy surrounding this legislation. However, while the bill is likely no one's idea of an ideal path forward, I believe the controversy stems more from political considerations than from policy or substance.

Let me say one thing up front. I don't love this legislation. If we were living in the ''United States of Orrin Hatch'' this bill would look very different, but while I may not like parts of this deal very much, there are other things I like much less, including political brinksmanship on important matters and election-year posturing on complicated issues.

This budget deal, while far from perfect, will help eliminate several hurdles that must be overcome in the near term and hopefully allow Congress to function and to actually govern over the next year. That said, there are some very important provisions in this bill that I think will be counted as wins for good government and will help us address some important issues. So I would like to take just a few minutes and talk about some of the specifics of this legislation and why I believe these provisions are important.

First, as we all know, the bill would suspend the statutory debt limit through mid-March of 2017. I have heard a number of my colleagues decry this provision, arguing that any increase in the debt limit should be accompanied by fiscal reforms, and on that count my colleagues are right.

I think you would be hard-pressed to find many Members in this Chamber who have spent more time than I have talking about our Nation's debt and calling for reforms. I have spoken extensively about the need to rein in our broken entitlement programs, which are the main drivers of our debt. Unlike most Members of Congress, I have actually come up with specific proposals that would help stave off the growing entitlement crisis. On top of that, as chairman of the Senate committee with jurisdiction over the debt limit, I have repeatedly called on the Obama administration to do what past administrations have done, which is to use debt limit increases as opportunities to reexamine our fiscal situation and work with Congress to find a path toward reforms that will improve our fiscal outlook.

Unfortunately, these calls and similar calls made by other leaders in Congress have largely gone ignored as the administration refuses to even consider fiscal changes in the context of a debt limit increase. I am as frustrated as anyone by the refusal of this administration to even engage on this issue. However, the President's refusal to be reasonable and to do his job when it comes to our debt is no excuse for Congress failing to do its job and prevent a default.

I know some of my colleagues either don't believe a default would be that bad or that the result of hitting the debt limit would even be classified as a default. I will not delve into the semantics of the issue, I will just say that hitting the debt limit would prevent the government from meeting a

large number of its obligations. Nothing good and many things that are bad will come from that result. No reasonable person would dispute that.

In addition, I don't think any reasonable person wants to see Congress push up against debt limit deadlines multiple times throughout 2016. Mixing a looming possibility of default with election-year posturing—and I am talking about posturing on both sides of the aisle, by the way—is, in my view, a recipe for disaster. This budget bill will suspend the debt limit and spare Congress and the American people the spectacle of ticking debt clocks in the middle of an election season. Once again, this isn't my preferred result, but it is much better than the alternative.

In addition to raising the debt limit, the bill would extend the life of the Social Security disability insurance, or SSDI, trust fund through a temporary reallocation of resources from the retirement trust fund into the disability insurance program.

As we all know, the SSDI trust fund is set to be exhausted sometime late next year, which would lead to benefit cuts of around 20 percent for disabled Americans. I am not willing to do that. Right now, the beneficiaries in the disability program face enormous uncertainty, and that will only get worse between now and the end of 2016 if Congress fails to act.

I have been urging action on this issue for quite some time and have put forward a number of proposals to reform various aspects of the disability insurance program. Sadly, despite many calls for bipartisan cooperation, the administration has decided to remain silent, aside from the very simple and overly broad reallocation proposal. Nonetheless, the budget bill will, as I mentioned, provide an interfund reallocation that will add an additional 6 years of viability to the SSDI trust fund, preventing benefit cuts to disabled American workers and removing the current uncertainty.

That is not all. The bill would also put in place reforms to the SSDI Program, including some of the proposals I put forward earlier this year and reflecting a great deal of work between Chairman PAUL RYAN of the House Ways and Means Committee and Representative SAM JOHNSON, who chairs the Social Security Subcommittee, and me. Our work led to a number of features of the budget bill's treatment of SSDI that will help combat fraud in the program, make it easier for those who can and desire to return to work to be able to do so, and improve the overall administration and integrity of the disability program.

As I said before, this is not a budget bill that I would have written, and I think there are a number of other ways to improve the SSDI Program and Social Security more generally. However, nothing in the bill prevents us from continuing our work to develop and refine ideas and come up with additional improvements. Given the unsustainability of the Social Security System generally, we will have to continue to work on reforms to ensure these programs are available to future generations.

For now, we must be realistic. If we don't act now to prevent next year's benefit cuts, we will create a cliff that will occur right in the middle of an election campaign, when fundamental reforms to an entitlement program will be virtually impossible. Instead of a real debate over the future of this important program, we would see accusations lobbed back and forth about which side is responsible for the impending benefit cuts. Why would anyone want that? What good would that accomplish?

I would also like to remind my colleagues that the SSDI reforms in this budget bill represent the most significant changes to any Social Security program since 1983—more than three decades ago. That is nothing to sneeze at. So while critics may be right that these changes aren't the only types of long-term fixes the SSDI Program needs, they should not by any means be overlooked.

While we are on the subject of entitlements, I also want to point out that this budget bill will avert an unprecedented and large increase in Medicare Part B premiums for millions of elderly Americans. Under the law, there is a complicated interplay between the Social Security and Medicare Programs, where under what is called the ''hold harmless'' rule, the majority of Medicare beneficiaries cannot see a premium increase greater than their cost-of-living adjustment under Social Security. However, due to very low inflation, there will be no cost-of-living adjustments in Social Security in 2016, meaning there can be no premium increases for the majority of Medicare Part B participants. This means the full amount of what the Medicare system needs to collect in Part B premiums for next year will be charged to the nearly 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who do not have their premiums deducted from their Social Security payments.

Long story short, absent some kind of action, more than one-quarter of all Medicare Part B beneficiaries will see their premiums go up as much as 52 percent in 2016. This bill is important, with all its faults, and that is a great reason to vote for it. The legislation before us will prevent this increase, once again allowing Congress to avoid a contentious fight and preventing many seniors from becoming pawns in the unending liberal political gamesmanship and demagoguery. Most importantly it would do so in a responsible manner.

In addition to sparing our country some needless political fights over Social Security and Medicare, this bill will also repeal the employer autoenrollment requirement under the so-called Affordable Care Act. This provision, once implemented, would require large employers to automatically enroll new employees in health insurance plans, putting the burden on employees who prefer alternative plans to opt out. This provision, like many provisions of ObamaCare, never made sense and ultimately had few champions outside left-leaning think tanks that continually advocate for the government to ''nudge'' citizens into what some technocrats believe are preferred outcomes by removing certain nonpreferred choices.

So with this legislation we have bipartisan agreement on the need to remove at least part—and not an insignificant part—of ObamaCare. That is important. That is a good reason to vote for this. Obviously, we need to do more, but in my view any acknowledgement from my friends on the other side that any part of the President's health care law doesn't work is good progress. We haven't been able to get them to admit that in all these years of this failing program that is going on.

Finally, and for many most significantly, the bipartisan budget legislation would partially lift the budget caps established under the Budget Control Act both for domestic spending priorities and national defense. While very few people in Congress or elsewhere are big fans of the sequester threat, it did result in the only legitimate measurable spending cuts we have seen in quite some time. It is especially noteworthy, given the current administration's seemingly insatiable desire for more debt-fueled spending.

I sympathize with my colleagues who might be hesitant to lift those spending caps. However, I think we need to keep a few things in mind. First, the increase in the spending baseline under this bill is fully offset. That is important. While not all of the offsets are ideal, it is important that the spending cap relief will not result in increased debt or a tax hike. Let me repeat that. It is important to note that the spending cap relief will not result in increased debt or a tax hike. In that sense, the spending caps, even with the relief included in this bill, continue to be successful. Let me repeat that again. In that sense, the spending caps, even with the relief included in this bill, continue to be successful.

Second, lifting the spending caps will help us ensure our military is properly funded, although many of us would like to do more with the world in the turmoil it is in. Many Members of Congress, particularly on the Republican side, have expressed concern regarding the impact of the spending caps on our men and women in uniform and our overall military readiness. Make no mistake, these are dangerous times. American generals and military officials have made clear the spending levels under the Budget Control Act are not enough to meet the challenges our Nation faces on the world stage. Between the threat of ISIS in Iraq and

Syria, Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, and our newly prolonged troop presence in Afghanistan, now is not the time to underfund our military. We need to be sure our troops have all the resources they need to succeed.

As we know, President Obama has conditioned any budget-cap relief for defense on similar relief for other domestic spending programs. While I agree with many of my colleagues that this represents an odd set of priorities for a Commander in Chief—his No. 1 duty is to keep us safe—we should not let the President's refusal to do right by our military lead us to do the same.

In addition to criticisms of the substance of the bill, some of which I agree with, I have also heard complaints about the process that led us here. On that front as well, I share some of my colleagues' concerns. It certainly would have been better to move this legislation through regular order, including committee consideration and an open amendment process. I can't speak for anyone else, but I would assume that almost everyone involved would prefer to see legislation of this magnitude move through the House and Senate in a more deliberative process and a longer timetable. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, that is not what happened.

However, much of the time, effective government is about the art of doing what is doable. Though Republicans control both Chambers of Congress, there is a Democrat in the White House and enough Democrats in the Senate to sustain a filibuster. That is just a fact. We have to live with that. If we want to get anything done around here, we cannot demand perfection, nor can we operate in a zero-sum environment where every victory for the other side, however minor, is considered a loss for yours.

I get that there are some who sincerely and truthfully believe that compromise inherently means failure, and I know there are others with different agendas in mind that lead them to oppose anything resembling a concession to the other side, no matter what their side may get in return, but I have been around here long enough to know that such an approach does not often yield satisfactory results. If you are going to wait for that perfect bill to come around, my experience has taught me that you are likely to wait a very long time.

The budget bill before us is far from perfect. But, as the saying goes, the perfect should not be the enemy of the good. Under the circumstances, I believe this bill needs to pass so we can solve these problems, remove many dangerous obstacles directly in front of us, and give ourselves a chance to govern effectively without the cliffs, crises, and deadlines that all too frequently dictate what we do around here. For these reasons I plan to vote yes on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Having said that, I would like to compliment our majority leader. He has one of the toughest jobs ever on Capitol Hill.

I want to compliment the House as well. I have worked very closely with the distinguished new Speaker of the House. He is a tremendous human being. He does not reject the doable. He is a very strong conservative, one of the strongest people in either House of Congress, as is our majority leader. Both of them are doing what has to be done, and they deserve to have support in doing that. I compliment my friends on the other side for the successes they consider they have made.

On the other hand, I wish to pay tribute to our majority leader and the work that he is doing, trying to keep this fractious group of people together in so many ways and to get important legislation like this passed so that we are working on even more important legislation in the future.

I want to personally pay tribute to PAUL RYAN for his election to Speaker of the House. We have worked very closely together, as he has been chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. We have met almost weekly ever since he took over as chairman of that committee and I as chairman of the Finance Committee. He is one of the truly great people in the Congress, and I personally want to express my view that we are lucky to have him. We are lucky to have our distinguished majority leader as well.

I want to compliment my friends on the other side who have been working to do the art of the doable and, though imperfect, have worked with both of these leaders to get this done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I rise to discuss a very troubled part of the world, the Middle East, a region that is experiencing perhaps the greatest turmoil it has seen since the end of the First World War.

After more than 4 years, with over 200,000 people killed and 4 million forced to flee, Syria's civil war and humanitarian crisis continues to drag on. President Assad still clings to power, and he clings to that power with the help of Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah.

Opposition groups remain divided, and they are weak, while terrorist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda's al-Nusra Front exploit the chaos. ISIS also exploits sectarian tensions across the border in Iraq, where its fighters battle Iraqi and Kurdish forces, as well as Shia militias, for control of large parts of the country. And, according to press reports, a Saudi-led coalition meanwhile battles Iranian-backed Houthi rebels for control of Yemen, home to Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

In addition to its support for Assad and terror and proxy groups, Iran continues other hostile activities, such as testing ballistic missiles, attacking in cyberspace, and violating human rights. I think this is an important thing to remember, as the expectations of the Iranian joint nuclear agreement—this was not a panacea for all of the things that Iran is doing. As a matter of fact, it specifically was a negotiation to prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapon, which I think has been achieved for at least 10, if not 15 to 25, years.

Then, to add to the complications regarding Iran, there are still four Americans detained or missing. One that is missing, of course, is our Floridian Bob Levinson, a former FBI agent.

These are tough challenges that reflect a changing balance of power, and we have already taken important steps to meet them. I am talking about steps other than the Iranian nuclear joint agreement. American and coalition air strikes against ISIS in both Iraq and Syria and the training and equipping of Iraqi and Kurdish forces in Iraq have blunted ISIS's momentum, and we are starting to see some reverses there. As the Secretary of Defense just a few days ago told our Armed Services Committee, we are changing our approach to supporting the moderate Syrian opposition and equipping those forces already on the battlefield against ISIS. It is much more difficult in Syria, and we have not had a lot of success in training and equipping those so-called moderate forces in Syria.

So now the changing strategy is that the United States is focusing on what the Secretary of Defense referred to as the ''three R's''—the ISIS strongholds of Raqqa in Syria and Ramadi in Iraq and then targeted raids in both to build battlefield momentum. We saw such a raid that tragically took the life of a senior enlisted Special Forces Special Operations sergeant the other day, but that raid was particularly successful in that it rescued 70 people who were about to be executed the next morning. In those raids, the three R's the Secretary mentioned are underway.

Turmoil and violence in the Middle East may seem distant to everyday Americans, but the consequences extend far beyond those regions. We see it daily on our television screens. Tens of thousands of Syrians have sought refuge in Europe. ISIS, we are reminded, uses the Internet and social media to spread its propaganda and radicalizes young people far from Iraq and Syria and even some in the United States.

So in this whole perplexing problem, as we try to get our arms around it, meeting these challenges, protecting our national security and interests, including those of our allies like Israel, is going to take strong and patient leadership on the part of our country.

I wanted to share these thoughts with the Senate.

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.

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

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

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

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

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, it is not always easy to get a majority of Congress to agree on something. But when it comes to the Export-Import Bank, the numbers are now clear. Three days ago, the House easily passed a bill to reauthorize this critically important program, 313 to 118. Months before that, here in the Senate, we approved reauthorization 64 to 29. That is a supermajority in both Chambers, so no one should think we should not be able to pass this. But right now, the will of a bipartisan supermajority is being blocked by Senate Republican leaders who have so far refused us the opportunity to act. This lack of movement on this critical issue is unacceptable, and people across the country are not going to stand for it.

Every single day that passes without this program in operation, America's businesses—most of them small businesses—are at a disadvantage. That is because one of the main goals of the Export-Import Bank is to level the playing field for American companies to sell their goods overseas.

There are 60 other export credit agencies worldwide, including several in China. While companies around the world are enjoying the support of their own lending programs, this Congress allowed one of its best tools to grow the economy to go dark. That is now hurting our economy at a time when we should be continuing to work to build and grow and create jobs.

For months, I have heard from businesses in my home State of Washington that they are being held back by partisan grandstanding nearly 3,000 miles away. Businesses in Washington State make great products, and they want to ship what they make overseas and continue to build their business at home, and Congress ought to be a good partner in that effort.

This isn't a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. This is about supporting American companies that are creating local jobs, adding to our economy, and helping our economy grow from the middle out. It is why the Export-Import Bank has had the support of this body now for more than 80 years.

I urge Republican leaders to stop allowing extreme members of their party—a minority of their party—to hold our economy hostage. It is time to renew the Export-Import Bank on behalf of American businesses, American workers, and American families.

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.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 597

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, once again we are down on the floor of the Senate, begging, pleading, and trying to get anyone to listen to our pleas to once again open the Export-Import Bank. As we look at the consequences of having closed—for the last 3½ months—the Export-Import Bank, it becomes readily apparent every day and every hour that we are losing American manufacturing jobs and we are stressing small businesses that have a strong history of reliance on the Export-Import Bank, and that we are, in fact, not only not helping American business, but we are hurting American manufacturers in this country.

Why would we do that? Why would we wait one more day? Before the charter expired on the Export-Import Bank, we were told that the reason why—even though we had 64 votes in the Senate for the Ex-Im Bank—we couldn't possibly get this done was because the House of Representatives would not take this up. The House of Representatives would not move on the Ex-Im Bank, and, in fact, if it came to the floor, it was doubtful that we would actually get a vote that was favorable to the Ex-Im Bank. Well, a funny thing happened when we looked at the reality of where the House of Representatives is today.

When we counted the votes this week for the Ex-Im Bank, guess what; over 70 percent of the House of Representatives voted to reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank. And probably even more remarkable, a majority of Republicans in the House of Representatives voted to reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank.

Now, you might wonder: What changed? What happened? How could we possibly have been so wrong?

Well, let me tell you that no one in their right mind in the business community ever believed that we would let the Ex-Im Bank charter expire, and so everybody assumed that we would do the right thing here—that the charter would go on and that this would happen. Guess what happened. When we shut down the Ex-Im Bank and people weren't able to approach the Ex-Im Bank to get credit guarantees to do the work of manufacturing and exporting, all of a sudden, those small business men and women and those employees of those institutions picked up their phones and started calling their Members of Congress. When they called their Members of Congress, that is when we saw action. That is when we saw things moving in a direction that actually supports American manufacturing.

This is an institution that has been reauthorized many times. This is an institution that has been in existence for decades. It is an institution that is in competition with dozens—in fact, about 80 or 90 export credit agencies are run by other countries—of credit agencies every day. They are competing against those same agencies.

What we have now is unilateral disarmament. Imagine this: American manufacturers—longstanding manufacturers—are actually considering moving their manufacturing facilities offshore so that they can compete for this export business. We can't wait another minute. We can't wait another day. We can't wait for another opportunity to present itself. We have to do this now.

I understand and know that I am new to this institution. But most times when you have supermajorities in support of something, it shouldn't be that hard to get it done, and we know the President will sign it.

I am always a little shocked when people say: Well, you know, we still can't get that done because we need to find a vehicle. And I think: Well, what does that mean when you actually introduce a bill and the bill itself is sitting at the desk and there is an opportunity not to try to attach something so that somebody can hide their vote or not to try to attach it to something because you might be able to leverage another idea on there but to actually move this bill forward?

We don't need to look for a vehicle. We don't need to look for another opportunity to advance the Ex-Im Bank. Guess what we need. We need to bring this bill to the floor right now. We need to ask our colleagues to engage in what we should be doing here, which is debate and legislation on the floor of the Senate. We need to resolve this issue and wrap it up.

When we started this journey, we were told the Ex-Im Bank was in need of reform. In a very bipartisan way, my office sat down with Senator KIRK's office, joined by Senator BLUNT, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, Senator MANCHIN, and Senator DONNELLY and said: What do we need to do to make the Ex-Im Bank better? What do we need to do to make the Ex-Im Bank more accessible and more accountable?

We negotiated something that is rare here, which is a bipartisan bill, the Kirk-Heitkamp Ex-Im Bank reauthorization bill. That bill has been the vehicle and the kind of blueprint for how we are going to move forward. In fact, when the House did their discharge petition, they discharged the bill that is, in fact, the Kirk-Heitkamp bill. There is nothing in there where we have to balance this or somehow reconcile a House version and a Senate version.

We can get this done today. We can move this forward. We can send the message to the rest of the world that the Ex-Im Bank and American manufacturers are open for business. It makes absolutely no sense for us to wait any longer and in any way delay the movement of the Ex-Im Bank.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from North Dakota for her continued leadership on this issue and for pointing out to our colleagues that we really could be just a short step away from reauthorizing a very important business tool for small businesses, manufacturers, and the agriculture industry by making sure that we reauthorize the Export-Import Bank.

What my colleague is referring to is that it would take just a short agreement here this morning to go ahead and take the House-passed bill that, as she explained, was passed after colleagues got a discharge petition, but it is the same as the language that we have had over here in the Senate.

The process to move forward on this reauthorization would be very simple. I am sure Senator HEITKAMP pointed out before I got to the floor that a filibuster-proof majority of our colleagues approve of this legislation. I think 67 of our colleagues approve of this, and now we have this tremendous support—313 votes—from the House of Representatives.

As Senator HEITKAMP said, we are just a short step away. Why are we so emphatic about that? Why wait? When we look at what has just come out, the financial numbers show a 1.5 percent job growth. I think it is something like that. It shows very anemic numbers for our economy.

I don't know about anybody else, but since we are a very cyclical economy in the Northwest, or we have been for various periods of time in our history, my constituents expect me to get up every day and fight for things that will improve the economic opportunity of America, and that is what we are doing here.

When we look at 2014, it supported $27.4 billion in U.S. exports and 164,000 jobs. My colleagues know how much the economy outside of the United States is growing. So we want to sell them U.S.-made products. I think it is one of the biggest economic opportunities in front of us. I believe in what we make.

I complained because I think exotic financial instruments got us into trouble, and I want to be known for something in the United States of America besides exotic financial instruments. I like that we make airplanes and automobiles.

The Senator from Michigan has joined us on the floor. I like that we make great agriculture products from North Dakota that are then exported around the globe.

I visited Bob's Red Mill in Oregon. That company makes a great variety of various grain products that are shipped all over the world. They use the Export-Import Bank as a way to gain access because not every bank in Oregon is brave enough to take on a deal in Tanzania or some other country. Why? Because the banking doesn't exist there. So the Oregon bank says: OK, I will bank you. I will get Bob's Red Mill sold in all of those places, but I want some credit insurance. I want to be sure that you have an insurance program in case something goes wrong, and that is where the Export-Import Bank comes in.

In 2014, we had $27.4 billion in U.S. exports and 164,000 jobs.

Where have we been since 2008? It has helped us with 1.4 million jobs. Our economic information shows that we have had a somewhat anemic quarter in our country. I would say it is interesting that it did coincide with this issue of the Export-Import Bank, and this whole malaise here of not getting work done probably didn't make anybody happy in business, and there is the fact that a lot of doubt and uncertainty plagued us.

So if you want to help the economy, let's just agree this morning that the Export-Import Bank is a great tool to help U.S. manufacturers grow their economic opportunities outside of the United States. Let's just agree this morning and get this done, and we will be moving ahead on this important issue.

Now, some people are saying: Let's just wait. I am saying: What we are risking by waiting is more job loss, more small businesses at risk, and the U.S. economy at risk. There are more than $9 billion in pending Export-Import Bank deals on the table—$9 billion. That can't get done because the Bank doesn't exist anymore. If you just think about that, those are U.S. companies that have economic activity to do around the globe to help us grow the U.S. economy at a time when we have been anemic. If no one objects to my motion, we would restart that engine today.

Ms. STABENOW. Will the Senator from Washington yield for one quick question?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes.

Ms. STABENOW. Was that $9 billion?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes.

Ms. STABENOW. We have economic activity that is hanging in the balance, and because of this inactivity, we are losing $9 billion every single day?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes.

Ms. STABENOW. That is billion with a ''B''?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes. That's the dollar value of deals for U.S. companies being held up that could be moved forward.

Ms. STABENOW. Shocking.

Ms. CANTWELL. So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 282, H.R. 597, the Export-Import Bank Reform and Reauthorization Act, and that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would remind my colleagues that we voted on the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank already. There are numerous objections on this side of the aisle; therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I hope our colleagues realize that the economic activity we could be seeing today could help us in everything we are doing moving forward.

While the Senate has passed the Export-Import Bank, it is part of a larger transportation package that this Senator hopes will actually get done. But there are many people who don't want to see the Export-Import Bank reauthorized. In fact, some of our colleagues suggested in the recent budget deal that they put a 1-year provision in for the Export-Import Bank. I don't support a 1-year provision. We support a 5-year reauthorization, and we want to get to that now. We do not want to see more jobs shifted overseas as we continue to have this debate, because that is what is happening. We are giving economic opportunity to other countries to take advantage of our businesses.

I hope we will take this up and move it forward so that we can get economic opportunities back in front of the American people at a time when we most critically need to.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Will my friend from Washington yield for a question?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes.

Ms. HEITKAMP. We have now had this experience of 3½ months—really 4 months because we are at the end of October—with no opportunity for a small business to actually look at how they could grow that small business. We know we have lost jobs all across America in States where they are economically challenged. Opportunities are there. We know that the large institutions, the large manufacturers in our country, some of which are in Senator CANTWELL's State, rely on this small business chain of businesses, and those are the businesses that have been hit the hardest.

If we wait, again, for another promise that we are going to put it on another vehicle—how much more inactivity, how much more disruption to these small businesses can these small supply chains have given their economics? Isn't it true that a small business is much more challenged by a day's delay in opening up the Ex-Im Bank than a large corporation?

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota for her question because she is right on the pinpoint of what this issue is about. It is really about small businesses that don't have huge capital reserves to set aside money so that they can guarantee the sale of their product.

As I said, there is $9 billion of pending issues before the Bank right now, and many of those are small businesses. So those small businesses could

be opening up economic opportunity that might grow their revenue significantly and allow them to create more jobs. When we think about the motion I just made, if no one had objected, that $9 billion would have been free to go out into the economy, those deals would have gotten done, those small businesses would have been empowered, and we would be on our way to winning in what is an export economy.

Why is it an export economy? Because the growing middle class around the globe is going to double in the next several years. Ninety-five percent of consumers live outside the United States of America. So we want to win economic opportunity, and we have to be able to sell outside the United States of America. It is hard because not every place in the United States of America is so developed that their banking system is there to do deals.

This great company in my State, in Spokane, SCAFCO—two of my colleagues here—the ranking member on the Agriculture Committee, from Michigan, and my colleague from North Dakota, Senator HEITKAMP—are very active in agriculture issues and will get it. He is basically making and selling aluminum grain containers, silos, all over the world. That is his business. He has expanded it, built new buildings, and he has an incredible workforce.

As the rest of the world—particularly in Africa and South America but even in Asia—starts to grow their agricultural economies, guess what they need. They need agriculture equipment. I am sure the Senator from Michigan understands that because she has some of those manufacturers. So those manufacturers have a huge opportunity to sell U.S.-made agriculture equipment.

I like to say: Guess what we are still No. 1 at in the United States of America? Agriculture. We know how to do agriculture. Guess what the next big opportunity is around the globe? Feeding the growing middle class around the globe. It is one of the biggest economic opportunities. But we have to be able to sell them things. We have to be able to sell them Michigan-manufactured products. We have to be able to sell them agriculture products that my colleague from North Dakota makes. SCAFCO needs to be able to sell their grain silos, but they can't because people want to hold up this process, all to put a trophy on someone's desk saying they did the bidding of a very conservative think tank that—the last I know, I don't think they created any of these manufacturing jobs in America.

I hope my colleagues will help us continue this debate because I know there are some who will say: Well, we passed this bill, and it is going to get done someday. Someday, really? Because everybody said we will get it on the Transportation bill in April. OK. That didn't happen. They did an extension. It didn't happen. We will get it on the Transportation bill in July. The Bank won't expire. Guess what. It expired. Now they are telling us to wait again, and we do not want to wait on creating more U.S. jobs.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, if I might just wrap up one statement. I know my colleague from New Jersey is here.

I want to thank my colleagues who are such great leaders on the Export-Import Bank, the Senator from Washington State, Ms. CANTWELL, and Senator HEITKAMP from North Dakota.

I just want to put on the record that 100 businesses in Michigan alone were assisted in $1 billion in exports, which meant jobs in Michigan last year. We can't wait. We need those jobs. Our businesses need the support. We need to get this done now.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator SESSIONS be recognized, and that following Senator SESSIONS, Senator DAINES be recognized.

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

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF SUPERSTORM SANDY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise on the third anniversary of Superstorm Sandy to reflect on where we have been, how far we have come, and what is still left to accomplish, and to praise the people of New Jersey who have remained New Jersey proud and New Jersey strong during this long, 3-year recovery process. But, most importantly, it is to remind everyone in this Chamber and all around the Nation that the job isn't done yet. Many people believe that this is over and that everyone just moved on, but I know that for many Sandy victims, that is not the case.

In these last few years, we have made a lot of progress. Billions of dollars of Federal funds have flowed to the State and were used to rebuild bridges, roads, boardwalks, help businesses reopen, and keep people working. Those fortunate enough to navigate the maze of Federal and State programs have rebuilt their homes stronger and more resilient than before. The Jersey Shore has enjoyed a resurgence in tourism which fueled the local and State economy, creating jobs and supplementing the recovery.

But while the beaches have been replenished and the boardwalks have been rebuilt, 3 years later, for far too many working-class New Jerseyans, the recovery not only is incomplete, in some cases it has still barely begun. There are still parts of the State that remain neglected. There are still families who haven't stepped foot in their homes for 3 years. They may not have a reality TV crew following them around, but they are the real New Jerseyans, the salt of the Earth, and the backbone of our great State. They are the unsung, hard-working New Jersey families who suffered loss and pulled themselves back up and kept going, one foot in front of the other, every day, not only because they wanted to but because they had no other choice.

For these families, even after the storm passed, the clouds parted, and the Sun came out, a different kind of disaster—this time manmade—was looming on the horizon. They went from filling up sandbags to fend off the Atlantic Ocean to filling out endless forms to fend off insurance companies and government officials. They had endured the fight against Mother Nature but were simply no match against Uncle Sam.

Doug Quinn, a constituent of mine who served as a marine—and once you are a marine, you are always a marine, so I won't say former marine but who served as a marine—and who served his country with distinction, encapsulated this sentiment perfectly in a letter he wrote to me. In it he said:

> I was in my home the night the floodwaters rushed in. I waded out through waist deep water at midnight to escape while electrical transformers exploded and houses burned down. That was the easy part. It's the year-and-a-half since then that has been the tragedy.

Let me repeat that. He says the flood was the easy part. This is a picture of him in that flood and the consequences to his home afterward.

Doug had maximum coverage of $250,000 and received estimates of damages in excess of that—$254,000—but he received only $90,000, just over a third of what he needed to rebuild. And Doug was not alone.

Chuck Appleby is another one of the thousands of New Jerseyans who has had to engage in this fight for the past 3 years to just get what he deserves. Like many others, Chuck, who joined us recently, was lowballed by FEMA and his insurance company, which somehow claimed it wasn't Sandy that severely cracked the foundation of his home. According to them, it was all a preexisting condition that just happened to magically appear the day after Sandy hit. Imagine that. He played by the rules, he faithfully paid for flood insurance for 10, 20, or 30 years, never had a claim until Sandy, came only to find out it wasn't enough.

People assumed that since they have insurance, they would be made whole and that the resources necessary to rebuild would be there. But after surviving the wind, the rain, and the storm surge, he woke up to another nightmare: A flood insurance claim process that threatened to take what the storm had not.

As much as I wish it were an aberration, Chuck's story is not unique. Thousands of New Jerseyans were lowballed by their insurance company, stunting the recovery and leaving families out of their homes.

Fortunately, I, along with Senators BOOKER, SCHUMER, and GILLIBRAND, was

able to convince FEMA to allow all Sandy survivors to have their claims reviewed, which will result in tens of millions of dollars going to the recovery. Chuck is one of those people who opted into the process, and FEMA recently admitted its mistake and acknowledged he was shorted at least $50,000.

Dawn and Sonny Markosky are another example. They stood next to me in Belmar this week after having received a check for $56,000 from FEMA's claims review money that they should have received the first time around. Sonny served our country as a retired Army reservist and a police chief. He is now only receiving the justice he deserved and the chance to rebuild. And even Dawn's mom, who was lowballed $17,000 on her house, got an additional $17,000 from the claims review—money she had been owed all along. And it goes on and on.

It shouldn't have taken this long, nor should the path have been this winding and difficult, but these successes illustrate the incredible resiliency of all the Sandy survivors who wouldn't give up no matter how dark things appeared on the morning of October 30, 2012, and throughout the 3 years that followed.

I will continue to fight to help everyone recover. I will continue to be a voice for everyone in the Sandy community as we seek to repair what happened and make our communities more resilient in the future and more capable of dealing with storms like Sandy, which left incredible devastation in its wake.

As we take a moment to think back on that day 3 years ago today, when the clouds finally parted and the ominous seas receded, the destruction Sandy left is almost unimaginable. We remember images like these of Seaside Heights. In fact, I actually took this photo while touring the damage with Vice President BIDEN.

This is a photo of Hoboken, in northern New Jersey, where street after street looked like a series of canals. Thousands of families lost everything and suddenly found themselves homeless. Billions upon billions of dollars' worth of property, roads, bridges, trains, schools, fire stations, and hospitals were in ruins. Most tragically of all, dozens of people lost their lives. It was a dark time for our entire State, no doubt about it, but, as the proverb goes, the darkest hour is just before the dawn.

Today, as we remember that dark hour, we commit ourselves to completing the job and entering the dawn of a new era in the long journey to rebuild and recover not just to where we were before the storm but to a place where we are stronger, more resilient, and more prepared. I have no doubt we will get there together, not just through our efforts here in Washington but because of the indefatigable, dogged character of the people of New Jersey. We showed that character in the immediate aftermath when, despite the level of devastation, New Jerseyans were true to their reputation of being New Jersey strong. Communities united, families took in neighbors who lost their homes, and we all came together and worked together. It was a testament to the fundamental nature of community action, community involvement, and to what real community service is all about.

After seeing the impact of the damage that day, I came back to Washington with a heavy heart but a determined mind, solely focused on representing the countless victims of our State who had their lives turned upside down. They didn't ask for handouts; they asked for help and kept moving forward.

I remember working closely with my late colleague and dear friend Senator Frank Lautenberg, and we made it our No. 1 priority to bring every available resource back to the victims of our State. I continued to work with Senator BOOKER, who jumped head first into the fight from the moment he entered the Senate to do the same. And to be clear, we had to fight from the very beginning. We had to fight a tea party-inspired opposition that was blocking the relief we so desperately needed. We had Senators and Congressmen who said no to disaster victims in New Jersey with one side of their mouths, while asking for Federal funds when a disaster struck their State on the other side. Ultimately, we overcame the calloused and ideological attacks and secured more than $50 billion for the entire region. These Federal funds have been absolutely critical to our recovery, but mistakes by government agencies at the Federal and State level hindered our progress.

On this third anniversary of Sandy, I don't come to the floor to point fingers at FEMA or the State or to play a blame game. This is not about politics or scapegoating; it is about continuing to do all we can to deliver for the people in every disaster who still need help, and that requires cooperation and teamwork from all levels of government.

One example of bipartisanship was our effort to stop the draconian flood insurance rate increases that Sandy survivors were facing after the storm. These families were being confronted with skyrocketing premiums which threatened to take what the storm had not. In response, I led a broad, bipartisan coalition from all parts of the country and passed legislation to stop these egregious hikes and restore fairness in the flood insurance program.

A recovery requires more efforts like this. It requires the State to be transparent and open to correcting any inefficiency that causes delays and for every Federal Government agency to step up, step in, and make corrections when needed. It requires strong oversight and technical assistance from Federal agencies, such as Housing and Urban Development.

As we have seen in the past, this cooperation can result in significant improvement. For example, when I discovered that homeowners were being needlessly delayed from rebuilding because the State chose to conduct historical and environmental reviews at the end of the application process—therefore, further delay—I worked with then-Secretary Donovan to clarify to the State that they could conduct these reviews at the front end of the application process, allowing victims to begin rebuilding sooner without jeopardizing their funding. This was a perfect example of eliminating unnecessary obstacles and inefficiencies, and I was proud to be in charge.

We always need to find more opportunities like this. We need HUD to continue to work with the States to discover these inefficiencies and to get people fully restored. It is our responsibility to make the system and the process work for them.

When I look at two of these families—a marine serving with distinction for his country and a former Army reservist and police chief—their country didn't ultimately respond to them the way it should have. It made life more difficult when, in fact, it should have been the other way around.

We cannot allow partisan and geographical politics into our Nation's disaster response priorities. There is a reason we call our Nation the United States of America. I have cast my vote time and time again for flooding in Mississippi, wildfires out West, Hurricane Katrina—the list goes on and on—because I believe in this we are one. No matter where a disaster occurs, no matter if it is across the street or across the country, we come together as a nation ready to go.

With that, Mr. President, I look forward to our continuing effort to get everyone in New Jersey back in their homes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of the Senator from New Jersey, and no doubt they faced tremendous challenges.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator DAINES be recognized for up to 2 minutes for remarks and that I then be recognized for the 30 minutes I have noticed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

REMEMBERING CHARLES ''CHARLIE'' DECRANE

Mr. DAINES. Today I rise to honor Montana World War II veteran Charlie DeCrane, a member of the Crow Tribe, who passed away earlier this week in Billings, MT.

Charlie was an incredible person. He was hard-working and dedicated to serving his country as well as his tribe. He was a quiet and gentle spirit, and that was apparent to anyone who came into contact with him. Charlie was a man of principle and honor.

I had the privilege of spending time with Charlie in Washington, DC, when

he accompanied me as my one special guest to the State of the Union Address. I was able to witness firsthand truly what an amazing man he was. Our walk from my office to the House Chamber is one I will never forget. To personally know a man who fought so courageously in World War II was a great honor. Many freedoms we have today stem from the sacrifices made by Charlie and men and women like him. His accomplishments in life will continue to live on.

It is my hope that through Charlie's life we will remember how important our veterans are and how much respect and care they deserve.

His passing is one that will affect many, and not just his close family and friends. Cindy and I will be keeping Charlie's family and the entire Crow community in our thoughts and prayers in this most difficult time.

I thank my colleague from Alabama for allowing me to speak.

I yield back to Senator SESSIONS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, the budget passage that will soon be before us essentially does a number of things. One of the more basic is that it spends a lot more money than the current law allows, and it is done in a way that the new Speaker of the House said ''stinks'' a day or so ago.

Once again a massive deal is crafted behind closed doors and is being rushed through Congress under the threat of panic. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 serves as a reminder that the most important and controversial legislation is still being drafted in secret with little or no input from the Members of this Chamber. We have been cut out of the process. No amendments will be allowed to this massive package, and the cloture vote will be filed immediately after the bill is placed on the floor in order to force a vote, limiting the debate to the shortest possible time under the rules of the Senate. Those who question, object, and want more time, are accused of wanting to shut down the government and disrupt the machinery of the government. They say that President Obama will accuse us of shutting down the government. They say that we should cower under our debt at this great charge he might make against us. As if insisting that we have a right to read and study a bill of this magnitude is out of order.

It should not be run through the Congress in the shortest possible time. They can bluster and they can huff and puff, but I say the arguments that I am going to make in opposition to this deal are bricks of truth, and this house will not fall down. They will not be able to sustain a charge that somehow we have bad motives by objecting to what is set about here.

At its core, this deal with President Obama provides what the President has demanded throughout.

First, it lifts the Federal spending caps for 2 years, including a $40 billion increase in spending on the Federal bureaucracy.

A ''yes'' vote affirms that this spending level—the new high spending level—is correct and that we need to spend this much money.

Second, it erases the current debt limit we have that stops spending or borrowing money above a certain amount. It erases that debt limit until March of 2017, allowing for approximately $1.5 trillion more to be added to our debt of $18.4 trillion, and it could be more than that.

The text states that at that date the debt ceiling shall be raised to whatever level of public debt is at that time. Unlike in the past, when we had a debt ceiling, it was a dollar amount, and we would raise it and approve a certain dollar amount. Suspending this limit is a very unwise process. It was done last time and should not be done in the future—raise it to a date in the future and indicate, in effect, that as much debt as Congress or the President wants to add in that time is approved. We don't even know the amount. This is a covert and clever way of raising the debt ceiling without having to engage in a real discussion of Washington's runaway spending problem. It ensures that no further serious conversation about our debt course or any corresponding action to alter it will take place.

The debt ceiling has always been a pivotal point. It is the classic case of the parents calling the young man home from college. He has overrun his credit card, and they have a little prayer meeting about this spending and demand certain reforms in the young man's spending habits if he wants to continue to have a credit card.

Congress has the debt ceiling power to call in the President and say: We are on an unsustainable debt course. We need to have reform.

That was done in 2011, and that is why we have these numbers in place today that contain spending but are being violated by this act.

Finally, the deal submits the unacceptable precedent that every dollar of increased defense spending should be met with a dollar of increased nondefense spending. How silly is this? What possible logical argument can you make for this? This is upside down.

If an emergency requires more defense spending—as I think it does—we could dispute the amount, but we have had the Russians in Crimea since 2011, Russians in Syria, refugees by the millions in the Middle East, ISIS threatening the very government of Iraq, Afghanistan is still a problem, Yemen, Libya, and so forth. All of these have happened in some part due to the inconsistent, incoherent policies of this President. It has happened. We have a lot of problems out there. We need some more money for defense.

Common sense says we should seek to identify reductions and not demand spending hikes because we have to spend more money on defense. I think this is a deeply troubling problem that we have.

Raising these budget caps, as we go forward now, removes the moral authority of Senators who vote yes and approve this process and reduces our ability to talk with integrity to our friends and voters back home to whom we promised reform and more principled spending decisions in Washington.

How can we with a straight face say this is a good policy? If we approve these higher spending levels, those who vote for it are prohibited in many ways from objecting to the levels in the future. If they find some waste and cut it, it does not mean we will reduce spending. Instead, the Congress, lacking the moral authority to decrease spending below these levels, will spend that money up to the higher levels in the future. It is a big decision and I think it is wrong.

Furthermore, I would note, as a member of the Armed Service Committee, my concern about defense, but the defense account takes a larger percentage of the budget than does the nondefense account for discretionary spending. By increasing defense and nondefense by the same amount, the nondefense category actually receives a larger percentage of the increase, all to pay for more bureaucracy, employees, and government in Washington.

So let's be clear. The spending caps in law today were placed in as a part of the 2011 Budget Control Act agreement which lifted the debt ceiling by $2.1 trillion. We objected. Congress objected to raising the debt ceiling without reform. Senator MCCONNELL stood firm, and the Budget Control Act of 2011 is the reform that came. Then we raised the debt ceiling. We approved a raising of the debt limit on the credit card only after we got a containment of the growth in spending. So supporters are calling this bill sequester relief as if that is OK, but sequester and the Budget Control Act were just simply limits on spending. That is what they were.

The fact is, we have never followed the sequester. In 2013 the Congress passed the Ryan-Murray budget deal. That deal raised the discretionary spending $64 billion over 2 years. Now that deal has ended, and instead of returning to regular order and agreed-upon limits, the President wants us to yet again break the Budget Control Act and raise spending an extra $80 billion over the next 2 years.

This deal will obliterate future spending restraint, it does do so, destroying our credibility to achieve meaningful spending reform. The Budget Control Act represented a bipartisan commitment to cap spending, limiting it at a fixed amount. It is a good, responsible policy. In fact, I thought it did not limit the spending enough. It was passed by a Republican House, a Democratic Senate, and signed into law by President Obama. He agreed to these limits.

This deal shatters that commitment by spending $80 billion more than we

promised over the next 2 years. It is problematic because it is filled with gimmicks. They contend, not correctly, that all of this new spending is offset by new revenues or cuts in spending somewhere else. However, I would suggest and would show here that is not accurate. These are a lot of gimmicks we have here.

Secondly, if we have wasteful spending, and some of this is wasteful spending, it needs to be eliminated. But the spending cuts ought to be used to reduce the deficit, which was over $400 billion last year, will be $400 billion next year, and will double in the next 10 years according to the Congressional Budget Office. We need to be using this wasteful spending—these low-hanging-fruit problems—to reduce government expenditures and reduce our deficits, not using that opportunity to reduce deficits to instead spend more money somewhere else.

So they offset. It appears the deal is built on the same principles as the deal in 2013. It exchanges instant increases in Federal spending for distant promised savings in the future, as much as 20 years, or two decades down the road, many of which are unlikely to occur. It funds increased spending through increased revenues, violating a core budget principle by extracting evermore money from Americans to expand an already-too-large Federal bureaucracy.

We need to be reducing the bureaucracy, not adding to it.

The deal trades ending spending limits for the promise of new spending limits 10 years from now. We just agreed to limits in 2011. They promised that we are going to have new spending limits in the future. My time in the Senate says promises about the future seldom come to pass in this body.

We need to fight tenaciously to hold the spending limits that are in law today and not exchange those limits for a promised limit in the future. This is how a country goes broke. We are heading to financial catastrophe on the path we are going.

The deal also uses a common gimmick where alleged savings in an entitlement program—a trust fund—are used to boost unrelated spending in the general discretionary budget. This is a bigger issue than most of our colleagues understand. Any savings found in the entitlement programs faced with insolvency must be used to shore up those programs, those trust funds, not for spending somewhere else. Yet this deal claims illusory savings from disability insurance, part of Social Security. That is the disability trust fund. There are two trust funds of Social Security, disability and a retirement fund. Every American pays into both from their paycheck. So 2.2 percent of your paycheck goes to fund the disability fund, the rest of it funds your Social Security, and then there is additional money that comes out of your paycheck to fund the Medicare trust fund.

So this deal claims illusory savings from the disability insurance and increased pension insurance fees in order to boost bureaucratic budgets. Perhaps even worse, the deal attempts to stave off the shortfall in the fraud-ridden Social Security Disability Insurance Program that has a host of problems. We all know and have known for years it is coming into default by the end of 2016. How does it get around the default in the disability program? It raids the Social Security retirement fund to pay for the deficient, ineffective, badly managed disability fund.

It weakens Social Security. We need to be looking at ways to strengthen Social Security, not raid it and weaken it. Some $150 billion in funds will be siphoned off from Americans' payroll retirement contributions and taken out of the Social Security fund and transferred to the disability program—four-tenths of a percent each year of the income of an American.

This will weaken the Social Security trust fund by $150 billion while politicians all over America continue to promise that what they are doing is acting to strengthen the Social Security trust fund. We have seen the disability trust fund heading for disaster for several years now. Now, ''60 Minutes'' and program after program have shown abuse, fraud, and total mismanagement in Social Security Disability. It has not been reformed. It needs fundamental reform. They made a few changes in the program that I am sure are worthwhile, but none that come close to putting the disability fund on a long-term sound basis. It is basically a gimmick to get past the impending insolvency crisis, to kick it down the road, and then create some money to justify the new spending above the spending limits imposed by the Budget Control Act.

People want to end wasteful Washington spending. The people want that. Lifting the budget caps and raising the debt ceiling through 2017 only ensures that our ineffective bureaucracy continues its wasteful ways, while momentum in Washington for deficit reduction stalls out. That is what is happening. We are losing momentum. Several years ago we were in serious discussions about the dangers we faced financially. That conversation has been eroded. It eliminates a powerful opportunity, the debt ceiling, to advance the case for fiscal discipline.

What about Social Security? The deal uses the same fraudulent accounting methods our Democratic colleagues used to pass ObamaCare on a straight party-line vote. We just received a letter from the Social Security Actuary, Mr. Goss, who stated that the ''enactment of these provisions [in this proposed legislation] is projected to reduce the long-range 75-year OASDI [the combined Social Security trust funds] actuarial deficit by 0.04 percent of taxable payroll,'' which is a lot. However, the savings going in are being counted as both, creating money that can be spent to increase new spending, and also creating money that can be spent to shore up the retirement insurance program. This is an important concept, colleagues. The funds are used to pay for more government spending outside the retirement and disability funds.

Even worse than the promise of saving Social Security, which has been overstated as major entitlement reform, the savings are being counted as money that can be spent on the discretionary account. It basically provides cover to extend the debt of the United States.

This is the very same tool the Democrats used to pass the ObamaCare bill, amazingly, and to produce a phony score so the President could say that every penny of it is paid for—saying it would not increase the deficit. Our colleagues used the same tactic in this deal by counting the funds they cut from your retirement account as being able to fund new discretionary spending.

During the Obamacare debate, the Democrats reduced payments to hospitals and doctors and others, but Medicare is a trust fund. They claimed some $500 billion would be used both to extend the life of Medicare and to pay for the new ObamaCare spending. They openly and directly claimed that these savings could be used for two different things—$500 billion. It was one of the largest, I contend, misrepresentations of finances—fraudulent activities—in the history of the world.

You cannot have money that is used for two different purposes. Mr. Elmendorf, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, has said: You cannot spend the same dollar twice, even though the conventions of accounting might suggest otherwise. So they used an accounting gimmick to make it appear that this money was available to strengthen Medicare and fund ObamaCare. It is the same money.

We accepted that kind of improper financial analysis. The bill was passed on the promise it would not add to the debt. It certainly did. The same accounting gimmick lies at the heart of the proposed legislation to waive Federal spending caps and to raise the debt limit by at least $1.5 trillion.

Promoters of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 boast of long-term future savings to Social Security disability, but those savings need to extend the life of the disability program, which is nearing insolvency. Instead, they are spent on new discretionary spending, basically adding to the debt. This is not entitlement reform, this is an accounting gimmick. Any savings to be captured in the future from disability insurance cannot be spent today on bureaucratic budgets for Federal departments such as the EPA, the Department of Labor, or the Department of Health and Human Services.

A second and no less egregious accounting trick siphons off as much as $150 billion from the Social Security trust fund for retirees and transfers

that money to the fraud-ridden disability program. But there is no surplus in the retirement trust fund. We know the Social Security retirement trust fund is heading toward insolvency. Taking this money out and moving it to the disability program shortens the lifespan, the solvency of the retirement program. All this reform accomplishes is advancing the insolvency date of the retirement fund, while bailing out the mismanaged disability fund by taking working Americans' pension contributions and reallocating them to the disability fund. Again, the authors of the bill double count the savings as both increasing the sustainability of Social Security disability and paying for the new spending.

So instead of implementing much needed reforms to fix the disability program, which is projected to go broke next year, this deal robs $150 billion from the Social Security trust fund and uses it to pay disability checks through 2022. The Social Security trust fund is never reimbursed. They reduce the amount of dedicated money going to the Social Security retirement fund on everybody's paycheck and redirect it for 3 years to the disability fund, and the Social Security retirement fund is never reimbursed for the money they lost. So Social Security is left in a worse financial situation than it is currently. It is also a violation of the budget law to do that; I am confident.

Furthermore, this bailout lasts only 6 years. In 2022, the disability fund runs out of money again, and Congress will have to bail it out once again. This bill removes the incentive to provide serious reform to fix that broken program and put it on a sound basis. It kicks the can down the road once again.

In conclusion, I would say to my colleagues that we don't have to pass this bill today. There is no crisis that requires us to pass it today. There are a number of interim steps we could take to allow this bill to be out there for the Members who actually study it, to offer amendments on it, and maybe improve it for the American people to understand just what it is the Members of Congress are doing to their Social Security and to the fiscal debt of America.

As I have mentioned, the Budget Control Act of 2011 increased the amount that we can borrow in exchange for $2.1 trillion in spending cuts that we were able to win in 2011. What we did when we faced the debt ceiling issue was that we were able to enforce our new spending law, which limited the growth of spending in the future, saving $2.1 trillion over that period of time. We are still in that time period, and we are ceasing to save money because we are violating the law.

We were able to win a concession from the President. We didn't cower under our tables. We didn't retreat from the huffing and puffing of the President on this issue. We stood up as Members of Congress, committed to fiscal integrity in America, and we told the President: You are not going to get an increase in the debt ceiling unless you agree to some spending reforms. That is what happened. We did that when there were only 45 Republicans in the Chamber. Now there are 54 Republicans in the Chamber, and the House has a huge majority.

I think we can do better. I don't think this should be rushed through the Congress, and I object to its passage.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for up to 20 minutes and that Senator SANDERS be recognized immediately following my remarks for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank the Senator. If you could extend that up to 20 minutes, that would be great.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I amend that to 20 minutes for Senator SANDERS, if there is no objection.

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

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, having previously served in the Senate, I came to the floor once again for the second time as a freshman Senator, in the early months of 2011, full of optimism and a sense of purpose.

Back for a second time as a newly elected freshman, I delivered my inaugural speech, which included the following thoughts:

> For each of us serving today, I believe it is our duty to rise to the immediate challenge and resolve the problems which now confront us. It will take all of us, united behind a common purpose—that above all else we must first restore and strengthen our fiscal security. We must articulate a clear vision, set specific goals and make the tough decisions needed to bring our nation out of debt and preserve prosperity and opportunity for future generations.

Those remarks outline a major part of my vision for what I hope to achieve in my term as a Senator. It is now 5 years later. What I came back to try to accomplish hasn't been accomplished.

At the time, I saw—and it was the reason why I answered the call to come back—that our fiscal health was eroding right before our very eyes. I didn't want to be a part of the first generation of Americans to leave our children and the country worse off than the one we inherited.

Anyone who reads through our history knows the sacrifices that have been made by generation after generation after generation so that their children and their grandchildren and their country could be in a better position so that they wouldn't be saddled with the burdens that might not allow them to live the American dream.

I asked Hoosiers to send me back to Washington to focus on taking on these essential issues. It was the first thing in my very first debate, where I put it on the table and said: Unless we go back and address our runaway mandatory spending and entitlement programs, it is not worth going back, and I will not ask you to send me back there unless you give me the mandate that this is a task that has to be undertaken.

It was called political suicide at the time: Oh, you can't bring that up. I mean those who are on Medicare or Medicaid or Social Security will make sure that you will never be sent back to the Senate if that is what your goal is.

I said: I just want every Hoosier to know, when you walk in that voting booth, what you are voting for and what you are not voting for.

And I received the mandate to come back to address that because people in my generation understood that as to the privileges they had received and the opportunities they had received throughout their lives, they wanted to pass them and that same opportunity on to their children and their grandchildren. They wanted us to come back and make difficult decisions so that would happen.

It is not that this issue wasn't worked on. Whether it was to fix the debt or the Business Roundtable, Domenici-Rivlin, Simpson-Bowles, the Gang of 6, the super committee resulting from the Budget Control Act, and the dinner club of Senators—all of these efforts over the early years I threw myself into and in support of. And many of us—even on a bipartisan basis—were working together to try to address this gorilla in the room, the runaway mandatory spending. It is now eating up over 70 percent of our total budget and ever-decreasing discretionary spending.

The President, unfortunately, walked away from every effort that was made. The efforts were divided, and nearly 40 of us—20 Democrats and 20 Republicans—sent the President a letter stating: We need to address that, and we are willing to step up and address this if you will join us in this process.

I was very much a part of the final effort with the President—the so-called dinner club—at the President's initiative. We were working with the President himself, his Chief of Staff, his top Director of OMB—now Secretary Burwell at HHS—and his political director. Over the months, eight of us met privately—there was no press, no staff—working to see, as principals, if we could come up with something. In the end, it fell apart. It fell apart because the President, in the end, wouldn't even accept his own previous proposals—his own White House proposals to address this problem.

Here we are 5 years later. Currently, what we have gone from, under this administration, is a $10.6 trillion debt at the beginning of this Presidency to now 18-plus, or almost $18.2 trillion. There was almost a doubling in just two terms of one President, almost a doubling of our debt.

And here we stand with injunctions from the Congressional Budget Office

saying that we are headed toward a crisis and it is holding down our economy. We are not growing as we should and putting people back to work as we should because this is a drag on us. It is an anchor holding us down.

Every Member of this Senate understands that the issue here is not this particular program or that particular program. The issue is runaway mandatory entitlements that are eating up everything—virtually three-quarters of everything they spend money on.

There are essential functions of the Federal Government that have to be addressed: the National Institutes of Health and, obviously, our defense and national security. There is the CDC, which deals with communicable diseases, education funding, veterans programs, law enforcement, border security, and food safety, just to name a few. Those are essential functions. But the money available to do what government needs to do is ever shrinking in terms of our ability to allocate it for that to be done, and the mandatory spending is just simply running out of control.

Is anyone in this Senate or in this Congress saying we should end Social Security, end Medicare, and end Medicaid? Everyone here is saying no. Everyone has to understand, however, that to preserve those programs we have to bring on sensible reforms, and that has been the challenge.

CBO said earlier this year: ''Large and growing federal debt would have serious negative consequences, including increasing federal spending for interest payments; restraining economic growth in the long term; giving policymakers less flexibility to respond to unexpected challenges; and eventually heightening the risk of a fiscal crisis.

The evidence that we read and talk about in the Senate every day comes to the same conclusion. Congress too often has governed to avoid a crisis and failed to make the tough but necessary choices.

Now here we are in another crisis looming, another leverage for us to try to achieve some sensible forward movement in terms of dealing with this runaway mandatory spending, and this is the raising of the debt limit. Given all the failure of previous efforts, the exhaustion of the private sector and congressional efforts, we are left with very few options to address our fiscal problems. Now we have a debt limit that is hitting us just days from now, November 3, and we won't be able to pay our bills unless we raise that debt limit.

So what have we done, using this potential leverage, to try to achieve something of significance? We end up basically waving the white flag and saying: There is really nothing more we can do. We just have to simply raise this. We have to live with it. We have to continue spending more. Oh, and by the way, those caps that we put in terms of discretionary spending, we have to break those also.

There is a legitimate argument for the need to provide additional funding for our Department of Defense and our national security. All you have to do is turn on the television and watch what is happening around the world to understand that America is in a weakened position and that national strength and defense strength are important for the future of our country. So I do think that was a legitimate issue to try to deal with. But to break the caps on an equal basis for more government spending on the discretionary side simply is something we shouldn't have to do.

These so-called pay-fors that were put out there are the same old, same old. It is spend now and maybe we will adjust the program later and that will help cover the cost now. That hasn't worked before, and it won't work now. It is a gimmick, in most instances. It is something to sell the program, but it doesn't begin to address the problem of out-of-control debt.

Along with that, Social Security disability, the trustees have said, is going to go broke in just a few months, and the benefits are going to have to be dramatically cut unless it is fixed. So do we come in with a real fix for the real future of the Social Security-related programs? No, we transfer money from the old age fund—actually, there is no money in that fund, we simply allocate the money that is owed to that fund to pay for solvency for the disability part of that fund.

First of all, the thing we need to do is to be honest with the American people is to rename the Social Security trust fund to something else because the trust tells us there is money there to pay these benefits when there isn't. There are IOUs there, locked in a box or a safe somewhere. There are simply piled up pieces of paper saying: We have to pay you back at some point. Without addressing this—and we saw this last evening in the debate, those of us who watched. I was going back and forth, to be truthful, between the World Series and the debate, trying to catch both of those. But we saw a few Members stand up and tell the truth—tell the American people exactly what the situation is and why we need to do what we need to do. I commend those few who had the courage to go forward and tell the American people straight up that this is the problem and it must be solved.

Anyway, speaking of this vote that is coming up—the vote that will allow more spending for Federal programs, many of which are not priority programs—the arrangement will simply allow us to take a pass on raising the debt limit. We are not going to use it as leverage to try and achieve anything meaningful in terms of entitlement—frankly, offsets that we have used before and we use over and over again. It is the same old shuffle game where we move pieces around, but it doesn't accomplish the purpose. All of that leads me to the conclusion that I cannot support this particular arrangement.

There are reforms that must be put in place. We have to get to the point where we stop talking about these reforms and put them in place, where we make the political decisions that I believe will be supported back home. But even if they aren't supported by everyone back home, even if they are distorted by organizations that are funded by trying to scare seniors into believing Congress or the government is taking away their benefits—which is not the case; we are trying to save those benefits and we are trying to put our future generations, our children and grandchildren, in a better position so they won't be so saddled with that debt—there are many ways we can go forward.

We have talked about balancing our budget. What entity in the world doesn't have to balance a budget at some point? What entity can keep borrowing money, saying on a piece of paper they will pay it later—that they are going to spend it now and pay it later? What businessman or woman, what small, medium-sized, or large business, what family, what organization continues to deal with their fiscal issues the way the Federal Government deals with its fiscal issues and survives? We are careening toward a crisis. There are solutions for this, but it takes political will, and we have seen far too little of that political will.

More importantly, it takes support from both branches of government, both the legislative and the executive, if we are going to accomplish this. Unfortunately, it appears now we are going to have to wait for yet another Presidency, yet another Congress, because we are kicking the can down the road. We are dumping this problem on the next group coming in. Boy, I feel for whoever winds up with the Presidency, whether it is Democrat or Republican, because of what they will inherit, given the damage that has been done over the past several years.

Clearly, we need to address the gorilla in the room. Clearly, we need to stand up and be truthful with the American people, as some of our candidates were last evening. We must tell them exactly where we are, what we need to do, and then put the long-term reforms in place that will save these programs and put America in a solid fiscal situation.

Getting a balanced budget amendment in place is something we have talked about. We have made an effort, and we need to continue that. Without the discipline of putting your hand on the Bible with your right hand up and swearing you will uphold the Constitution of the United States, which includes balancing our budget and not spending more than we take in, we will never get there. You have to put people under oath in order to achieve that. We have come close on a couple of occasions but, unfortunately, not close enough.

Therefore, I am resorting to a program that has worked in the past regarding our national defense and our military and proposing that what we

do is create another BRAC. BRAC was the Base Realignment Commission—a process we finally agreed to because there was no way we could touch or close anything, and we were just overrun with excess spending and excess bases in the United States. And that worked. It worked very well. All of us here know exactly or very closely what the parameters of that were.

In this case, if we cannot summon the courage and the will to stand up and do this, as we are required to do under the oath of office we take, but which we avoid doing, we should turn to a commission that would provide a solution. It would be a budget reduction accountability commission. We can use the same BRAC title on the thing. Let's call it the budget reduction accountability commission, which would bring forward a plan to achieve the goal of bringing us back to fiscal health. We would put it before this Congress, both the Senate and the House, with a straight up-or-down majority vote—yea or nay.

Here is the plan. You haven't been able to do it yourself, you have tried it, we appreciate your trying it, but it has come up short, whether it is the executive branch or the legislative branch. So the outside commission presents the path forward, and we say yes or no. Then the people back home all know exactly where we stand in terms of the future fiscal health of this country. They will know exactly where we stand in terms of how we want to leave our legacy to the next generation and future generations, how we want to treat our children and our grandchildren.

Each Member will have to go home and not talk about procedures and not talk about bumping up to the crisis level of spending and how we have to do something to avoid a government shutdown or avoid chaos or avoid economic collapse. Every Member will go home and say they were presented with a plan to get us there, and they were either for it or against it. Nobody could say: Well, we had to do this, we had to do that, it was late, we bumped up against the ceiling, it was running out, and so forth. I am tired of hearing all of that.

Mr. President, clearly solutions exist to deal with this problem. Clearly, we must summon the courage to set aside politics and do what we all know we need to do and suffer the consequences. I think the consequences will be applause and support because finally someone is standing up and saying we are going to fix this problem for the future of America and the future of our children and grandchildren; we are going to take that risk. If the groups outside are going to rally against this kind of thing and try to take us down, fine; we will go down doing the right thing. But I think we will be rewarded for doing so.

I want to close this today with the same words I used to conclude my inaugural speech in 2011, where I said:

I am standing here today to find solutions—to make the hard decisions—and to leave behind a country that is stronger and more fiscally secure for future generations. This crisis is not insurmountable. We can overcome it by doing what great generations before us have done—mustering our will to do what is right. If we do, I know America's greatest days are not behind us, but still lie ahead of us.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I want to spend a few minutes discussing a major crisis in this country that must be addressed. Tragically, in the United States of America we now have 2.2 million people in jail. We have more people incarcerated than any other country on Earth, including China, which is a Communist authoritarian country four times our size. We have more people in jail than does China.

Further, at a time of large deficits and a very large national debt, we are spending about $80 billion a year in Federal, State, and local taxpayer money to lock up people—$80 billion a year to incarcerate people.

Our criminal justice system is broken, and we need major reforms in that system. I think there is no debate in this country that violent and dangerous people must be locked up and they must be kept in jail and away from society. I think nobody argues that. On the other hand, I hope there is also no debate that nonviolent people—people who have been convicted of relatively minor crimes—should not have their lives destroyed while they do time in prison and create an arrest record which will stay with them for their entire lives. The important point is, it is not just the year or 2 years somebody is in prison; this record will stay with them for their entire lives and do enormous damage to their lives.

In 2014 there were 620,000 marijuana possession arrests. That is one arrest every minute. According to a report by the ACLU, there were more than 8 million marijuana arrests in the United States from 2001 to 2010—8 million marijuana arrests—and almost 9 in 10 were for possession. Arrests for marijuana possession rose last year nationwide even as Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and the District of Columbia became the first States in the Nation to legalize personal use of marijuana.

Let's be clear that there is a racial component to this situation. Although about the same proportion of Blacks and Whites use marijuana, a Black person is almost four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a White person. In other words, as we try to understand why our prison population today is disproportionately Black and Latino, one reason is because in overpoliced Black neighborhoods, African Americans are much more likely to be arrested for smoking or using marijuana than will Whites. Here is the simple truth: An upper middle class White kid in Scarsdale, NY, has a much lower chance of being arrested for using marijuana than a low-income Black kid in Chicago or Baltimore. Those are just the facts.

Too many Americans in this country have seen their lives destroyed because they have criminal records as a result of marijuana use. That is wrong. That has to change. Let's be clear. A criminal record could mean not only jail time, but much more. If a person has a criminal record, it will be much harder for that person later in life to get a job. It is not so easy to come out of jail and get a job, and if you don't get a job, there is a strong likelihood you will go back into your same old environment and end up in jail again. If somebody has a criminal record, it may be impossible for them to obtain certain types of public benefits and in fact make it difficult for them to even live in public housing. A criminal record stays with a person for his or her entire life until the day he or she dies. A criminal record destroys lives.

Right now, under the Controlled Substances Act, marijuana is listed as a Schedule I drug, meaning it is considered to be a drug that is extremely dangerous. In fact, under the act, marijuana is considered to be as dangerous as heroin. I know there are conflicting opinions about the health impacts marijuana may have, but nobody I know seriously believes marijuana is as dangerous as heroin. This is absurd. Nobody believes that.

In my view, the time is long overdue for us to take marijuana off of the Federal Government's list of outlawed drugs. In my view, at a time when Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and the District of Columbia have already legalized the personal use of marijuana, every State in this country should have the right to regulate marijuana the same way that State and local laws now govern sales of alcohol and tobacco. Among other things, that means recognized businesses in States that have legalized marijuana should be fully able to use the banking system without fear of Federal prosecution.

In response to the initiatives that Colorado and other States have taken, the Obama administration has essentially allowed these States to go forward and do what the people in those States have chosen to do. That is a good step forward, but it is not good enough because a new administration with a different point of view could simply go forward and prosecute those marijuana businesses and individuals in those States who use marijuana despite what the people in those States have decided to do legislatively.

What I am saying is not that the Federal Government should legalize

marijuana throughout the country. This is a decision for the States. I hope many of my colleagues, especially those who express support for States' rights and our Federalist system of government, those who often decry the power of the big bad Federal Government in undermining local initiatives, would support my very simple and straightforward legislation that will be introduced next week.

All my legislation says is that if a State chooses to legalize marijuana, that State should be able to go forward without legal impediments from the Federal Government.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. President, I want to talk about an issue of great importance in this country. I believe the time is now for the United States to end capital punishment. I know this is not necessarily a popular point of view, but in my view it is the right point of view. Virtually every Western industrialized country has chosen to end capital punishment. I would rather have our country stand side-by-side with European democracies than with countries like China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and others that maintain the death penalty.

We are all shocked and disgusted by the horrific murders we see in this country, including massacres in schools and on college campuses that seem to take place every week. All of us are tired and disgusted with what we are seeing, but it seems to me that at a time of rampant violence and murder all over the world, where people are being blown up and their heads are being cut off, it is important that the state itself, the Federal Government in America, say loudly and clearly that we will not be part of that process.

When people commit horrendous crimes—and we see too many of them—we should lock them up and throw away the key. I have no problem in saying that people who commit terrible murders should spend the rest of their lives in jail, but the state itself, in a democratic civilized society, should itself not be involved in the murder of other Americans.

I know there are strong differences of opinion on this issue. In fact, I think I am in a minority position, but I think those of us who want to set an example, who want to say that we have to end the murders and the violence we are seeing in our country and all over the world, should in fact be on the side of those of us who believe we must end capital punishment in this country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Washington.

HOMELESS VETERANS SERVICES PROTECTION ACT OF 2015

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to talk about an issue that is very important to me, and that is the care of our Nation's veterans. As the daughter of a World War II veteran, I realize what it means for a family member to be willing to sacrifice their life for their country. We promise our men and women in uniform that the country will be there for them after they leave service, and sometimes that means long after the war is over. But I am concerned our country is about to turn its back on thousands of veterans, and I am here today to say we have to fix it.

Last year, the VA told homeless service providers they needed to cut off services to certain veterans who had other than honorable discharges or had not served a certain length of time. If that policy had been enacted, it would have been a major setback for veterans across the country. It would have set us back on our goal of ending veteran homelessness, a goal that the administration has set for itself and hundreds of mayors across the country have committed to. It would have been simply unacceptable. These are veterans who need our support. Many of them struggle with mental illness and substance abuse or simply finding employment.

According to some of our leading veterans and homeless groups—including the American Legion, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans—if the policy had been enacted, the VA would have had to stop serving about 15 percent of the homeless veteran population. In some urban areas, up to 30 percent of homeless veterans would be turned away.

Thankfully, after hearing concern from around the country, including from my home State of Washington, the VA was able to put off that terrible policy change. But, unfortunately, the VA is now expected to announce their final decision any day that the reprieve is over, and they are going to have to go ahead with this change and force homeless providers to turn away veterans who have nowhere else to go—veterans whose providers have been serving them for decades. That is wrong. This policy change would be heartless. It is a bureaucratic move that would put thousands of veterans on the streets practically overnight, and it has to be stopped.

The VA is going to enact this policy when the final decision is made. So Congress needs to act now to stop this from happening. Earlier this year, I introduced the Homeless Veterans Services Protection Act. That is a bill that would ensure our most vulnerable veterans would be assured continued access to critical homeless service programs, regardless of their discharge status or length of service. In other words, it fixes the problem the VA says it has and makes sure they do not have to cut off homeless veterans from care.

My bill will make it clear that our country takes care of those who served and that we do not allow bureaucracy to dictate who gets a roof over their head and who does not. But it is critical that we act now. The VA has said it would issue this legal position in November, which could put thousands of veterans on the street. We are running out of time. But the solution to this crisis is now before us, and we can do it by passing the Homeless Veterans Services Protection Act.

I don't believe there is any Member of this body who would deny our obligation to ensure that veterans are taken care of and have a roof over their head. While our country has made great strides in recent years providing homeless services to the men and women who so bravely served our country, I believe that even one veteran sleeping on our streets in the United States is one too many. We know we have a lot of work ahead of us.

Veterans are at a greater risk of becoming homeless than nonveterans. On any given night, as many as 50,000 veterans are homeless here in this country. With an influx of veterans now returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the numbers of veterans seeking care will continue to go up.

In short, this problem is not going away. Our veterans have made great sacrifices serving our country. We cannot turn our backs on them when they come home. That commitment includes providing benefits, medical care, support, and assistance to prevent homelessness. It is a commitment that shouldn't stop simply because we have run into a policy roadblock.

I am very pleased to call this up now with the Heller amendment which is the text of S. 1105. It is a bill that I strongly support. The provision will increase the availability of care for homeless veterans with children by reimbursing facilities funded by the VA Grant and Per Diem Program.

I want to thank Senator HELLER for his leadership on this issue. I want to thank Senator ISAKSON and Senator BLUMENTHAL for their leadership, as the heads of the Veterans Affairs' Committee, and for their support in being here today.

I am hoping Democrats and Republicans join us today to right this wrong and prevent this problem from happening. It shouldn't be a partisan issue. It is not a political issue. This is a veterans issue. It is one that should bring us all together.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1731 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1731) to amend title 38, United States Code, to waive the minimum period of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces for receipt of certain benefits for homeless veterans, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish such benefits to homeless veterans with discharges or releases from service in the Armed Forces with other than dishonorable conditions, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Heller amendment be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2760) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To authorize per diem payments under comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans to furnish care to dependents of homeless veterans)

On page 4, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF PER DIEM PAYMENTS FOR FURNISHING CARE TO DEPENDENTS OF CERTAIN HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2012(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) Services for which a recipient of a grant under section 2011 of this title (or an entity described in paragraph (1)) may receive per diem payments under this subsection may include furnishing care for a dependent of a homeless veteran who is under the care of such homeless veteran while such homeless veteran receives services from the grant recipient (or entity).''.

The bill (S. 1731), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1731

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Homeless Veterans Services Protection Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. WAIVER OF MINIMUM PERIOD OF CONTINUOUS ACTIVE DUTY IN ARMED FORCES FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 5303A(b)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (F) and (G) as subparagraphs (G) and (H), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following new subparagraph (F):

''(F) to benefits under section 2011, 2012, 2013, 2044, or 2061 of this title;''.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION TO FURNISH CERTAIN BENEFITS TO HOMELESS VETERANS WITH DISCHARGES OR RELEASES UNDER OTHER THAN HONORABLE CONDITIONS.

Section 5303(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''not apply to any war-risk insurance'' and inserting the following: ''not apply to the following:

''(1) Any war-risk insurance''; and

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

''(2) Benefits under section 2011, 2012, 2013, 2044, or 2061 of this title (except for benefits for individuals discharged or dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial).''.

SEC. 4. MODIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF VETERAN FOR PURPOSES OF PROVIDING CERTAIN BENEFITS TO HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2002 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''In this chapter'' and inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—In this chapter''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) VETERAN DEFINED.—(1) Notwithstanding section 101(2) of this title and except as provided in paragraph (2), for purposes of sections 2011, 2012, 2013, 2044, and 2061 of this title, the term 'veteran' means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, regardless of length of service, and who was discharged or released therefrom.

''(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), the term 'veteran' excludes a person who—

''(A) received a dishonorable discharge from the Armed Forces; or

''(B) was discharged or dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial.''.

SEC. 5. TRAINING OF PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND GRANT RECIPIENTS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a program of training and education to ensure that the following persons are aware of and implement this Act and the amendments made by this Act:

(1) Personnel of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are supporting or administering a program under chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) Recipients of grants or other amounts for purposes of carrying out such a program.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF PER DIEM PAYMENTS FOR FURNISHING CARE TO DEPENDENTS OF CERTAIN HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2012(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) Services for which a recipient of a grant under section 2011 of this title (or an entity described in paragraph (1)) may receive per diem payments under this subsection may include furnishing care for a dependent of a homeless veteran who is under the care of such homeless veteran while such homeless veteran receives services from the grant recipient (or entity).''.

SEC. 7. REGULATIONS.

Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prescribe regulations, including such modifications to section 3.12 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation), as the Secretary considers appropriate, to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs is in full compliance with this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall apply to individuals seeking benefits under chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, before, on, and after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator HELLER, Senator ISAKSON, and the other Members who worked so hard for this. I would like to yield some time to the Senator from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator MURRAY for her efforts here today and for her willingness to work with me on including a provision that we worked on together for several years now as members of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Senator MURRAY's legislation ensures that homeless veterans continue to be eligible for the VA's Grant and Per Diem Program.

With my provision that Senator MURRAY agreed to include, this legislation will also extend this eligibility to the dependents of homeless veterans. Given the work that I have done with Senator MURRAY on eligibility for homeless veterans' dependents, I believe it was important we addressed both the needs of the veteran as well as their dependents.

In cities such as Las Vegas, where veteran homelessness remains a serious problem, the support of housing and service centers that receive VA funding is absolutely critical in getting these veterans back on their feet. Not only do the programs provide housing but they also offer services, such as case management, education, crisis intervention, and other services to special populations and important populations such as homeless women veterans.

This Congress has a responsibility to ensure that existing veterans under this program remain eligible, but also that dependents of veterans, especially their children, are taken care of when their veteran parents have fallen on hard times.

That is why I introduced the CARE for Veterans' Dependents Act with Senator MURRAY, to make dependents eligible for care at VA-funded facilities. These children and their parents deserve the certainty that they will able to access supportive housing during their serious time of need. I am proud that we were able to move forward on this measure, which was just accepted a few moments ago by unanimous consent.

Senator MURRAY and I have a proud history of working together to advocate on behalf of our Nation's veterans, and today's passage of this legislation is another testament to our strong partnership on behalf of veterans. I am also grateful to the chairman of the committee, Senator ISAKSON, and to Ranking Member BLUMENTHAL of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for working so diligently with us to make this happen.

Mr. President, I yield back to the Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I yield back.

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

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

TRADE ACT OF 2015—Continued

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 222

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as the proud parent of a wonderful daughter and the proud grandparent of three wonderful granddaughters, like so many others, I was proud of the U.S. Women's National Team and their historic World Cup victory. I was even more proud on Tuesday when I saw

them at the White House with President Obama.

I know all Americans are so proud, as well as honored. The reason why so many Americans are proud of it is that earlier this year, with more than 25 million Americans watching, this electrifying group of athletes led the United States to a record third World Cup title. We all cheered, but then along with a lot of other Americans, I was surprised to learn that the U.S. Women's National Team—even though there were enormous receipts from the TV coverage of this—received $2 million for winning the Women's World Cup. The 2014 Men's World Cup winners were awarded $35 million. When the women won, it was $2 million. When the men won, it was $35 million. To make it even worse, the men's teams that lost in the first round of the 2014 Men's World Cup were awarded $8 million. In other words, if you lose and are a man, you get $8 million. If you are a woman and you win, you get $2 million.

That is really not acceptable. I cannot imagine anybody finding it acceptable. I wanted to raise some awareness of this. I introduced a Senate resolution calling on soccer's international governing body, FIFA, to eliminate its discriminatory prize awards structure.

It highlights the gross pay disparity in their award structure and calls for immediate change. All Democrats support this call. I have heard some opponents of an equal prize awards structure in sports who say: Oh, no, we must pay men more than women. They point to revenue as the reason behind this disparity. Revenue cannot be accepted as a means for discrimination. Awards should not be determined by gender. That is why major sporting events, including the U.S. Open Tennis Championships and Wimbledon changed their prize award structure to assure that both female and male athletes are treated with the same dignity and respect they deserve.

This proud father and grandfather feels that my sons and my daughter should be treated the same and my grandsons and granddaughters should be treated the same. In fact, it is why the U.S. Women's National Team was rightly honored with a Ticker-Tape parade and magazine covers for each player and their head coach by Sports Illustrated.

These athletes, recognized at the White House on Tuesday, are global icons. Not just here in America but around the world they are recognized. They are role models to young athletes and fans everywhere.

This includes fans such as 13-year-old Ayla Ludlow. She wrote to President Obama and the First Lady after the Women's World Cup. She said: ''It makes me mad that people do not treat girls equally.'' I agree. It is time to recognize all athletes for their contributions—not make women second-class citizens. By taking an overdue but important step toward pay equity, we send a resounding message not just to women and girls but also to men and boys around the world. Equal pay for equal work should not be an ideal we talk about, but a reality.

The men's teams that lost in the 2014 Men's World Cup was awarded $8 million. The women's team, which was watched worldwide as they won, was awarded $2 million. The men's team that did win was awarded $35 million. I cannot imagine anybody who could stand up for that kind of disparity and treat men so much differently and so much better than women. These are athletes who worked hard from the time they were young to be the best of the best. They made America proud. But I think we make America a little ashamed if we do not stand up and say: We want women treated the same as men.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 222, and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration—this is the resolution calling on FIFA to pay the same; and that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I listened carefully to the distinguished Senator's comments. Gender discrimination is wrong, and we all know that. We have enacted laws in the United States for sports and for the workplace to make sure that we reflect those values.

I support those laws, but we have a budget to pass, a debt crisis to fix, an education system that needs reform, and a humanitarian crisis in Europe that we ought to address. That is what the U.S. Senate ought to be spending its time on rather than offering opinions and resolutions about a private international entity and how they should distribute prizes and awards. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last night we passed resolutions, and here we are talking about taking 30 seconds out of our busy, busy schedule. Of course, we were in a quorum call for a few hours today. We could take 30, 50, or 82 seconds out of the 100 hours or so we will spend during the month sitting here doing nothing and pass a resolution that calls for the equal treatment of male and female athletes.

If we cannot even do that, is it any wonder that the approval ratings of the Senate are in the tank? If we cannot even pass a nonbinding resolution, how can we ever achieve real pay equity for women? What is the real objection? We are simply urging for the equal treatment of female athletes. Treating people differently solely because of their gender is unacceptable. It sends a terrible message to mothers, daughters, and granddaughters across the globe.

As I said, every single Democrat supports this resolution. I am very disappointed that the Republicans are blocking it.

I will leave after saying one more thing. The women's team won to international acclaim, and they were awarded $2 million. The men's teams that lost in the first round was paid $8 million. The men's team that won was awarded $35 million.

Wimbledon knows better. The U.S. Open Tennis Championships said enough is enough. Women should be treated the same as men.

A 13-year-old girl wrote to the President and said: ''It makes me mad that people do not treat girls equally.'' Well, I have a granddaughter who will be 13 in December. How do I speak to her? How do I tell her that the U.S. Senate—which is sort of waiting around here and has not done anything today—is unwilling to take 10 seconds, 30 seconds, 50 seconds to say: Let's treat women athletes the same as men.

I thank my Democratic colleagues for supporting this legislation. I hope my Republican colleagues will change their minds and say: Let's treat female athletes the same as male athletes, especially since the World Cup organization made a fortune on TV rights. They certainly made a heck of a lot more money on those TV rights while the women were winning than they were making when the men's team lost, but the men's teams that lost in the first round were still paid $8 million. They made four times more than the women who won the championship were paid. It is sexist, and it is wrong.

In this day and age we need to stop treating women as second-class citizens. I do not want my daughter treated that way. I do not want my granddaughters treated that way. I do not want the women in Vermont treated that way. I do not want women anywhere in this country to be treated that way. I want to say to that 13-year-old girl who is angry because of the unfair treatment of girls: I am sorry the U.S. Senate would not stand up for you, but I, and others, stand up for you, and I always will. Let us hope someday the Senate stands up for you too.

We can see how busy we are at this time. There is not a single Senator on the floor, except for the distinguished Presiding Officer, of course, and so I will suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TESTER. 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. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to address a frustrating situation that has brought us here today. For months I have been calling on Congress to come to the middle and negotiate a responsible budget deal that

works for the American people, but time and time again, whether it was in the Appropriations Committee or here on the Senate floor, Members of this body refused to have a conversation about how to do that. They dug their heels in and said: It is my way or the highway.

Now here we are, down to the wire, and they finally realize that sequestration is damaging. It is something that we have been saying from day one. Unfortunately, it cost the Speaker of the House his job, it wasted months of time, and it continued to erode what is left of the faith that the American people have in Congress.

Coming from Montana, I find this incredibly frustrating. Folks back home are reasonable. They talk to their neighbors even if they don't agree with them. They compromise, negotiate, give a little, and most of the time they get a lot. This body could learn a lot from my constituents.

The Senate was designed to be a deliberative body. It was supposed to be a place where conversations and compromise happen, where we reach across the aisle and partner with our colleagues with whom we might not always agree. That kind of bipartisanship requires more time, harder work, and tougher conversations. Sure, it is a lot easier to scream and yell at the other side so the super PACs and millionaires who fund too much of our politics these days know we didn't back down, but at the end of the day, that doesn't move the country forward, and unfortunately that happened again this year.

Had we started these budget negotiations back in July when 10 moderate Members of this body first rang the alarm, we wouldn't be in a last-minute scramble today. I am disappointed. I am disappointed in the Senate. The only time folks are talking to one another is when there is a crisis. The only time folks are working together is when we are faced with fiscal cliffs, economic meltdowns, and catastrophes. I hope we realize that Congress is the only place in this country that operates like this. Businesses and families plan, talk, and they certainly don't wait until the last minute to get their financial house in order.

Why does it take an emergency for Congress to govern? Why does it take a looming deadline for folks to come to their senses and to do their jobs? It is because the voices in the middle are getting drowned out by the voices on the fringes. We have become afraid of compromise. In many circles it is a dirty word, one that should never be uttered.

So here we are today, just a few days before we default on our debt, and we have wasted so much time. Our inability to tackle these issues earlier this year caused the appropriations process to break down. It caused an unnecessary veto of the Defense authorization bill, something our troops are waiting for us to resolve while they stand on the frontlines.

I know this budget deal isn't perfect, but it is the product of compromise, however last minute it may be and however limited the ability of Senators to weigh in on it is. But by raising the debt ceiling, we will prevent interest rates from skyrocketing and the value of the dollar from plummeting. By ending the sequester, we will do away with severe budget cuts that are hurting our veterans, seniors, students, and working families.

We will shore up Social Security and allow ourselves to make responsible investments in our national security, education, health care, and public lands. It will reduce a massive premium hike that was scheduled to impact 46,000 Montana seniors who use Medicare for their health insurance. This legislation will keep those premiums more manageable.

Those accomplishments are critically important to our economy and worthy of this Senate's support, but as with anything that comes together at the last minute, there are provisions I don't like, things that could have been fixed if we had taken more time to negotiate. Take, for instance, the budget's impact on our rural hospitals. There are provisions in here that could severely limit access to rural health care. I am committed to addressing those concerns in the upcoming appropriations process because folks in Montana and other rural States shouldn't have to drive hundreds of miles to see a doctor.

As I said, this budget isn't perfect. The most disappointing thing is that it could have been so much better. But in the spirit of compromise that got us here today, we need to use that conversation to make sure we get things done.

I know there will always be those who refuse to get off the ideological soapbox and who like to watch others do the hard work of governing, but those folks usually don't last long with my constituents.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SPEAKER PAUL RYAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, when responsibility calls, it is usually not at a time of our choosing. The decision to answer is rarely easy or straightforward. PAUL RYAN knows this. He spent his nights dreaming about tax policy, not the Speakership. But our country is fortunate that he stepped up to lead, and I know I am grateful that he did.

Speaker RYAN is thoughtful about the issues facing our Nation. He is sober-minded. He knows the job he is walking into is tough. He also understands the potential it holds in terms of conservative solutions for our country and in terms of more opportunity for the middle class.

When I called to congratulate Speaker RYAN, we discussed our many shared goals in Congress. We pledged a strong partnership. We aimed to continue advancing conservative reform. I look forward to working closely with him as we move forward.

Speaker RYAN knows what it means to work hard. He knows what it means to dream big dreams. He knows what it means to achieve them as well. Something we all admire about Speaker RYAN is his determination to ensure others are able to achieve big things in their lives too, to ensure others can lead fulfilling lives defined by meaning and punctuated with purpose.

There is no doubt he cares deeply. He cares about combating poverty effectively. He cares about lifting up the middle class successfully. And because he cares, he is willing to call out failed policies when they hurt those they are supposed to help, and he has suggested better ways forward as well.

In short, here is what we can say about Speaker RYAN: He has a big heart, he has an extraordinary intellect, and he knows how to lead with both. That quality is rare around here. So is having a reputation that so greatly precedes oneself in such a positive way. But that is Speaker RYAN.

Nothing is going to come easily in his new role, and he certainly knows that. Neither of us will be under any illusions about the positions we hold. We face a Democratic Party that continues to move left. We face a President who doesn't seem very interested in cooperation on the big things or the hard things, nor on making divided government work. These are the realities that face us, and we might as well acknowledge them, but it won't stop us from working together to advance conservative reform as well as to achieve solutions for the middle class whenever we can.

Today, though, let's celebrate Speaker RYAN's extraordinary achievement. He has already proven his stature as a leader in our party. From leading the Nation on responsible budgeting and pro-growth tax reform to serving as an extraordinary candidate for Vice President, he always rises to the challenge.

I would note for my House colleagues that their incoming leader campaigned vigorously to become President of the Senate, but he was drafted into the Speakership.

But, look, on a more serious note, PAUL RYAN may not have asked for this job, but the moment called for him to lead, and I am grateful that he will because we know he is a leader who has repeatedly demonstrated the talent, the vision, and the experience to succeed.

I look forward to building a strong partnership on behalf of our country.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar Nos. 345

through 355 and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Thomas K. Wark

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Howard P. Purcell

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Allan L. Swartzmiller

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. David D. Halverson

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Kenneth R. Dahl

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army Veterinary Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 3064 and 3084:

To be brigadier general

Col. Erik H. Torring, III

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Thomas S. Vandal

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Valeria Gonzalez-Kerr

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. John J. Morris

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Stephen E. Markovich

IN THE ARMY

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Marta Carcana

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN603 AIR FORCE nominations (1451) beginning BRANDON R. ABEL, and ending BRANDON A. ZUERCHER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of June 24, 2015.

PN805 AIR FORCE nominations (19) beginning MICHELLE T. AARON, and ending KIRK P. WINGER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN808 AIR FORCE nominations (50) beginning QUENTIN D. BAGBY, and ending MARY A. WORKMAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN811 AIR FORCE nominations (126) beginning ROBERT H. ALEXANDER, and ending JUSTIN DAVID WRIGHT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

IN THE ARMY

PN784 ARMY nomination of Matthew P. Tarjick, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 8, 2015.

PN816 ARMY nomination of Judith S. Meyers, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN817 ARMY nominations (2) beginning THOMAS W. WISENBAUGH, and ending HAROLD P. XENITELIS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN898 ARMY nomination of Michael A. Blaine, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 5, 2015.

IN THE NAVY

PN906 NAVY nomination of Terry A. Petropoulos, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 8, 2015.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 343; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Edward L. Gilmore, of Illinois, to be United States Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gilmore nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

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

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

TRADE ACT OF 2015—Continued

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to raising the debt ceiling. I rise particularly in opposition to raising the debt ceiling without getting any sort of spending reform or budgetary reform in return. In fact, it will be completely the opposite. We will be raising the debt ceiling in an unlimited fashion. We will be giving President Obama a free pass to borrow as much money as he can borrow in the last year of his office—no dollar limit. Here you go, President Obama, spend what you want. We do this while also exceeding what are called budget caps.

We have been trying to have spending restraint in Washington. It hasn't worked very well, but at least there are some numbers the government is not supposed to exceed. These include spending caps for military spending as well as domestic spending.

When I first arrived in 2010, I was part of the movement called the tea party movement. We came into prominence, and I was elected primarily because I was concerned about the debt, worried about the debt we were leaving to our kids and our grandkids, worried that we were destroying the very fabric of the country with debt.

We came here in 2010, and we negotiated and negotiated, and President Obama said: I won't negotiate with you. I won't negotiate with a gun to my head.

The media said: You always have to raise the debt ceiling. It is irresponsible to use that as leverage to get reform.

But you know what. We did get reform. The conservatives put together something called cut, cap, and balance. It was passed overwhelmingly in the House, blocked in the Senate, but ultimately there was something passed called sequestration, which put caps on both military and domestic spending. It did slow down the rate of growth in government for a little while.

This is the problem with Congress: Congress will occasionally do something in the right direction, and then they take one step forward and two steps back. In 2013 we gave up on the sequester and we added back in about $60 billion worth of money. Now they are doing the same thing again. This time we are going to add back in $80 billion—$50 billion in 2016 and another $30 billion in 2017.

We are doing the opposite of what we should be doing. We should be using the leverage of the debt ceiling by saying: We are not raising it again until you reform your ways, until you begin spending only the money you have.

Instead, we are saying: Here, Mr. President. You can raise the debt as much as you want. You can spend as much as you want while you are in office, and we are going to do nothing. In fact, we are going to help you. We are going to exceed the caps so everybody gets what they want.

So everyone in Washington is going to get something. The right is going to get more military money, the left is going to get more welfare money, the secret handshake goes on, and the American public gets stuck with the bill.

I think one of the most important things that we do is defend the country. If you ask me to prioritize the spending, I will say we have to defend the country above and beyond and before all else. But that doesn't mean we are stronger or safer if we are doing this from bankruptcy court.

I think the No. 1 threat to our country, the No. 1 threat to our security is debt, this piling on of debt. The debt threatens our national security. Yet we just want to pile it on and pile it on.

This deal will do nothing but explode the debt. In fact, it doesn't even limit how much the debt can go up. We are giving the President a blank check.

We are in the middle of a filibuster. This filibuster will go on until about 1:00 in the morning, and then we will find out who the true conservatives in this town are. If you are conservative, you will say: There is no way I am going to vote to give an unlimited power to the President to borrow money. If you are a conservative, you are going to say: We shouldn't be exceeding the budget caps; if anything, we should be passing more stringent budget caps.

It disappoints me greater than I can possibly express that the party I belong to that should be the conservative party doesn't appear to be conservative. This is a big problem.

I am traveling the country, and I have asked Republicans everywhere. I have yet to meet a single Republican who supports this deal.

In the House, they voted on this yesterday. Do you know what the vote was? Two to one among Republicans say that this is a god-awful deal and that we shouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole. It is a terrible deal. House Republicans understood this.

We should be doing the opposite. We should be taking the leverage of saying we are not going to raise the debt ceiling unless we get reform. Instead, we went to the President and said: Here, raise the debt ceiling as much as you can possibly spend over the next year, and we will let you exceed the budget caps. It is irresponsible. It shows a lack of concern for our country, for the debt, and it should go down in defeat.

When I ran for office in 2010, the debt was an enormous issue. The debt was $10 trillion. Some of us in the tea party were concerned because it had doubled in the last 8 years. It doubled from $5 to $10 trillion under a Republican administration. Many of us were adamant that Republicans needed to do a better job. We had added new entitlement programs, we added new spending, and the deficit got worse under Republicans. Now we are under a Democratic President and it is set to double again. This President will add more to the debt than all of the previous Presidents combined. So we will go from $10 trillion now to nearly $20 trillion. We may get close to $20 trillion, and now that we have increased the debt ceiling an unspecified amount, we may well get to $20 trillion by the time this President leaves.

Is that a problem? Some people say: It is just a big number. I don't know what $1 trillion is.

If you want to imagine $1 trillion, take thousand-dollar bills and put them in your hand. Thousand-dollar bills 4 inches high is $1 million. If you want to have $1 trillion in thousand-dollar bills, it would be 63 miles high. We are talking about an amount of money that is hard to fathom.

You say: What does that mean? How does that hurt me or my family?

Economists say we are losing 1 million jobs a year through the burden of debt. Economists also say that when your debt becomes as large as your economy, you are in a worrisome place; that when the debt is as large as the economy, there is a possibility that you may enter into a period where you might suffer a panic or a collapse or a burden so great that your economy can't withstand it. In 2008 we were very close to a panic. I think we get closer with each day.

The No. 1 priority up here shouldn't be trying to scrounge around and find new money to spend. It should be trying to conserve. It should be doing something that some say is radical but I say is the absolute essence of common sense; that is, we should spend what comes in.

So often up here, things become partisan and people just want to point fingers and say: Oh, it is that party that did it; they are the ones responsible for the debt.

But I want to let you in on a secret. This is a secret that goes on and on and on up here. It is something I call the unholy alliance. It is the unholy alliance between right and left—they both have sacred cows they want to spend money on. Instead of saying: The debt is a real problem, and we both have to conserve in both areas, they get together secretly and raise the money for their sacred cows. So on the right we are busting the limits because the right wants more military spending. The left wants more for welfare. The unholy alliance is the secret handshake. And what gets worse? The debt. We are borrowing $1 million every minute, and it is not going to end in a pretty way.

What do other conservatives have to say about this deal? Stephen Moore at the Heritage Foundation writes: ''It is the worst budget deal to be negotiated by the GOP since George H.W. Bush violated his 'no new taxes' pledge in 1990.''

Rush Limbaugh says: ''The Republican party cannot campaign by running around blaming the Democrats for destroying the budget, for overspending, for threatening the very fabric of the country.'' They can't do it because they are now complicit.

We can't point fingers and say the Democrats are the big spenders. We now, by this deal, become complicit. We become equally guilty of supporting new debt.

Some say: Well, gosh, you have to raise the debt ceiling, right? If you don't raise the debt ceiling, there will be a default.

Hogwash. Do you know how much money comes into this place every month through taxes? About $250 billion comes in in taxes. Do you know what our interest payment is? About $30 billion, might be as high as $60, $70, $80 billion. There is never not enough revenue to pay for interest. People say we couldn't pay for everything. I say maybe we shouldn't spend it on everything. We have plenty of money that comes in every month to spend on interest, to spend on Medicare, to spend on Social Security, and to spend on soldiers' salaries and veterans affairs and the rest, but maybe government shouldn't be doing much else.

These are the questions we would have to ask: What would happen if the debt ceiling didn't go up? We would have a balanced budget. How bad would that be? If your debt ceiling didn't go up, you would spend what comes in. That is what every American family does—they spend what comes in.

I think this is absolutely what we need to do, but even I am willing to compromise, so I have put forward a compromise. I put forward a compromise that we tried in 2011 called cut, cap, and balance. My compromise would cut the deficit in half in 1 year—a dramatic lessening of the burden of

debt. That is the cut. The cap is that my bill would actually cap spending at 18 percent of GDP—18 percent of the total amount of money spent on the economy. Why did we pick 18 percent? Because that leads to a balanced budget. The last part of my bill of cut, cap, and balance is we would pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. I have kind of jokingly said—but probably seriously—if we pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution and we pass term limits, I will go back to being a doctor, which is my first love anyway.

We have to fix the country. We are destroying the country with debt. We are drowning in a sea of debt, and neither party seems to be concerned with it anymore.

So what I would do is I would say, yes, I will compromise. I will raise the debt ceiling under these three conditions: cut the deficit in half, cap the spending, and pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

People say: Well, there aren't the votes for that.

Why don't we have a vote? Why don't we allow a vote on cut, cap, and balance, the conservative alternative to this deal we have on the floor? Why don't we vote on an alternative? Because there won't be any amendments allowed. This will be pushed through without amendments. I really object to that. This is supposed to be a body of deliberation. We are supposed to be able to deliberate over how we are going to fix the problems of the country. And I think this is the No. 1 threat to us. We are accumulating debt at $1 million every minute. Someone has to stand up and do something about it.

Taxpayers for Common Sense says about this: ''We're not a fan of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015.''

CATO writes: ''The Gipper's [Ronald Reagan's] ghost is probably looking down from heaven at the new budget deal between congressional leaders and the Obama administration and saying 'there they go again.'''

''So let's rephrase the question: What do advocates of fiscal restraint get in exchange [for raising these spending caps]? Well, if you peruse [this] agreement, it's apparent they don't get anything.''

What we have traded is an increase in the debt ceiling—not just an increase, an unspecified increase in the debt ceiling. We have said to President Obama: You can spend as much money as you want throughout the rest of your Presidency—no limits.

The National Taxpayers Union writes:

> If the question on the budget and debt ceiling package is ''Deal or No Deal?'' taxpayers should clearly opt for the latter.

While the agreement contains a few meritorious provisions, it fails other sufficient savings and structural reforms necessary to address our Nation's $18.1 trillion debt problem. The debt is without question the No. 1 problem in the country. We will have a vote this evening, and that vote will be: Do you care? Are you willing to do something to slow it down? Do you think we ought to use the leverage of the debt ceiling to slow down spending or are you a profligate spender who will vote to bust the caps and who will vote to give President Obama unlimited borrowing authority?

I think it is a clear-cut question. I will vote no, and I will continue this filibuster as long as there are enough votes to allow it to continue.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2182

Mr. President, at this point, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of my bill, Cut, Cap, and Balance, which is Calendar No. 274, S. 2182. I further ask that there be 1 hour of debate equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senate is now considering a bipartisan budget agreement. I believe it is important to pass that bipartisan effort to avoid catastrophic default and to put an end to the mindless sequestration and pass funding to keep the government open. Regrettably, because I often agree with my friend from Kentucky and we team up on so many issues, the request to take up the Cut, Cap, and Balance legislation is a step in the wrong direction.

When you push for cut, cap, and balance in this context, you are pushing for default, recession, and joblessness because that is what all of the independent financial authorities tell us is what is ahead if we don't act in the Senate. The desire to set aside what we are working on and pursue this other legislation is specifically an approach that would throw aside the bipartisan agreement before the Senate.

This bipartisan effort is exactly the kind of bipartisan work where Democrats and Republicans come together to tackle a major issue. The American people expect their leaders to find common ground on key issues. That is what this legislation does.

For those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from Oregon that bipartisan agreement is necessary in this body, but I think we have in this agreement bipartisan agreement in the wrong direction. The bipartisan agreement we need is to conserve across the board, for both sides to say that our sacred cow, whether it is military on the right or domestic spending on the left—that they all will have to be conserved. We will not be able to spend money we don't have.

I think we are becoming weaker as a nation the more we borrow. If we pass this bill, it is not a difference or a choice between calamity and continuing to add to the debt—which this bill will do. I fully believe we can continue to make our payments. We have $250 billion a month that comes in. Interest payments are $30 billion. There is absolutely no reason we would ever default. In fact, I have a bill called the Default Protection Act, which would ensure that Social Security, Medicare, our soldiers' salaries, and the interest on the debt were paid for. So I think what we should be doing is doing the opposite kind of compromise. Right and left should come together and say: You know what. I really want spending on this. The right says: I really want spending on the military. They should come together and say: You know what. We don't have any money. We are borrowing $1 million every minute.

So I think this bipartisan compromise goes in the wrong direction. What I would ask for is a bipartisan compromise to actually save money and borrow less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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

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

SYRIA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the conflict in Syria, and in particular what is happening over the next couple of days and weeks. We know that in the last 4 years, starting in 2011, this conflict has resulted in the deaths of a quarter of a million Syrians. More than 4 million Syrians have fled and registered as refugees in neighboring countries. We are told that 7.6 million Syrian are displaced from their homes within Syria itself.

So when you combine those who have fled the country because of the violence and combine that with the number of folks displaced in the country, you have about half the population of Syria. If we had the equivalent number here in the United States—of over 300 million people—that would be something on the order of 150 million Americans displaced from their homes. We cannot even imagine the scale of that suffering.

At the center of this horror, this horrific war and humanitarian catastrophe, sits Bashar al-Assad, the dictator, who in the estimation of many experts and world leaders, and this is my opinion as well, has lost all legitimacy as the leader of Syria. A conflict that began with peaceful protests by Syrian young people for change quickly gave way to fighting on the streets of Homs, Daraa, and Aleppo.

Assad's security forces have attempted to quash dissent with brutal beatings, imprisonment, starvation, use of chemical weapons, and wholesale destruction from indiscriminate barrel

bombs, which, by the way, is a violation of international law. These actions prove to be a recruiting windfall for extremists and terrorist groups like ISIS, which now operate along many major transportation routes and cities in parts of Syria.

The Institute for the Study of War just this week assessed that ISIS is now challenging the Assad regime for control of the supply line to Aleppo, expanding their reach westward. As I have said before and some others have said—it is what I will continue to maintain—the conflict in Syria and the international effort to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIS are inextricably linked.

We cannot expect to bring about a lasting defeat of ISIS without bringing about a political transition in Syria. The atrocities perpetrated by these two evils, one the Assad regime and also ISIS—these atrocities are too numerous to catalog today. Neither entity offers a stable, secure, and prosperous future for Syria. Several times the United States has participated in international negotiations with an eye toward ending this horror and paving the road toward a third choice for Syria.

That is what this would be, a real political transition featuring inclusiveness, rule of law, and the primacy of citizenship over sect, ethnicity, and other divisive categories. These conversations have yet to bear fruit, mostly because the regime in Iran and the Russians continue to offer a lifeline to the murderous Assad, but we must keep trying. We must keep trying.

One look at the images of the destruction in Aleppo or the faces of Syrians fleeing to Europe for a better life reminds us of the human costs of inaction. It is because of this that the Iranian and Russian escalation in recent weeks is so outrageous. These countries look at Syria as a ground line of communication to Hezbollah or a friendly host for a warm-water naval outpost. They turn a blind eye to the suffering of ordinary men, women, and children in an effort to exert their international influence. Russia's warplanes have struck in areas where the Syrian opposition, not ISIS, operates. Their strikes appear indiscriminate and have killed many civilians.

Now, in the case of Iran, the recent visit of a designated terrorist and IRGC commander, Qasem Soleimani—his movement to Syria indicates that Iran and its proxies like Hezbollah are still central elements of this fight. I am on the floor today as leaders from major countries meet in Vienna. Yesterday in a speech at Carnegie Endowment, Secretary Kerry described his diplomatic task as ''charting a course out of hell.'' That is how he described the way out through a political resolution in Syria.

Although news reports indicate that these talks will not deal directly with the question of Bashar al-Assad, our policy must remain firm. Assad has no place—no place in Syria's future. No bombing campaigns, no promise of sham elections should change that. I commend the work Secretary Kerry is doing. I commend him for the speech he gave yesterday.

One month ago I wrote to him calling for greater U.S. leadership on at least three tracks: political, multilateral, and humanitarian. In the response to my letter, the State Department emphasized, ''The only way to sustainably end the suffering of the Syrian people is through a genuine political solution consistent with the Geneva principles.''

I appreciate and agree with this commitment. However, I am concerned that the Governments of Syria, Iran, and Russia remain in clear violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, including flouting arms control restrictions and travel sanctions. These regimes do not appear to be ready for dialogue consistent with the Geneva principles. Secretary Kerry said during his Carnegie speech yesterday that the United States and Russia have many points of common ground on Syria. However, the areas of divergence are stark.

We know there is no military solution to this conflict. Only a political settlement can heal the deep wounds across Syria. We must continually assert that no political solution can include a role for Bashar al-Assad. For a ruler who indiscriminately barrel bombs children over and over again, presides over the death of over one-quarter of a million civilians, there must be no soft political landing.

We have said over and over again—and I will continue to say it—that Assad must go. It is important our negotiators in Vienna insist that these talks are a vehicle to effectuate the removal of Assad, not continue his brutal rule.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business and following my speech that Senator LEE from Utah be recognized.

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

TRIBUTE TO M.H. ''WOODY'' WOODSIDE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, all of us know that back in our home States today and every day, there are men and women working hard to plant the fields, manufacture the products, run the chambers of commerce, sell the groceries, cut the lawns, make the beds, make our States work, and make our economy work. We also know that as politicians serving in the Senate, there is not one of us who doesn't owe our career to community leaders back home who take the time to lend their support to us, bring their communities to us, and give us the fortification we need to serve our great State.

Back in Georgia there is one such person who means a lot to me and who meets all those criteria. His name is Woody Woodside. Woody is the president of The Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce in Brunswick, GA. On November 5, he is going to be honored for 30 consecutive years as president of that chamber. And Woody is one great chamber president, let me tell you.

He got his start right here in Washington, DC, working 11 years for Bo Ginn, the Congressman from Georgia's coast, and for 3 years following that for Bo's successor, Lindsay Thomas. Woody worked hard for our State, he worked hard for his district, and he worked hard for those members of commerce.

But he comes back to us every year now as the president of the chamber of commerce. He brings his board with him. He brings the issues that are before them and he lobbies hard for his community. But he also lobbies hard for the environment. Woody represents a chamber that promotes tourism on the coast of Georgia but fights equally for the preservation of the estuary of the Atlantic, the Marshes of Glynn.

He is proud of his community and proud of the work he does. He is a tireless worker on behalf of his State and his community. He loves his beautiful family—his wife Ellen, his daughter Mary Gould, his late son Jay, his grandson James ''Woods'' Woodside, and his granddaughter Mary Bremer Moorhead.

He is one of those priceless citizens who means so much to our State and so much to me personally. On this occasion on the floor of the Senate, I pay tribute to Woody Woodside for his 30 years of service to the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce and thank him for everything he has done for his country, his State, and his community.

May God bless Woody Woodside, and may God bless the United States of America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the budget deal before the Senate today is not just a horrible piece of legislation that is undeserving of this Chamber's support, it also represents the last gasping breath of a disgraced bipartisan beltway establishment on the verge of collapse.

The bill is the product of an unfair, dysfunctional, and fundamentally undemocratic process—a process that is virtually indistinguishable from what we promised the American people a GOP-controlled Congress would bring to an end. We made that promise precisely because negotiating legislation behind closed doors without input from the majority of Members and then rushing it through to final passage without debate or opportunity for amendments violates our party's core principles. It also inevitably leads to bad policy.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 is a case in point. This bill would suspend the debt limit for 17 months and increase government spending beyond its already unsustainable levels. It would

do so while failing to make reforms that would put us on a path toward fiscal sustainability.

Many proponents of this budget deal challenge this claim. They say: Well, the bill isn't perfect, but while it isn't perfect it does include some meaningful entitlement reforms.

The sales pitch we hear most often alleges that this budget deal will save the Social Security disability trust fund from insolvency, but we are never told exactly how this bill would do this. That is because, as always, the devil is in the details.

I rise today to discuss these very details, details that prove this budget deal's so-called entitlement reforms are nothing of the sort. At best, they are well-intentioned but ineffectual tweaks to a program that desperately needs fundamental, structural overhaul. At worst, they are accounting gimmicks unbecoming of the U.S. Congress.

According to the Social Security trustees, the Social Security Disability Insurance Program—or SSDI—is scheduled to run out of money in 2016, which means that without serious reform disability benefits would be slashed across the board by nearly 20 percent.

Under the Budget Control Act of 2015, the bankruptcy deadline of SSDI would be pushed off for an additional 6 years until 2022. But here is the kicker: It would do so by raiding the Social Security trust fund to the tune of $150 billion. That is right. Our grand, bipartisan solution to the impending insolvency of our Nation's disability insurance program amounts to stealing $150 billion from our Nation's largest retirement insurance program.

This isn't the only phony pay-for in this budget deal. There are others that simply move money around from elsewhere in the Federal budget, such as the Crime Victims Fund and the Assets Forfeiture Fund. There are also new heavyhanded instruments that purport to implement cost savings in Medicaid reimbursements but actually only impose misguided price controls on the generic drug industry. Only in Washington, DC, could something so deceptive and ineffective, something so unfair to America's seniors and future generations, be considered a reform.

To be fair, there are a couple of sound entitlement reforms in this budget deal that deserve to be commended. First, there is a position that would correct a design error in the Social Security program that amounts to an unfair and wasteful loophole. Fixing this would save a significant amount of money over a 75-year window. There are also measures that would increase the penalties for fraud, create new pilot programs, and prohibit doctors with felonies from submitting medical evidence. But these minor changes don't even come close to putting SSDI on a path toward fiscal sustainability and sanity, and they represent only a tiny fraction of the sensible reform proposals put forth by our conference.

Many of my colleagues, such as Senator LANKFORD and Senator COTTON, have already spoken or will soon speak on the floor about the long list of structural reform ideas that are still sitting on the sidelines of this debate. I wish to take a moment to touch on just a few of them.

Senator COATS has a proposal that would protect the SSDI trust fund from being drawn down by fugitive felons illegally receiving disability benefits.

Senator HATCH has put forth a plan that would prevent an individual from receiving both unemployment insurance and disability insurance simultaneously, ensuring that SSDI funds would remain focused on their intended population.

I also have a proposal that would expand the footprint of private disability insurance program, which I intend to file as an amendment to this bill.

That is not all. My friends, Senator COTTON and Senator LANKFORD, have their own proposals, and there has been an equal amount of policy innovation by our colleagues in the House of Representatives.

They are all commonsense ideas that would bring us much closer to real SSDI reform than what is found in this budget deal, but you won't hear much about them in this debate because there won't be any real debate on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015—no amendments, a fast-approaching deadline and, in the end, a take-it-or-leave-it choice forced upon us with our backs up against a cliff.

This is not how Congress is supposed to operate. This is not how we promised the country we would conduct the American people's business if given control of the House and the Senate. We should be the party of ideas, but we won't be so long as we continue to tolerate a legislative process that stifles our most innovative proposals from getting a fair hearing. We should be the party of reform, but we won't be so long as individual Senators are blocked from offering amendments to legislation. We should be the party of fiscal sanity and responsible governance, but we won't be so long as we continue to govern by crisis and by cliff, delaying the inevitable while working only 3 days a week in our legislative calendar. We should be the party that looks out for the most vulnerable among us, but we won't be so long as we lack the courage to enact the structural reform that our retirement and disability programs need to survive for generations to come.

We can be all of these things. I know we can, but it is going to take hard work—a fair, open, and inclusive legislative process, and all the policy innovation we can muster. It is going to take something more, something better than this budget deal.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARPER. 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. CARPER. Mr. President, in recent weeks I have spoken three or four or five times on the question of whether we are going to realistically and honestly fund the transportation improvements our country so badly needs. I don't know if it is my imagination, but every time I am here speaking on the subject, you are here. We have any number of people—50-some Republican Senators in the majority—who cycle in as Presiding Officer, yet you always seem to draw the short straw and get to hear me wax eloquently about transportation infrastructure. I am honored you would be back again today for more of the same. Pretty soon, you will be able to give these talks for me and I will sit up there and preside. I won't ask unanimous consent for that, but it is a good thought.

Mr. President, this is a picture that was taken, gosh, 60 or 70 years ago, and there is a quote here by a fellow who was a great military leader for our country during World War II and later one of our Presidents. In fact, he was President when I had just about come into the world and left as President a few years after that. The photograph says, ''This is the first project in the United States on which actual construction was started under provisions of the new Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956.''

This is in Missouri. They have the contractor and some of the local folks there. I don't see Ike anywhere, but his words are here at the bottom of this old photograph. His words that day were: ''A modern, efficient highway system is essential to meet the needs of our growing population, our expanding economy, and our national security.''

There is a word—''prescient''—that indicates something is wise and forward-looking. Those words are just that—wise and forward-looking—and they were first spoken almost 60 years ago by President Eisenhower.

This week, President Obama and leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate reached a long-sought compromise on a budget deal for 2 years, through 2017. And while there are certainly some aspects of that budget deal that are disappointing, other aspects of it, at least for me—in terms of finding ways to save money, going after program integrity, and looking for waste and fraud—bring a good deal to like about it as well.

It is encouraging that Democrats and Republicans were able to come together to reach an agreement—any agreement—that will pause the cycle of crisis government, from crisis to crisis, where we find too much of our time across the Federal Government, as we run up to these crises, spent not doing work—the work we ought to be doing—

but actually trying to figure out how we deal with a shutdown. At least we can say this agreement will prevent that and for the next couple of years enable people across the Federal Government to do their work, whether it happens to be agriculture, environment, law enforcement, border security, or you name it.

The other thing I would say is by preventing a default on our Federal obligations and lifting the harmful spending cuts—particularly in the areas of our budget where we actually invest money that create economic opportunity—this deal will help to encourage continued economic growth and recovering from low job creation and job preservation.

I heard today that this agreement is worth about an extra one-third of a million jobs, and in a little State like mine, Delaware, with fewer than a million people, that is quite a few jobs. However, if we really wanted to focus on economic growth and job creation, we would be talking a lot more about transportation, and I mentioned the words here of Dwight Eisenhower, but let's go on to the next poster.

While there is much to like in the budget agreement we are debating today and into the night, I am disappointed that it fails to offer a long-term plan to increase investment in America's infrastructure, particularly in our transportation infrastructure. A budget deal like this offered a prime opportunity to address our chronic underinvestment in the roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems of this Nation.

I have looked high and low in this budget agreement, and when it comes to transportation, there is a ''whole lotta nothing'' in there with respect to transportation and infrastructure investment. Instead, Congress is now poised to pass not the 13th but the 14th extension of our Federal transportation programs since 2008. We have done this 14 times. Fortunately, this extension does not require us to add to the $74 billion we have spent since 2008 to bail out the highway transportation fund time and again, but it only continues the cycle of uncertainty and crisis governing that prevented our States and our cities from planning major transportation projects.

I would just insert here that if you look at the country from coast to coast, our State transportation budgets use a mix of funds from different sources, but on average, about half the money they spend—from Delaware and the other 49 States—comes from the Federal Government.

We have missed another opportunity to give our Nation's economy a serious boost. This is a little bit of what I am talking about. This poster says: ''Here's why Congress needs to reauthorize funding to rebuild America's infrastructure.'' Here are a few numbers to keep in mind: 25 percent, 45 percent, and 65 percent. Twenty-five percent of our bridges require significant repair. Either that or they cannot handle today's traffic at all. Twenty-five percent. Forty-five percent of Americans lack access to transit. Forty-five percent. Sixty-five percent of America's roads are rated in less than good condition. Sixty-five percent.

There is an outfit called the American Society of Civil Engineers. One of the things they do every year is to rate highways, roads, and bridges. They assign a grade. It could be an A.

We have our pages here. They are here doing their school work while they are paging in the Senate, so they do double duty, but hopefully they are all getting A's in their courses. Our roads, highways, and bridges do not receive any A's. They do not receive B's. Hopefully our pages get B's and better, but our roads, highways, and bridges do not. In fact, our roads, highways, and transit systems are earning a D. D is disappointing. D is degraded. D is dogged. And our Nation's bridges earn a C-plus. Those aren't grades that our pages would be proud of or that their parents would be proud of, and those certainly aren't grades we should be proud of as a country.

In the most recent World Economic Forum ranking, in less than a decade the United States has fallen from seventh overall in the quality of our transportation infrastructure. A decade ago we were No. 7; today we are No. 18. In Billboard magazine, when they are rating the top record across the country—a record on the rise gets a vote. A No. 5 in the vote means it is heading up the charts. Ten years ago we were No. 7, and now, like a bullet, we are heading right the other way—from No. 7 to No. 18. We are heading in a very wrong direction.

Here in this poster we can see that highways and transit spending as a share of GDP has not been going up.

In 1962 John Kennedy was President and I was a junior in high school, just like you pages. In 1962 the share of GDP that we spent for highways and transit was right at 3 percent—right at 3 percent. Over time it started dropping. Around 1972, in the middle of the Vietnam war—I spent some time overseas in Southeast Asia with my compadres—it dropped to 2 percent. We were trying to pay for guns and bullets. It really dropped rather steeply there, probably because of the war. What has gone on since 1972 is to trend down, down, and down, and now the number is somewhere between 1 and 1.5 percent. It has diminished by more than half since 1962.

Let me mention a couple of other numbers. The infrastructure spending is only about 2.5 percent of GDP in the United States. Actually, it is only about 1.5 percent in the United States. What is that compared to? Compared to what?

I have a friend, and when you ask him ''How are you doing?'' he says ''Compared to what?'' Well, how is the United States doing? Well, compared to what? We are at 1.5 percent—actually, a little less than that—of GDP for transportation infrastructure. Where are our Canadians up to the north? They are at 4 percent—more than twice the number we are. Australia, South Korea—where are they? They are at 5 percent, and 5 percent for most of Europe. China is at 9 to 12 percent. They are spending 9 to 12 percent of their GDP on transportation and infrastructure. We are spending 1.5 percent. That is not a good thing. That is not a good thing.

The National Association of Manufacturers estimates that their investments in roads and highways dropped significantly between 2003 and 2012. How significantly? By another 20 percent.

To meet our country's needs in ways that support American business and families, an outfit called McKinsey Global Institute—most of us have heard of the McKinsey Consulting Company, but they have an arm of their company called McKinsey Global Institute—estimates that we need to increase infrastructure investment by $150 billion annually through 2020 to catch up the backlog of projects that are badly needed—roads, highways, bridges, and transit.

Our lack of transportation investment is hurting families, individuals, and businesses. There is an outfit down in Texas, Texas A&M, which is famous in recent years for their football teams, but they are also well known because every year they give us a report on congestion on the roads, highways, and bridges in the United States. They found that the average commuter across the country wastes 42 hours per year in traffic—42 hours per year just sitting there or barely moving. If you actually look at cities such as New York City or Philadelphia or Dallas or Denver or L.A., that number is 82 hours per year. Think about that—82 hours per year here in the greater Washington area and a lot of other places, such as L.A. and New York City. The resulting wasted fuel and lost productivity cost the Nation's economy $160 billion this year—$160 billion. That works out to about $960 per commuter.

In addition to congestion, we have other costs to commuters—people out on the roads, highways, and bridges—that come from our repairs.

Not everybody can see this, but obviously there is a guy working on potholes and talking to his supervisor. It says: Warning, potholes. But here is the number that is really the key: There is $516 per driver in increased repair and maintenance costs every year.

There was an editorial in the Philadelphia Inquirer last week, talking to consumers and voters, that said: The next time you get a bill for replacing your tires, your steering, your rims or whatever, send the bill to your Congressman, your Congresswoman, your Senator.

Even if it is only half of that, it is still a lot of money. I don't have reason to believe it is half, but even if it is, it

is a huge amount of money that we are spending. Add to that the waste of time, and this adds up.

This is a sad commentary. Some of the charts I use are humorous; this one is not. Poor roadway conditions were a significant factor in approximately one-third of the 32,000 traffic fatalities last year. About 10,000 people who would be alive today are not. The primary contributing factor to their death was the poor condition of the highways, roads, and bridges on which they were traveling.

I mentioned the McKinsey Global Institute a minute ago. They said that if we were serious about making real progress and doing it promptly on the condition of roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems, we ought to be investing about $150 billion a year. Here is another report from the McKinsey Global Institute. It says that about a $150 to $180 billion in annual investment is needed for 15 to 20 years. That is a lot of money for a long time. They say that if we are serious and consistent in robustly investing in transportation infrastructure, we would add to GDP, not once but every year, somewhere between 1.4 percent and 1.7 percent per year, and we would add about 1.8 million jobs if we are willing to make the kind of investments that we need. Those aren't my numbers. Those are McKinsey's.

Put it all together, and this explains why Senator DICK DURBIN and I introduced a month or so ago what we call the TRAFFIC Relief Act. It raises about $220 billion in new money, user fee revenue—revenue that can only be used for roads, highways, transit, and bridges, and not for anything else—not for foreign aid, not for wars, not for some other domestic program. But $220 billion would go into roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems.

The legislation Senator DURBIN and I introduced permanently eliminates the annual highway trust fund shortfalls. Every year we run out of money. We run out of money in the transportation trust fund and take money out of the general fund to fill up the transportation trust fund. When the general fund runs out of money, we go around the world cup-in-hand borrowing money from people such as China to refill the transportation trust fund. Then, when we call China on their misbehavior—it might be manipulation, it might be dumping various goods and services on our country, it might be messing around in the South China Sea and other places—we say to them: You can't do that.

If I were them, I would say to us: We thought you wanted to borrow our money. We shouldn't be in that position. So the TRAFFIC Relief Act Senator DURBIN and I introduced raises an additional $72 billion over 10 years for new transportation investments, over and above what would otherwise be generated. We could use that $72 billion and more.

Not everybody can read the script here, but this one fellow here is saying: ''There is no way I can afford an increase in the gas tax.'' Then over here it goes on to say, as his car is towed away: ''I spend all my money fixing my car because of these terrible roads.'' Think about that. There are a lot of terrible roads, highways, and bridges, and some pretty lousy transit systems as well. I spent money on my minivan last year replacing a tire that cost me about $200 because of a problem with the road. I am not the only person. That happens to a lot of folks during the course of the year.

Those are all the posters I have. I will close by saying that on the Environmental and Public Works Committee, where I serve, we have reported out unanimously authorizing legislation that would authorize investments in transportation systems—roads, bridges, highways, and transits—for the next 6 years. It is actually very smart legislation. I give Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE, the lead Democrat and the lead Republican on the committee, a lot of credit for leading that effort.

The House of Representatives is coming up with a 6-year transportation authorization plan that reflects in many ways what we have done in the Senate. To the extent that is the case, then we applaud their efforts as well.

Some may remember another poster I showed earlier, an enlarged photograph of a fellow wearing a cowboy hat as if he were asleep on his back. The cowboy hat was covering his face. He didn't look like the ''Marlboro Man.'' He looked like a cowboy who had been ridden hard and put up wet. The caption at the bottom of the poster was talking about the hat: ''All hat, no cattle,'' suggesting the guy wasn't a real cowboy. ''All hat, no cattle.''

It is great that we have sound, smart transportation authorization legislation, and we do. What is really disappointing is ''all hat and no cattle'' when it comes to paying for this stuff, not coming close to the amount of money we need to invest. We are not even close. I think we are going to look at a 6-year transportation authorization with maybe 3 years of funding. Some of that funding we create by borrowing and spending, which is like 8, 9, 10 years down the road and bringing it forward to pay for spending today. I don't feel good about that. I expect you don't either. In some cases we are taking money that is supposedly being collected for TSA, for aviation safety and our security in the skies, and using that money for roads, highways, bridges—taking TSA funding increases and using it for a couple of months on roads, highways, bridges, and improvements. We do the same thing with Customs fees along our border. People and a lot of commerce come across our border. Another idea we have used in the past is taking money out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, maybe from oil we bought for $80, $90 a barrel and turning around and selling it for half that price. Buy high and sell low—I don't think that is a very smart strategy for investing in or for funding transportation projects. The American people deserve better than this.

Ronald Reagan, Eisenhower, and others—even Democrats—have said that the way we have funded transportation for years in this country and improvements to transportation—roads, highways, bridges—is a user approach. The folks and the businesses that use our roads, highways, and bridges ought to pay for it. That is what we have done. We have come to a place in this country where we are finding it hard to pay for the things we need and the things we want. Somehow we have to summon the courage to do what the American people expect us to do, which is to work together, to work smartly, and to make some tough decisions.

The legislation I alluded to that Senator DURBIN and I and another colleague or two have introduced and sponsored would raise the gas tax and diesel tax in this country. It hasn't been raised in 22 years. The gas tax, which 22 years ago was raised to 18 cents, because of inflation is now worth less than a dime. The diesel tax, which 22 years ago was worth about 23 cents, is now not even worth 15 cents. Meanwhile, the cost of concrete, asphalt, steel, and labor have all gone up, and we are still stuck with the same purchasing power from these user fees that we had 22 years ago. The math doesn't add up. As a result, we earn nearly failing grades for the transportation system that we have.

If we were to somehow wave a magic wand and the House and the Senate would come to their senses and pass by acclamation an increase in the user fee of 4 cents a year for 4 years, we would get to 2020 and we would have added 16 cents over that period of time to what is one of the lowest user fees on gas and diesel of any advanced nation in the world. I think we are No. 33 out of 34 of the OECD nations. In 2020, after an increase of 4 cents a year for 4 years was put in place, the cost to the average driver is the cost of a cup of coffee a week. Think about it. For the average driver paying an additional user fee of 4 cents a year for 4 years, indexing for inflation, the cost is the cost of a cup of coffee a week.

The question I would ask my colleagues—and I think we would ask most people—is this: Would you rather put up with really—one of my favorite, good senatorial words—''crappy'' roads, highways, bridges? Would you rather continue to put up with that?

We could have a transportation system that we could be proud of for a cup of coffee. I don't think that is asking too much.

I don't have a magic wand. I don't think it is likely that my colleagues will rush to the floor after these remarks today and say: Let's do something real. Let's see if we can't get our roads, highways, and bridges making the kinds of grades that our pages are making doing their schoolwork while they serve us here in the Senate.

In the Bible there is a parable where some seeds were sown on the hard ground and never bore fruit. Some came up for a little while and raised up some plants but then died away in the hot sun. But others took root and grew a hundredfold. I am going to keep sowing these seeds, and hopefully someday soon—sooner rather than later—some of these seeds will fall on fertile soil.

Until then, I look forward to joining the Presiding Officer on the floor to keep this up until you say ''uncle'' and then we will change places.

I see my friend from Kansas—my many talented friend—here with our friend from Nebraska. I am tempted to wait and see what they have to say.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, in the morning we will vote on a budget agreement and I will vote no. I think it is useful and important for my constituents to understand my thinking and the basis on which I reach that conclusion.

In my mind, one of the most important issues that we face in this country today is the fiscal condition of our country. The amount of debt that we incur and the amount of debt that we continue to incur is a significant drag on our economy, on job creation, and, in reality, on the American dream.

It is an economic issue. At some point in time, if we don't get our fiscal house in order, we will pay a significant price. We can either deal with this issue in a gradual, incremental way, in which we set ourselves on a path to right, or we can wait for the crisis to occur, which I have no doubt will happen.

While it is often said that this is an economic issue, and fiscal issues matter to the country, I also would point out that this is not just an economic issue. It is a moral issue. The borrowing of money to pay for services and goods that the government provides the American people is a selfish circumstance in which we take the so-called benefits of government programs today and expect future generations of Americans to pay for those benefits. It is wrong economically for us to continue down the path of fiscal irresponsibility, but it is also morally wrong to expect someone else to pay for the so-called benefits we receive today.

As to this issue today, this Bipartisan Budget Act—this bipartisan effort to resolve the circumstance we find ourselves in because we face a debt limit problem—the problem is that if we don't do something, then we reach the debt limit. There are those who will argue that the consequences of not raising the debt ceiling are so dramatic, so damaging that we need to do that regardless of the fiscal consequences of doing so.

I come down on the side of fiscal responsibility, and I want to explain why. I want Kansans to know how I think about this issue. In fact, one of the first letters I ever wrote to President Obama as a new U.S. Senator, March of 2011, was an explanation to the President that he needed to work with Congress, and I offered to work with the President and the administration and my colleagues in the Congress and the Senate to see if we couldn't find a solution so that when we raised the debt ceiling, we actually did something that would change the course, the path of spending we are on.

I explained to Kansans, by publishing that letter and explaining my comments in the letter to the President, what I believed was important, most important. Unfortunately, since 2011 we are no more on a course of fiscal sanity than we were when I wrote the letter to the President.

Here is the point I want to make. If we give up the leverage, the opportunity that this issue presents to us as Members of Congress, to force us to do things that we apparently don't have the will, the courage, the political desire to do, how do we ever get it done? Again, I guess there will be editorialists—certainly across the country and perhaps a few in Kansas—who will say that we need to raise the debt ceiling because it is irresponsible not to. Isn't it also true that it is irresponsible simply to raise the debt ceiling every time we need it? If we don't take advantage of the circumstance we are in to force ourselves to do the things that need to be done, we are irresponsible.

I read a lot of history. For a few years I have studied our country as a private citizen, and I have been involved in the political process in Washington in trying to resolve problems our country faces. Here is an observation: Things have changed over time. It used to be a bipartisan desire, a bipartisan understanding that balancing the budget was important. One of things that has changed over time is there no longer seems to be the desire on the part of many in Congress—many don't see it and in my view Democrats in particular don't see deficits as a bad thing. We look the other way.

Maybe in days gone by, when there was broad consensus from Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents that balancing the budget was something that mattered, that reducing the debt at least over time was important, that when we incurred expenditures going to war that we paid for them, that was something that was generally believed across the country by the vast majority of Americans and by the vast majority of Members of Congress, regardless of what political party they associate with.

That consensus, that drive, that insistence that we do that no longer exists, which highlights for me that the necessity of using this issue of whether the debt ceiling should be raised to determine what we should do about reducing spending, reducing the debt, figuring out what the balance is between taxes and expenditures is all the more important.

If I had any faith that this Congress, this President were going to deal with the deficit, regardless of what happened with the debt ceiling, then I wouldn't be interested in using the debt ceiling as a tool to force change in behavior in Washington, DC, but unfortunately I have no faith that there are enough people here who care enough about the deficit to do something about it unless we are forced to do so.

At the moment, the only tool I have is to insist we use this opportunity, in which we are requested to raise the debt ceiling, to change the course our country is on in regard to spending and deficits. Again, the argument may be by some it is irresponsible. In fact, I have heard so many times that all we are doing is authorizing the borrowing of money to pay for the things we have already encumbered.

Wouldn't it seem a better solution for us to quit encumbering over time rather than coming after the fact and saying let's raise the debt ceiling? But the reality apparently is there is no will to do that. We can say it is irresponsible not to raise the debt ceiling. We can say we are only paying for the things we have already decided to spend money on, but if that is the only thing we say, we never take it to the necessary step of doing anything about the problem.

It is irresponsible not to use this opportunity to force us to behave in ways that are good for the country today, that are economically solid and sound, that are morally correct. Borrowing money ad infinitum is not an option for this country under either economic or moral circumstances.

It is irresponsible for us to once again decide we will try to solve this problem later. I have always thought that the most important political issue we face, the one that has been most important to the country since I was elected to the Senate, was how do we make certain that the economy is growing, there are job opportunities, people feel secure in their employment, they have the opportunity to advance their careers, and they have the sense that they are saving for their kids' education, that they are saving for their own retirement. This issue of the fiscal condition of our country inhibits the ability for that economic security to be available to Americans.

I wish to conclude by saying we need to do what is responsible. What is responsible is making certain we pay our way and that we don't expect others to do so in the future. To only say that we have to reach this agreement in order to avoid greater challenges in our country is to walk away from something that I think is a primary and important responsibility of Congress and the President. It is unfortunate.

In my time and service in the Senate, President Obama has been the President, but I have seen no political will on the part of this administration to do anything about the long-term consequences of spending more money

than we have. That means we have no choice but to insist that something be done, and the only opportunity before us is this question of whether the debt ceiling should be raised without corresponding reductions in spending.

In my view, those reductions in spending take priority. It is important. Our primary responsibility as American citizens, as an American citizen, not just as a U.S. Senator but all of us as American citizens—we have a responsibility to do two things for the future of our country: protect and preserve the freedoms and liberties guaranteed by our Constitution and make sure the American dream is alive and well so future Americans have the chance to pursue their dreams in this country.

To continue to borrow money to put our country's fiscal condition in jeopardy once again means we will have failed that responsibility because the spending and borrowing of money inhibits our personal liberties and freedoms and reduces economic opportunity, the American dream for all Americans.

I will vote no.

I yield the floor to the Senator from Nebraska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

EQUAL PAY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise to respond to the minority leader's earlier comments today regarding equal pay. Pay discrimination is wrong. It is also illegal. Republicans and Democrats alike believe that violations of the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act should be punished to the full extent of the law.

Let me be crystal clear. The lack of consensus on proposals like the Paycheck Fairness Act does not mean that Republicans do not support the principle of equal pay. I am tired of hearing that Republicans don't have any new ideas on this issue.

I have offered legislation, the Workplace Advancement Act, which would prohibit retaliation against employees who discuss their wages. My proposal has a strong record of success, and unlike other proposals out there, it has bipartisan support.

In April of 2014, before Republicans had the majority, I, along with Senator AYOTTE, Senator COLLINS, and Senator MURKOWSKI, offered an amendment to the Paycheck Fairness Act that would make it illegal to retaliate against employees for seeking or sharing information on their wages. Unfortunately, that amendment was not considered.

This March I offered a similar amendment to the budget that would reaffirm and strengthen equal pay laws and make it illegal to retaliate against employees for seeking or sharing information on their wages. This nonretaliation measure was adopted to the budget resolution with bipartisan support. The legislative progress of my efforts to protect women in the workplace from retaliation for trying to ensure fairness in pay suggests a clear bipartisan way forward in this Chamber.

When women are fighting to be paid what they are worth, they need to know what they are up against. Knowledge is power, especially in the case of equal pay. Ensuring transparency will make it easier for workers to recognize pay discrimination and ensure that they are being paid fairly. How can workers negotiate for fair pay when they don't know how their industry or their employer compensates other workers? How can a woman know that discrimination is taking place if she is prohibited from asking about what other workers are making?

I want to empower women to be their own best advocates, secure in the knowledge that they have every tool available to them as they negotiate for the wages they deserve. It is time to remove this issue from our election-year politics. Let's have a real conversation about a substantive policy change that will improve the lives of all workers. I hope the Senate will soon consider my legislation because I believe Republicans and Democrats can come together on this issue and we can make a real, needed difference in ensuring equal pay.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, prior to being elected to the U.S. Senate, I spent 28 years in business. When you are in business, you know you can't keep spending more money than you are taking in or you go broke, you go out of business. I was elected to help get our country back on track and get the reckless spending and record debt of Washington, DC, under control. In fact, the very first bill I introduced in the U.S. Senate was the Balanced Budget Accountability Act. It is pretty simple. It requires that the Members of Congress pass a balanced budget or they don't get paid. The people of Montana deserve real solutions to address the failures of Washington, DC, not more budget gimmicks and backroom deals. In fact, Montana's farmers will suffer because of this budget deal. The crop insurance program was gutted as a way to make this deal work. Where was the voice of Montana? Where was the voice of rural America as this backroom deal was cut?

This deal takes our Nation in the wrong direction, and that is why I am voting no. This budget deal would increase our spending by $117 billion over the next 2 years and raise the debt limit through 2017. How big are these numbers? We are currently at about $18.1 trillion of debt. By the end of this 2-year agreement, sometime in 2017, we will be above $19 trillion. How big is 1 trillion? Do you know how long it takes to count to 1 million? If we were to count to 1 million 1 digit per second, 24 by 7, it takes less than 30 days to count to 1 million.

How long does it take to count to 1 billion? To count to 1 billion would take 32 years. Then the question is, How long would it take to count to 1 trillion? We are throwing around these numbers without much sense of how big they truly are when we are talking about $18 trillion—and soon to be $19 trillion—worth of debt. How long would it take to count to $1 trillion? It would take 32,000 years.

It is irresponsible for Washington to increase the limit on the Nation's credit card while at the same time busting the budget and increasing government spending with the false promise of far-off savings and new revenues that will never materialize. It is time that Washington, DC, takes a page out of Montana's playbook and stops spending more than we are taking in. It is time for commonsense solutions that protect the taxpayer and make elected officials accountable for delivering results to the people they serve because Americans deserve a thoughtful and open discussion, not one with backroom deals, about how to best support the Nation's priorities while also cutting wasteful spending and reining in this national debt. The current budget fails to provide a more secure future for the next generation of Montanans.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, back in August several western States and Indian tribes suffered an enormous environmental disaster. It has been called the Gold King Mine spill. In this disaster, the Environmental Protection Agency spilled 3 million gallons of toxic wastewater into a tributary of the Animas River in Colorado. This plume of toxic waste threatened people in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. It stretched to the land of the Navajo Nation and the southern Ute Indian Tribes.

Last month, I chaired a hearing of the Indian Affairs Committee that looked at the spill. The EPA was there to testify. The EPA claimed that it was taking full responsibility, and then it did everything it could to deflect actual blame. They said they were taking full responsibility; then they did everything they could to deflect actual blame.

The agency administrator actually told our committee that this spill was inevitable. She said it was ''inevitable.'' Does that sound like someone who is actually taking full responsibility?

Well, last week we got the results of the investigation by the Department of Interior about what actually happened at the Gold King Mine. On Friday the Washington Post reported: ''EPA gets blame for mine spill into rivers.'' Well, according to this report, the EPA's crew didn't take engineering into account when it was working on the mine. It didn't take engineering into account. The agency didn't understand that waters in these mines, according

to the report, ''can create hydraulic forces similar to a dam.'' How could the experts from the EPA, the U.S. Government's Environmental Protection Agency, not know that? The report also said that ''the conditions and actions that led to the Gold King Mine incident are not isolated or unique, and in fact are surprisingly prevalent.''

Remember, the EPA said it was inevitable. This spill was inevitable only because the EPA is so inept, so negligent, and so incompetent that it was inevitable the agency would cause a disaster like this someday, and now they have. It is inevitable that the agency is going to keep making the same mistakes unless something changes at this irresponsible, incompetent agency.

What has changed? It has been almost 3 months since this disaster happened. The Environmental Protection Agency has not named a single person whom it is holding responsible for poisoning the river. If the EPA's incompetence is ''surprisingly prevalent,'' as the investigation found, you would think that this agency should be trying to get its house in order before it takes on new jobs. That is not what the Obama administration is doing. Oh, no, it is not slowing down at all. It is not slowing down in its quest for power or in finding more ways that it can control what people do.

On Friday, the Obama administration published the final rule for what it calls its Clean Power Plan. This regulation would create more Washington control over how electricity is produced across the country. That very same day 26 States, including mine and that of the President's, filed lawsuits in Federal court to stop this disastrous rule. These States say that the Environmental Protection Agency went far beyond anything that the law allows and far beyond anything Congress ever intended. I completely agree. This rule is too expensive, it is too extensive, and it is too extreme.

The EPA does have a job to do, and it is failing dramatically at its job. Instead of going back to basics and doing its job right, the EPA wants more power, more control, and less accountability. This so-called Clean Power Plan will cost billions of dollars. According to one estimate, it will destroy the jobs of more than 125,000 Americans. None of that seems to matter to the President of the United States or his administration and the EPA. They are driven by ideology, not by the facts, and their ideology is driven by their desire for more control. That is why it is so urgent that we focus our attention on all of the ways this Washington bureaucracy is trying to restrict people's freedom and take more control for themselves.

The Obama administration isn't even satisfied telling States how to get their energy. Now the Obama administration wants to be involved in making these decisions for the whole world. It is trying to negotiate a climate change treaty that will impose broad new limits on American energy. This treaty will also do incredible damage to the American economy. At the same time, the administration wants to pay billions of American taxpayer dollars—hard-earned dollars—to other countries. In return for these other countries adopting green energy sources like solar panels, the Obama administration will help prop up their economies, not at their expense but at America's expense. It wants to do all of this behind closed doors without any oversight from Congress or the American people.

The administration wants to make sure that nobody can do anything to stop it until after it is too late. It wants to tie the hands of the American economy, dole out billions of taxpayer dollars, and not even ask the American people if that is what they want. The U.S. Congress cannot stand for that. It is the wrong choice for America, and it is the wrong choice for the rest of the world as well.

There was an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal last Thursday by Bjorn Lomborg. He is the director of a nonpartisan international group called the Copenhagen Consensus Center. The headline is ''This Child Doesn't Need a Solar Panel.'' It has a photo of a child in a slum in Mozambique. The author points out that the Obama administration is wrongly focused on the kind of climate change payoff that the President is promoting.

In the op-ed he writes:

> This effectively means telling the world's worst-off people, suffering from tuberculosis, malaria, or malnutrition, that what they really need isn't medicine, mosquito nets, or micronutrients, but a solar panel. It is terrible news.

He goes on:

> In a world in which malnourishment continues to claim at least 1.4 million children's lives each year, 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty, and 2.6 billion lack clean drinking water and sanitation, this growing emphasis on climate aid is immoral.

That is the assessment coming out of the Copenhagen Consensus Center. The President's actions are immoral. There are some very real dangers facing the United States and other countries today, such as the threat from global terrorists and from countries like Russia, Iran, and North Korea. There are desperate humanitarian crises around the world. That is where the Obama administration should focus its foreign policy.

Here at home, the EPA should be cleaning up the environment, not poisoning America's rivers and lakes. Until the Obama administration gets its priorities straight, Congress will have to act to stop it.

Republicans have introduced legislation to block some of the administration's most egregious new rules. Senator ERNST has filed a resolution against the so-called waters of the United States or the WOTUS rule. I have introduced legislation to replace the WOTUS rule with one that actually protects waterways while preventing Washington's takeover of nonnavigable waterways. Senator MCCONNELL and Senator CAPITO have filed resolutions against the extreme limits on powerplants. Senator FLAKE has filed one on the burdensome new ozone standard.

We are going to keep a spotlight on this administration as it negotiates this new climate change treaty. We are going to stop it from committing this country to another bad deal—and the rest of us will be paying for that bad deal long after President Obama is out of office.

Congress is going to hold the Obama administration accountable—accountable—and rein in the Washington bureaucrats before they do additional damage.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. 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. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise to express concern about the budget deal that seems to have been reached that we will vote on later today or tomorrow morning.

This Senator has a broader concern that we simply aren't cutting spending and that we aren't holding to the budget agreements we made. What we are doing here is getting rid of or extending the budget caps on the budget control agreement, spending about $80 billion more than we would have otherwise.

We have told ourselves that we have offset this spending. Here is my concern. It is clear that we haven't. Some of the so-called offsets are simple budget gimmicks. Many have been tried and true in the past, such as just extending the sequester a little longer. One that is of particular concern was raised earlier today. There is in this budget agreement a modest crop insurance savings provision. In farm bills over the past few years, we have tried to rein in some of the massive subsidies and waste that have gone on in terms of direct payments and some of the other methods. A lot of that funding has gone toward crop insurance, and it is quite a generous program. In fact, the taxpayer subsidizes crop insurance on average of I think about 70 percent. Seventy percent of the premium is paid for by the taxpayers.

What we are doing in this agreement or what we have tried to do in previous farm bills is say that the savings—if we reform these programs through so-called standard reinsurance agreements, or SRAs, if we realize some savings, than we plow those savings into the deficit or against the deficit. But what came out of the last farm bill was a provision that said if there are any

savings in this program, they have to stay within the program.

Now, we don't have that type of provision in just about any other program of government, where if you realize some savings by reform, you have to spend those savings on the program itself, just in another way. That doesn't save the taxpayer any money overall.

In this case, we have tried to get those savings, but the farm bill said no, it had to be plowed back into the program. So the reform that was agreed to in this budget deal was to do what we had been trying to do—to make sure that any savings that result from a standard reinsurance agreement be plowed into or be put against the deficit to actually save some money.

There is also a small provision which set a target rate for crop insurance companies at 8.9 percent rather than the 14.5 percent that it is currently at now. Opponents of this deal are saying that this minor change will gut crop insurance. I don't think that is true at all. Crop insurance is far from a suffering industry. It is a significant driver of the cost of our Nation's farm program.

Government costs for crop insurance have increased substantially over the decades. In fact, after ranging from $2.1 billion to $3.9 billion during fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2007, costs rose to a total of $14.1 billion by fiscal year 2012. In fiscal year 2013, the total costs were $6 billion, and in fiscal year 2014, $8.7 billion. Taxpayers are footing about 70 percent of the total costs of the program and 60 percent of all premiums paid.

This change would not impact the coverage that is received; it would simply trim some of the profits. Some say that will drive crop insurance out of business. I don't think so. There isn't a crisis here when taxpayers are footing 60 percent of the premiums and 70 percent of the overall cost of the program. Typically, it is the type of program the private sector would like to get into. If there is a problem with people fleeing the program, it hasn't been demonstrated. This is not an industry under siege; it is a industry which has seen dramatic expansion and which now faces a slight trimming of its profits. Yet we are saying that we can't stand it. What we are saying is that we are going to undo that deal as part of the budget deal before we even vote on the budget deal.

Earlier today on the floor, there was an agreement reached with the appropriators in the form of a colloquy that in the omnibus coming up in a couple of weeks, we would remove that provision, that savings of some $4 billion or $8 billion would simply be made up somehow by extending the sequester.

This reminds me of the last budget agreement we had, the Ryan-Murray budget, where there was a provision to very slightly adjust the cost-of-living increase for Active-Duty military retirees. This is something that the military actually asked us to do because they wanted to take a portion of the savings and put them into other areas of the military, but also it would realize a savings for us. This was a small adjustment for just Active-Duty military retirees who retired before the age of 62. If they made it all the way to 62, they could recover all the savings that were there for the COLA adjustment.

Three months after the agreement, because of lobbying by one particular small subset of those receiving these benefits, we reversed that change. Just 3 months after we signed the deal, we reversed part of the deal.

In this case, what we are doing with the Crop Insurance Program is we are not even waiting 3 months after the deal. We are not having a separate vote.

That vote, by the way, was 97 to 3 to reverse it, just because of some lobbying against it. I was one of the three opposed to reversing the program for the slight cuts.

But in this case, the Crop Insurance Program in this budget deal, we aren't even waiting until the ink is dry. In fact, we aren't even waiting until the ink is applied to the paper signing this deal. We are reversing this change before we even pass the deal. We are agreeing that in the omnibus in a couple of weeks, we are going to reverse these savings, we are going to reverse these offsets.

I had a lot of problems with this budget deal prior to today, but the more I look at this and the more I learn, I don't know how we can vote for this deal.

I don't know when we are going to get serious about our deficit and our overall debt. If we can't do it now, when will we do it? If we can't get serious now, when are we going to get serious? If we have a budget agreement with the BCA now and we can't stick to it now, what makes us think we are going to in the future?

It makes me think, if we are reversing changes we made to get some savings before we even have the deal signed, what are we going to do a month after? What are we going to do in the next month? Are there other provisions in the other so-called offsets that we are going to address and say: We did not really mean it; we are going to reverse that as well.

It is very discouraging to see what is happening with the budget. We cannot continue to simply spend, spend, and spend and just ignore the real offsets that are needed. I would have been fine with spending additional money on nondefense discretionary if we had been serious about going into entitlement spending and the mandatory spending and finding real savings, savings that were significant. We have a couple of reaches into mandatory spending but not significant reaches. Who knows whether they will last or whether we will reverse them as well in a couple of months.

This is very discouraging. I will vote against this, and I would encourage my colleagues to vote against this agreement as well.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SHELBY. 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. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon in strong opposition to the 2-year budget agreement before the Senate. This so-called budget deal was negotiated at the last minute. It is now being rushed through Congress with inadequate time for proper scrutiny. While the devil is typically in the details when Congress negotiates these eleventh-hour deals, the flaws in this agreement are evident from merely taking a glance at what is in it.

This budget agreement would increase the current Budget Control Act spending caps, which we enacted in 2011 in an effort to restrain Washington spending, by approximately $80 billion or more over the next 2 years. On top of raising the caps by $80 billion or more, this deal also adds $32 billion in additional spending totals. That is $112 billion in new spending over the next 2 years—yes, $112 billion in new spending over the next 2 years.

Not only would this agreement allow for increased spending, it would also raise the debt ceiling through March of 2017—yes, through March of 2017—where we can borrow more money, adding an estimated $1.5 trillion of borrowing.

President Obama has continually called for more government spending and a blank check, to raise our Nation's debt limit with no corresponding reforms or spending cuts. The deal before us today represents a victory for President Obama and his liberal allies, not for the American people. As long as Washington continues to spend far beyond its means and remain on the same unsustainable track, our economy will suffer.

While I believe we should safeguard the full faith and credit of the United States, I also believe we should do so in a manner that puts our Nation on a more responsible fiscal path. We cannot—I repeat, we cannot continue to raise the debt limit without taking responsible steps to tackle the underlying problems facing our Nation: wasteful government spending.

Taking on more debt to facilitate more government spending is not the answer and is simply unacceptable.

Hard-working Americans in Alabama and across the country are looking for Washington to have serious conversations about how to tackle our country's $18 trillion debt that is growing. Instead, this deal before us continues the never-ending cycle of bad policies that grow our bloated government, impede job growth, and perpetuate a stagnant economic recovery.

I believe our constituents deserve better than a last-minute, flawed budget deal that not only exacerbates our debt crisis, but it adds more and more to our children's debt. There is absolutely no excuse for continuing to increase our Nation's debt. Americans are frustrated that Congress continues to push policies that empower Washington instead of the people of this great country. This deal is more of the same. Borrow more, spend more, be accountable less and less. That is why I adamantly oppose this budget deal and will continue to fight for a smaller, more effective government that puts the American people first.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. 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. MARKEY. Mr. President, I come to bring a very important subject to the attention of my colleagues.

''Sequestration'' is just a fancy word for cuts, mindless cuts. That is why I have always opposed sequestration. This thoughtless, across-the-board approach to the Federal budget has harmed States across the country, but its effect on Massachusetts has been disproportionate.

Sequestration significantly reduced Federal research and development funding for science and medicine. That is Massachusetts. Investments in those fields are critical to our economy with its world-class universities, medical centers, industry-leading bio- and high-tech companies, and clean-tech industries exploding with new technologies. This is the future of our country. This is the future of the 21st century. This is what we must be investing in: research and technology, research and science.

I am pleased that for the next 2 years this budget agreement will give us desperately needed relief from sequestration and will extend the debt limit. This legislation will also protect vulnerable Americans who rely on Medicare and Social Security. It will ensure that for the next 7 years, millions who depend on the Social Security disability program do not face a benefit cut. The legislation will also help millions of seniors by avoiding a Gronk-like spike in Medicare premiums. But this bill comes with a price: more unwanted calls and texts to Americans.

Back in 1991, consumers were constantly harassed by unwanted telemarketing phone calls that interrupted their family dinners. In 1991, my bill, the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, stopped these intrusive and unwanted calls from telemarketers.

Yes, this budget being debated today actually makes it easier to harass consumers on their mobile phones. That is wrong, just plain wrong. Current law contains important safeguards against abusive practices. Before a caller can make autodialed or prerecorded calls or send texts, that caller must have the consent of whoever is being called.

Section 301 of this legislation before this body today removes that precall consent requirement if someone is collecting debt owed to the Federal Government. The provision opens the door to potentially unwanted robocalls and texts to the cell phones of anyone with a student loan or a mortgage, calls to the cell phones of delinquent taxpayers, calls to farmers, to veterans, or to anyone with debt backed by the Federal Government.

That is why, once the Senate takes action on this budget bill, I plan to file a bill that strikes that provision. I also intend to ask the majority leader for a vote on my bill at the earliest possible time. We must protect American students and consumers.

That rollback of protections against abusive telemarketers is not the only problem with this legislation. The bill also would sell off part of our Nation's oil stockpile simply to raise revenue. The Presiding Officer is an expert in this area. Our Strategic Petroleum Reserve is there to protect American consumers and our security in the event of an emergency, but now it is increasingly viewed as a piggy bank to fund other priorities.

If we are going to sell oil from our strategic reserve, we should at least do so strategically to get the best deal for our taxpayers, but the budget deal that we are considering would require the sale of a specific amount of oil each year from 2018 to 2025 regardless of its price.

When the majority attempted to use similar Strategic Petroleum Reserve sales to fund the highway bill, Senator CASSIDY of Louisiana and I authored a bipartisan amendment to fix the problem. Our commonsense amendment gave the Secretary of Energy flexibility to sell more oil when prices are high and thereby maximize the return for taxpayers.

Unfortunately, that bipartisan fix is not part of this legislation, but I will continue to work with Senator CASSIDY on this important issue. You know that we are right when a conservative Republican from Louisiana and a liberal Democrat from Massachusetts agree on an issue. It is foolish to buy high and sell low. That is essentially what this legislation is now mandating.

Rather than saying to the government that you have to find just the right time when the price of oil is high to sell it over the next 7 years, it says sell it on this schedule regardless of whether or not you are going to get a good return on your investment. That is not the way this government should be operated. We should be using some common sense, especially since the Senator from Louisiana and I had already drafted the legislation and had already attached it to the Transportation bill when that was going to be the place where they use the Strategic Petroleum Reserve money.

This is a very bad provision that is in a bill which is going to pass—and it should pass—but this is a flaw. It is going to lose a lot of money if it continues on with the language that is in this bill.

I am going to continue to work with the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Louisiana, so that we can correct it. It will save a lot of money if we do it the correct way.

We need to ensure that we have a rational approach to budgeting—unlike sequestration—which will finally allow us to get back to the business of legislating instead of lurching from crisis to crisis. That is not possible unless we begin a new era in this institution. Hopefully, that is what today and perhaps tomorrow will represent. Maybe we can work together again across the aisle the way I think all Americans want us to. I pledge to work on these two pieces of legislation going forward to correct real flaws that are built into this legislation.

Thank you for allowing me to have the floor at this time. I hope the Presiding Officer and I can partner to correct at least one of the problems in this bill.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, before we move to a vote on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, I want to take a moment to discuss the part of the bill that is intended to be an offset for partially lifting the budget caps established under the Budget Control Act.

Under current law, large partnerships are subject to a special set of tax procedural rules. They are known as the TEFRA partnership rules because they were included in the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982.

These rules are complex and unwieldly for both the taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service. Most tax experts agree that these rules are in bad need of reform. I agree.

The Treasury Department, former House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp, and Congressman JIM RENACCI have all put forward reforms of the TEFRA partnership rules. And, on the Senate Finance Committee, we have been looking at those reforms and other proposals as well. We have also held discussions with the Ways and Means Committee, as well as tax professionals and members of the business community. These efforts, so far, have been bipartisan.

Because any such reforms would have a significant impact on a large number of taxpayers, we were prepared to tackle this problem the same way the Finance Committee has dealt with other widely applicable tax compliance measures. Specifically, we had planned to release various discussion drafts that would be open for public comment and subsequent modification. That is the way the Finance Committee handled issues like stock basis reporting and

merchant credit card reporting, and the process has worked well in the past.

However, as these efforts were ongoing, bipartisan leaders from both the House and Senate identified TEFRA partnership reforms as a potential offset for this budget legislation. As per usual, the Finance Committee was consulted, and we provided assistance in drafting the offset language. I am pleased to say that many of our recommendations were adopted in the final version of the bill.

However, for those who might be concerned about this process, it is important to note that the effective date for the TEFRA partnership reforms in the budget bill is delayed for 2 tax years. In the coming weeks and months, the Finance Committee will treat the TEFRA partnership reforms as a work in process. As planned, we intend to hear comments and will be prepared to address issues raised by taxpayers, especially those issues that may not have been anticipated.

As an example, we have heard from stakeholders who were concerned that particular partner-level tax attributes that may be known by a partnership, such as certain passive losses under tax code section 469, should be identified in the legislation for purposes of modifying the so-called imputed underpayment amount with respect to the partnership.

In sum, I want the record to be clear: The TEFRA partnership reforms are not effective for a couple of years. We plan to use that window to properly address problems raised by affected parties.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for months, Democrats have called on Republican leaders in both the Senate and the House to work with us to avert the economic crisis that default would have wrought on this country. With our backs against the wall, congressional leaders and the White House have reached an agreement to not only raise the debt ceiling—ensuring that our government can pay its bills—but to limit the devastating impacts of sequestration for the next 2 years.

This agreement is far from perfect. This deal uses funding identified and supported by the Senate to extend the critical highway trust fund. The trust fund has limped along, one short-term extension after another, for far too long. Despite the progress made on advancing a 6-year authorization, we will now have to move back to square one to find a way to pay for it. I am as concerned now as I was in July that we are stealing from ourselves by selling off strategic oil preserves at a time of low prices when we purchased at a time of high prices, and I am deeply concerned that this deal raids the Crime Victims Fund of $1.5 billion. Democrats and Republicans alike have long supported the Crime Victims Fund—unique in that it comes not from taxpayer dollars, but from penalties and fines paid by the criminals themselves. This fund was set up to be a dedicated resource to help victims of crime. Given the ongoing level of unmet need in that community, it is simply unacceptable that this fund was raided to pay for unrelated things. This one-time rescission must not become a new precedent. We cannot turn our backs on the victims of crime.

Nonetheless, I support the Bipartisan Budget Act. It is the product of compromise that will offer a measure of stability and help pave the way for an omnibus appropriations bill to keep our government open past December 11. But this is only the first step. While we will avert a calamitous default next week, we now must undertake the difficult process of crafting an omnibus spending bill that will meet our financial obligations and properly invest our resources. We have come together—across the aisle and across Congress—to support this budget deal. Let's not squander those bipartisan efforts in the next phase by derailing the appropriations process with needless partisan policy riders intended to do nothing more than score political points.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to address a small but important aspect of the hospital outpatient policy that is included in the budget agreement. The legislation does not address what happens to outpatient departments that are currently under construction. The bill allows current outpatient departments to continue to receive the Medicare outpatient payment rate because hospitals rely on those payments. Hospitals that want to build new facilities in the future go in with ''eyes open'' because they know they will not receive the higher outpatient rate. But that is not the case for outpatient departments that are currently being constructed as we speak. These hospitals made the decision to build, understanding that these facilities would receive the outpatient rate—they had no idea that Congress would be voting on this policy as part of this bill at this exact time. Facilities under construction should be treated the same as current facilities. I think it is unfortunate that this was not addressed when the bill was drafted, and I hope my colleagues will join me in ensuring this issue is addressed, either through regulations or through a technical legislative fix.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to voice my support for the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. This is a credible compromise that accomplishes three key objectives: it prevents an economically catastrophic default, establishes 2 years of rational budgets for defense and domestic priorities, and provides our military with the resources they need without an overreliance on the emergency war fund accounts.

Specifically, the agreement takes the threat of default off the table until March 2017 and provides $80 billion in sequester relief over the next 2 years, evenly split between defense and domestic spending. Throughout this process to reach a budget agreement, I have urged my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work together to find a balanced, responsible way to address defense and domestic spending—because they are both essential to the security and financial well-being of the American people. And while this bill relies on emergency war fund accounts, it more accurately reflects the costs of our overseas military operations and provides the Department of Defense with some additional budgetary stability and flexibility to plan for the future. With the sequester relief that the bill provides, we will have greater fiscal certainty and the additional resources we need to maintain a strong defense and economy.

The bill also contains offsets that improve tax compliance among large partnerships and reforms federal crop insurance. These are the sorts of new revenue and spending cuts we should see more of instead of revenue and spending cuts that come off the backs of seniors and the middle class.

Now, while I would prefer to eliminate the sequester all together, this compromise sets an encouraging precedent for future sequester relief, which is balanced and allows the government to keep making investments in areas that spur economic growth like education, transportation, health care, and defense. And that is why it's important for the Senate and House Appropriations Committees to quickly reach a consensus and produce a detailed spending package before the expiration of the continuing resolution on December 11.

I urge my colleagues to quickly approve this budget agreement and move on to a bill to fund the government.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I want to speak about the compromise budget legislation we are debating on the Senate floor. This is a good deal that covers so many important topics: sequester relief for defense and nondefense accounts, the debt limit, Medicare premiums, Social Security Disability Insurance, and many more items. These are all items the Senate needed to address, and I am happy to support this bipartisan budget accord.

In my 3 years in the Senate, I have done everything I can to address the nonstrategic sequester cuts that have been hurting our national security and economy. When I was sworn into the Senate and put on the Budget Committee, we were about to let go into effect the arbitrary sequester cuts set forth in the Budget Control Act of 2011. So in 2013, we got to a bipartisan Murray-Ryan budget deal. I supported that deal because it provided sequester relief for 2 years and gave certainty to businesses and families, teachers and shipbuilders, around the Commonwealth and Nation to plan for their needs.

Since 2013, we have seen the uncertainty presented by short-term budget deals and continuing resolutions has

actually been shown to harm the economy. In addition, the world is a very different place now than it was in 2011 when the Budget Control Act passed, and we need to adjust our budget policies to respond to today's challenges, from the rise of ISIL to increasing cyber attacks.

The deal before the Senate today provides more than $100 billion in sequester relief over 2 years for both defense and nondefense accounts, which will provide much-needed certainty to Virginia's families while helping businesses and the defense community better plan for the future. It also prevents certain Medicare beneficiaries from experiencing a significant increase in premiums next year and protects disabled Americans from a potential 20 percent reduction in benefits. It raises the debt ceiling, avoiding a default on our debt and disaster in financial markets. The agreement is not perfect. But that is the nature of compromise.

Everyone can find something in this bill they dislike, and that is usually the marker of an honest compromise. I wish we were able to fully replace sequestration and reach that long-term budget deal which would fully replace sequester cuts, make Medicare and Social Security solvent over the long term, and reform the Tax Code. But that budget deal will take time to negotiate, and we face government debt default in less than a week. Given that reality, this compromise is a dramatic improvement over a government debt default, across-the-board budget cuts, and crisis budgeting.

I especially applaud the fact that we will do a 2-year budget deal, just like we did when we reached the Murray-Ryan compromise in December 2013. Two-year budgets provide certainty, and that has a significant positive impact on the economy. I came to the Senate a strong supporter of 2-year budgeting due to my experience as Governor, and it is good to see others in Congress finally embracing this helpful reform. I support this budget compromise and look forward to moving this bill to the President's desk.

Mr. MARKEY. 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. LANKFORD. 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. LANKFORD. Mr. President, people in my home State are trying to figure out what they missed on this budget deal. It was announced by the White House today that this is a great job-creating achievement, but all they see is more spending and no change in the status quo.

Everyone throws around numbers, but here is the one number people in my State want to hear. How much does it save the American taxpayer? Put another way, does it help us to balance our budget or to address the debt problem?

We need two things to be able to balance our Federal budget: spending restraint and a growing economy. Right now we have neither. We have $18.5 trillion in debt and over $430 billion in deficit in this year. To start paying down our debt, we have to first balance our budget.

The Presiding Officer knows very well that we passed a budget earlier this year that took the next 10 years to be able to balance our budget. Let's play pretend for a moment in this body. Let's say we put that budget into place, and over the 10 years we work down a little bit each year and get to a balanced budget 10 years from now. Let's take a guess in this body, and let's say the year after that we had a $50 billion surplus. It took us 10 years to get back to balance, and in year 11 we had a $50 billion surplus. How many years would we have to maintain a $50 billion surplus until we paid off our debt? The correct answer would be: 360 years in a row we would have to have a $50 billion surplus to pay off our debt. We need to start doing budgets that actually deal seriously with our debt and deficit.

Today, our GDP growth was announced again. It is a whopping 1.5-percent growth in the American economy. With new regulations on every business, the assault on American energy, new loan restrictions on banks, and ObamaCare cost increases—including in my State of Oklahoma, where premium increases are hitting 35 percent for next year on individuals—people know inherently that if you keep overspending, it limits our economic growth in America. We have fewer jobs because of it. It is harder to start a business because of it.

The President keeps saying if we will just spend a little more, we will have more jobs. But people don't believe it anymore because they have seen it is not true. After 6 years of ''if we just spend a little more, spend a little more, this will get caught up'' we still have a 1.5-percent growth rate in the American economy. That is pathetic.

While we have a great number of terrific people in the Federal workforce, people inherently know if you just keep adding jobs in the Federal workforce, it hurts our economy because it continues to take money out of private hands and puts it into government control. What people want is not unreasonable. They just want a plan. People want to know that if we are going to spend money, we use it efficiently and that there is a plan to be able to get us out of debt.

What we heard through the negotiations was that any increase in spending would be offset with pay-fors that were real. The spending negotiations that were done were supposed to develop that plan. What we have as a final document is not a plan to get us out of debt. In fact, it increases our debt again. What we have is not a plan to handle the long-term consequences of deficit. In fact, it obfuscates that again. We need a plan to deal with entitlements, and what we have done is just scratched the surface dealing with entitlements.

What I have heard over and over is that at least the pay-fors are real, that for any increased spending that was done, at least there were offsets for that. Let me give a couple of examples of these real pay-fors, as I read the bill.

Here are a couple of real pay-fors. One is called pension payment acceleration. This is listed as one of the real pay-fors in the document. Pension payment acceleration in section 502 changed the due date for pension premiums from October 15, 2025, to September 15, 2025, in order to get another $2.3 billion into the 10-year budget window.

You see, this is all laid out to say that in the next 10 years we will pay this off. So they took a payment that was due 10 years and 2 weeks from now and moved it forward a month. So literally, yes, it adds $2.3 billion into the 10-year window, but if we had a 10-year-plus-2-week time period, it would be exactly the same. It is actually zero savings. It is not real. They moved the payment a month and said that is a pay-for. It is not a pay-for. That is the pension payment acceleration.

How about this one? We have this one in the Federal Government called the Crime Victims Fund. The Crime Victims Fund is money seized from criminals and designated not for general use but to compensate the victims of crime—hence the name Crime Victims Fund. Apparently, this budget agreement qualifies as a victim of crime because $1.5 billion is taken from the Crime Victims Fund and dedicated not to victims of crime but to spending in other areas.

We literally take $1.5 billion out of the Crime Victims Fund and spend it on the EPA, the IRS, and silent Shakespeare festivals out there in Federal funding—so much for helping crime victims.

We have 12 appropriations bills we have done in the Senate. It is the first time in a very long time that the Committee on Appropriations has done all 12 appropriations bills through committee. In this agreement, all 12 of those appropriations bills will have to be redone. Here is how they will be redone. The defense bill will be cut, and the other 11 will all go up in spending. The top of that debt ceiling is without reform.

The final straw for me in looking at this deal is Social Security disability. The Presiding Officer knows full well I have worked for 3 years on Social Security disability reform, knowing that the day was coming when we would have to fix Social Security.

The CBO has warned us for 4 years that Social Security disability would reach insolvency in 2016, so my office has spent the last 3 years preparing for

how we could actually reform this program to make sure we stabilize the Social Security disability program. I have interviewed individuals within the disability program—attorneys that work with it, Federal judges, administrative law judges, representatives, Social Security staff in all of those cubicles across the Social Security Administration offices, advocacy groups, parents of the disabled, and we held bipartisan hearings to look for common-ground solutions and worked with the inspector general and the GAO to hear other practical solutions they had discovered. We have a long list of real solutions to solving Social Security disability for the disabled and for the taxpayer. We have submitted those solutions as an amendment to this bill because there are real answers to solving Social Security disability, if you do the work. We have actually done the work to prepare for this.

Instead, this budget bill renews a few demonstration programs, changes a few names, transfers some funds from retirement Social Security over to disability Social Security, and calls it reform. If you look at the way the actuarial tables work out, of the 100 percent that needs to be done to bring solvency, they do 1.5 percent of what needs to be done to bring the program to solvency. The estimate is 1.5 percent of the 100 percent that needs to be done, and it is called real significant disability reform. I wish it were, because it is desperately needed.

Everyone knows this Congress only seems to do anything when they have to. A deadline is coming to deal with Social Security disability. This is the time we have to do the reforms. This opportunity will not come around again for 7 years, because this extends out this program for 7 years with almost no reforms at all. We are missing our window.

These are the most vulnerable individuals in our society who are on disability. These are individuals who literally cannot work in the economy in any way, and they need our help and they need real reform in this program, and we have punted. There is 1.5 percent of reform of the 100 percent that is needed to actually stabilize the program.

What does real reform look like? It helps those stuck in the painful process of disability applications and gets them the help they need at the time they need it. Real reform helps with those who game the system to get out of the system. It gives clarity, accountability, and oversight to the system itself. That is what real reform would look like.

Let me give a couple of examples. The grid—it is called a vocational grid—which is used to determine if someone can work in the economy, has not been updated since 1978. It needs to be updated not just now but every 10 years in order to have a regular cycle of updating, and not every 40 years. But that is not required in this bill.

We need to have good record keeping—evidence for disability. That is not required in this bill. We need to have a standard to be able to rotate off disability and to bring some clarity to it. Right now it is medical improvement. The problem is there are no good records often for those individuals on disability. So there is no way to rotate off of it. An individual is permanently trapped in it because the records were so bad at the start. There is no change in that.

What does that look like in real life? Let me give a couple of real-life examples. In Puerto Rico, the Office of the U.S. Attorney accepted a case for prosecution about 4 years ago. The inspector general initiated a Federal grand jury investigation, working closely with the Office of the U.S. Attorney, the FBI, and the Puerto Rico Police Department. In August of 2013, 74 individuals, including 47 medical professionals and a nonattorney claimant representative, were indicted and arrested for their involvement in a large-scale disability fraud scheme.

On January 15, 2015, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Puerto Rico announced the indictments of an additional 40 individuals, including a psychiatrist, for their alleged involvement in this conspiracy when they undertook an early-morning arrest operation for those individuals. All of these individuals were apprehended, and at the end they estimate the cost to the taxpayer is $100 million of fraud in that one case alone.

In Huntington, WV, in May of this year, the Social Security Administration mailed letters to approximately 1,500 individuals informing them of their need to redetermine their eligibility for Social Security disability—many of those individuals have been on disability for years—because the Social Security Administration and the Inspector General's Office noted that many of these individuals were put on in a case that did not match facts with what actually happened in their lives. They were led to believe this by a representative, an attorney in this case, fraudulent work behind the scenes by physicians, and the inside work of individuals within Social Security who tracked them through the process. What happened? There were hundreds of millions of dollars in fraud.

These things still continue. Nothing changes on this. I wish this bill would correct some of these issues today, but it doesn't. Those individuals were told by someone that they fit into the disabled category, only to find out later that they had also been defrauded in the system.

There is nothing in this bill mandating the Social Security Administration to update its medical and vocational listings. There is nothing in this bill to prevent people who receive unemployment insurance, who by definition must be employable, from also receiving disability insurance—people who by definition cannot also work.

There is nothing in this bill to streamline the adjudication process or to eliminate the second level of appeal, which is called reconsideration. Many individuals within the process who are legitimately disabled and who just want to have their cases heard get stuck in this long process. There are actually more appeals in Social Security Administration, in the Social Security disability program, than there are on death row, which puts people in this cycle of endless appeals, year after year, and continues to rack up the cost to the taxpayer and the effect on those who are disabled.

There is nothing in this bill to ensure that a claimant's medical record is well developed so that when they come up for a continuing disability review, a disability determination service examiner can make an informed judgment and actually evaluate whether they are medically improved.

There is nothing in this bill to conduct oversight of the administrative law judges or claimants' representatives. The bill increases the number of administrative law judges but not the oversight. I am not sure if many in this body are aware that some of the administrative law judges in this country have an overturn rate of 95 percent or higher, and we are adding more but not increasing the oversight.

There is no opportunity given for greater accountability or even to improve the Code of Judicial Conduct—a basic element of reform that should be in this.

As for the claimant representatives, according to the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General, in tax year 2013, the top 10 highest earning claimant representatives made $23 million. Remember that the payment for the claimant representatives comes directly out of the money that should go to the disabled individual, not from another fund. It is from the individual who should have received that money as disability. So the more the reps make, the less tax money that actually gets to the disabled individual. There is no change in this model. It continues to provide funding for claimant representatives and attorneys and continues to leave the disabled exposed.

By the way, today in Social Security Administration offices all around the country, they are processing the money from the disabled and sending checks to the representatives because although the reps are hired by the disabled individual, they are paid and processed by the Federal workforce from the disabled person's money. We can do better than this. We should do better than this.

This is not a deal the American people are looking for. This is not a budget agreement the people of Oklahoma say fixes our debt and deficit issues and stabilizes disability. This is a deal that is done, apparently, but not a deal that is done well. Based on where we are in debt and deficit, we need to do better, and I pray we do in the days ahead. We have much to get fixed. It is time to

actually fix some things, not just to stay operational.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for an additional 5 minutes.

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

FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, there is a football coach in Washington State. He is the head coach of the JV team, and he is the assistant coach of the varsity football team. Tonight is the last game of the season for them, but he will not be coaching on the sidelines today because last night he was dismissed from his duties in Bremerton, WA. According to the attorneys at the school, he was dismissed from his duties because last Friday night at the football game, he had the audacity to kneel down at the end of the game and silently pray at the 50-yard line when the game was over, when the school had instructed him that he was not to silently pray at the end of a game.

Help me understand this. The night before the last game of the season, they kick the football coach off the field because he had the audacity to silently pray when they told him not to.

To his defense, this is not brand new. Since 2008, this same coach, at the end of the games—each game—has had the habit of kneeling and praying at the 50-yard line after the kids have gone, after the game is over, to thank God for the safety of his kids. It is a habit he started 7 years ago, but for some reason the Bremerton School District has determined this is completely unacceptable. Their perspective is that you can only have faith if no one sees it. They have literally set a new standard. What they are taking from the Borden case, which I will explain in a moment—they are saying that if you are a school official, no one can see that you have faith because if anyone sees that you have faith, they will take that as the establishment of religion from the school district. That is a standard no court in America has set. That would mean any individual who is Jewish couldn't wear a yarmulke if they were also a teacher. That would mean anyone who is Muslim couldn't wear a head scarf because clearly that is a visual display of faith. That would mean no teacher could bow their head and pray before their meal in the school lunchroom. That would mean no football coach could kneel down with 5 seconds to go in the game in, the fourth quarter, before their 16-year-old is about to kick a field goal. They would say: No, you can't kneel down and pray on the sidelines.

The absurdity of this is they set this brandnew standard that says you cannot have anyone see you have faith. That would mean that in this situation, this district has created a new legal standard that no one else has ever agreed to, literally created in the school district a faith-free zone, put up a sign on the front door that says ''No one can express any type of faith in this building.'' That is absurd.

The school district quoted multiple times from the Borden case, which is the Borden v. School District of the Township of East Brunswick case. This is what the actual case was. It was a football coach who, before the game, at a mandatory meeting of the team, led them in a prayer. The only similarity here is prayer and football because this is not a mandatory meeting before the game; this is not a required closed time; this is an individual, after the game is over, kneeling down on his own and freely expressing his faith without requiring anyone else to be there, anyone to listen. This is an individual living their faith. That is free in America, whether you are Muslim, whether you are Wiccan, whether you are Hindu, whether you are Christian, whether you are Jewish, whether you are a Federal employee or a State employee or a private citizen. Every individual retains their constitutional right to the free exercise of their religion. Does that mean they can coerce people or proselytize in that situation? No, it does not. The Court has been very clear on that. But that is not what this was. This is not a situation where the coach was coercing his players to participate in a prayer or proselytizing his players while he was on school time. He was simply kneeling down to pray, and for whatever strange reason the school district has put him on paid administrative leave and has started the process of firing the coach.

I bring this up because it suddenly becomes a national issue when a school district creates a new legal standard for every person of faith in America. Every person of faith in America has the right to live their faith. A school district does not have the right to say to someone: Your constitutional right ends here.

I can go through in great detail the different standards they leave out there, but their accommodation was this one simple thing: He could privately pray in a room of the school district's choosing. If he wanted to pray, they would put him in a spot and say: You can pray in there, in a place we pick, but you can't pray out there.

May I remind Americans that we do not have freedom of worship in America; we have the free exercise of religion in America. The government does not have the authority to confine your faith to the location of the government's choosing. A government entity like a school district cannot say to an employee: You can only live your faith over there, where we pick.

I don't know what the school district is going to do in the days ahead, but I know what Americans of all faiths and people of no faith should do. They should rise up and say: We are a nation that protects the free exercise of religion. And people who disagree with that coach should rise up in the same way with people who agree because I can assure you—if they will silence a Christian who is silently praying on the 50-yard line, I can assure you they will be after every other faith in the country and say: You can only practice your faith in the place of the government's choosing. That is not who we are.

Coach Joe Kennedy has the right to pray anywhere he wants to pray as long as it doesn't interrupt his school responsibilities. I pray that this school district and the attorneys who are trying to manufacture a new requirement on people of faith will see that in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SENIOR AIRMAN QUINN LAMAR JOHNSON-HARRIS

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to pay tribute to one of the finest among us, a young man from Wisconsin whose service to his country was cut short by tragedy in Afghanistan.

SrA Quinn Lamar Johnson-Harris, a 21-year-old from Milwaukee, was among six airmen and five civilian passengers who lost their lives when a C–130 crashed on takeoff from Jalalabad Airfield in Afghanistan earlier this month. Every one of those individuals was a grave loss to our country. Every one deserves to be remembered and revered before the Senate.

Today it is my solemn duty and particular honor to tell you about Airman Johnson-Harris. Quinn graduated from Homestead High School in Mequon, WI, in 2012. The very next year, he joined the Air Force. It was a foregone conclusion that he would serve his country long before that, however. His grandfather served in Vietnam. His oldest brother, Jeremy, is a proud marine. His other older brother, Lamar, graduated from West Point just last spring and is now proudly serving in the Army.

His mother told the story about how her three sons—Quinn was only 2 years old at the time—saluted at the grave of their grandfather and vowed to serve their country.

For men such as these, our Nation is eternally grateful.

Quinn went to rebuild houses in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina while he was still in school. Later one of his comrades, a sergeant who served with him in the Air Force, said he was: ''the heart of the squadron'' and that ''He was the best of us.''

For 239 years, our service men and women have guarded our freedom, more than 42 million of them. Since the Revolutionary War, more than 1 million of those heroes have given their lives, including more than 27,000 sons and daughters of Wisconsin. Now Airman Johnson-Harris has been added to that terrible toll. His brothers, his sister Fatia, his parents Yvette and LaMar, and all his family and friends grieve their loss. Our hearts go out to them, and we pray that they will find comfort and peace.

I saw the grief of Airman Johnson-Harris's family this past weekend during his funeral service at Christian Faith Fellowship Church in Milwaukee. I saw the respect they had for him and the honor granted him by a family who knows the meaning of earned honor. Quinn swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, to put his life on the line for the liberties we all enjoy. We must never take that type of dedication for granted. We owe him the honor of taking our own corresponding oath of duty as seriously as he took his.

May God bless Airman Johnson-Harris's loved ones, may He guard all of those in our Armed Forces who defend our Nation's liberty, and may God bless America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I spoke a few moments ago on the Senate floor, and as I was leaving I was made aware of an article in which the minority leader, Senator REID, was quoted. I wish to highlight something I want my colleagues to hear and know.

What the Senator from Nevada indicated was—the article begins: Having secured their goal of getting a budget deal addressing the debt ceiling and sequestration cuts, Democrats are now looking forward to the appropriations process.

As an appropriator, so am I. I am interested for us to have the opportunity, if this budget agreement passes, to make decisions about the priorities of spending within those budget numbers. What is so troublesome to me is that the indication was that President Obama and Democrats stand firm against efforts to target environmental regulations and other contentious riders.

I am quoting the Senator from Nevada:

> We're holding hands with the president, we're all holding hands. We are not going to deal with these vexatious riders. We feel comfortable and confident. . . .''

He goes on to talk about the agreement.

This is a Congress that is supposed to deal with contentious and vexatious issues. Why does anyone have the opportunity to say it is off the table? It happened in these budget agreements in which we were told dealing with mandatory spending is off the table. Yet it is one of the most important issues we need to address, and you ought not start negotiations by saying we are not even going to talk about an issue. In this case, ''off the table, not subject to discussion'' is the issue of contentious or environmental regulations.

Congress—Republican and Democratic Members—ought to care about the power of Congress that is granted to us by the Constitution in our representation of the American people. We need the days in which the Congress and Members of Congress are not wedded to a Republican President or a Democratic President just because they happen to be Republicans or Democrats. We need to make decisions based upon what is good for the country, not whether we are backstopping a President who happens to be a Member of our political party. Where are the Members of Congress who say congressional authority is the constitutional grant of power to act on behalf of Americans?

We need not only to establish priorities as a Congress when it comes to the spending process, but we need to make decisions when an agency or a department exceeds their authority, when they operate in ways that are contrary to what we believe is in the best interest of the country, in circumstances in which they are doing things that lack common sense. The role of Congress is to direct the spending. It is granted to us by the Constitution of the United States. We are saying that while we are pleased we have a budget agreement, we will not stand for Congress determining whether the money can be spent in a certain way, whether it can be prohibited from being spent in a certain way. We are taking vexatious riders off the table.

This is our responsibility. It is just as important for us to determine whether money should be spent at all as it is for us to determine how much money can be spent on a government program. It is particularly true, I don't think there is any question but that this administration has been the most active, many of us would consider acting in an unconstitutional way in the development of regulations, of policies, of the bureaucracy of what the departments and agencies are doing. This is an administration that cries out for congressional oversight, not for someone who says it is not even on the table to be considered.

I would think Republicans and Democrats both ought to have an interest in determining how money is spent as well as whether we should tell an agency, a department they can't spend that money at all. Many of my Democratic colleagues have indicated they support a number of riders, including ones that are considered environmental.

Waters of the United States is one that I have been told numerous times that my colleagues on the Democratic side of this Congress support the rider that is in the appropriations bill. Numerous times I have been told that many Democrats support reining in the regulations that are coming from the Department of Labor related to a fiduciary rule. Now we hear that vexatious environmental riders are off the table. We ought not allow that to stand. It is not that I expect every rider that I am for to receive approval of Congress, but those votes ought to be taken. That is our responsibility and majority rules.

Again, the circumstance we now find ourselves in, this is nothing that we are even going to talk about. It is troublesome to me that those of my colleagues who have expressed support for those riders—I guess I should explain to Kansans and to Americans, a rider is a provision—language in the appropriations bill that oftentimes says no money can be spent to implement this idea, to implement this regulation.

It is an absolutely important responsibility for Congress. It is not unusual. It is not something outside the boundaries of what we are supposed to be doing. It is absolutely a significant component of our responsibility. Now those who claim they are for a rider, say the Waters of the United States or the fiduciary rule that the Department of Labor is promulgating—we have colleagues who say they are for that. Now they will be able to say: I am for it, but I never had a chance to vote on it because it was off the table.

I would again ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, don't fall into this trap in which we are here to support ad hoc, at every instance, the executive branch just because they happen to be a Member of our political party. When there is a Republican President, I hope to abide by those same rules. I am here on behalf of Kansans and on behalf of Americans, not on behalf of an administration regardless of their political party, and we ought to demand that Congress do its work. We had an election, the people of this country asked for something different, and once again we are back in the circumstance in which no longer are we able to move forward on legislation.

I assume by what the former majority leader is saying that when he says it is off the table, he means there will not be 60 votes for us to even consider an omnibus bill in which those riders are included. Now, what I will say is that before long, we are going to be hearing about how Republicans are interested in shutting down government because they want these riders. Well, the reality is that the Senator from Nevada is indicating there is no discussion, and the blame ought not fall on those of us who actually wanted Congress to work. The allegation of shutting down government ought to rest on those who say: We won't even discuss an appropriations bill that includes vexatious or contentious riders.

Who would want to be a Member of a Congress that is unwilling to deal with contentious issues? It is our constitutional responsibility. The American people ought to demand the opportunity for us to address issues of importance to them, and it ought not be off the table before the conversation even begins.

Again, the point is that we have a constitutional responsibility that we

failed to exercise. When the decisions are made, it is off the table. We need a Congress that works, and we need a Congress that puts the American people above defending a President, regardless of his or her political party.

I yield the floor.

MEASURE DISCHARGED AND PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S.J. RES. 20

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2159(i) and section 601(b)(4) of Public Law 94–329, S.J. Res. 20 is discharged and placed on the calendar, 45 days of the review period having elapsed.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the information of our colleagues, the cloture vote on the House-passed budget and debt limit package will occur an hour after we reconvene, which is at 1 a.m. under the regular order. Once cloture is invoked, the Senate will remain in session and on the message until we vote on passage.

Senators will be permitted for up to an hour to speak postcloture. That is after 1 o'clock, under the rules. It is my hope that the debate time will be extremely limited and that we will be able to move to a passage vote almost immediately after 1 a.m. The timing, however, is up to any individual Senator who claims debate time after the 1 a.m. vote.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2015

So I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, or at 11:55 p.m. today, whichever comes first, it adjourn until 12:01 a.m. on Friday, October 30; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 1314, with the time until 1:01 a.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. MCCONNELL. So if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair, following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE COSTS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, we are embarked on a significant budget agreement that has as one of its components adjustments to America's health care costs. In the case of this particular agreement, I support the adjustments that have been proposed—things such as preventing drug manufacturers from raising their costs higher than the rate of inflation. We have seen people come in and buy companies and jack up the costs 10 times because they can. They haven't added any value to the products; they have just raised the costs. I support that. Paying hospitals the rate for physician practices that the physician practices were paid before the hospital bought them—nothing changed in the physician practices; just ownership changed, and that shouldn't allow a windfall to the buyer. I think we have done well with what we have done to reduce health care spending in this particular bill, but I recall that in the sequester we did an across-the-board haircut right across Medicare. Whatever you were being paid before, you got paid 98 percent of that afterward if you were a Medicare provider.

I want to come today to offer a thought that I hope can percolate a bit, and if we go back and look at those costs again I would like to get this thought into the conversation. The backdrop of this is the extraordinary increase of health care costs that we have seen more or less in my lifetime.

This chart shows 1960, and it is a $27 billion American expenditure on total health care. Here it is in 2013, with $2.9 trillion, an increase of more than 100 times over those years in what we spend on health care. And as we have done that, what we have done is we have become the most expensive per-capita health care country in the world—and not by a little but by a ton. Over at the far side of the chart is the United Kingdom, then Germany, Japan, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and here is the United States. Again, this is 2013 data. We are way above the most expensive competitors that we have. So there is something that can be done here with this excess cost, because people aren't getting bad health care in Germany. They are not getting terrible health care in the United Kingdom. They are not suffering in Japan or Switzerland or France or the Netherlands. These are competitive systems with ours, but ours costs half again as much. There is a big target in savings here.

Here is another way of describing it. If you look at the cost and you compare it to a quality measure, here the quality measure is life expectancy in years, how long people can expect to live in these different countries, and this is the same per-capita cost information I showed in the last bar chart. What you see is that most of the countries that we compete with are grouped right up in here, as shown on this chart—Greece, Great Britain, Japan. Most of the EU is right in here. As you run up the cost curve you get to Switzerland and the Netherlands. They are the two most expensive countries in the world in per-capita health care, not counting us. Look where we are. We are out here. Our costs are about half again as much as the least efficient health care providers in the industrialized world. We are more inefficient by nearly a factor of a third than the least efficient health care providers in the industrialized world. That is not a prize we want to own. We want to be able to move this back.

If you look at this gradient of life expectancy, we compare with Chile and the Czech Republic. Where we want to be is up here. Where we are is here. So once again, it proves there is enormous room for improvement in our health care system and we know that because other countries are doing it. They can do it. Darn it, we ought to be able to do it too.

Now we change the scope of this a little bit. This chart shows the American health care system State by State. Each State is marked as one of the dots on this graph. This graph has the same thing across the bottom—Medicare spending per beneficiary. The last one was national spending, and this is Medicare spending per beneficiary. Here are the quality rankings of the States. There are a variety of quality rankings, and this assembles them into a consolidated quality rating.

What you see is that within the United States of America you have the States. This goes back a bit. This is an old ranking that the Journal of the American Medical Association produced. It shows that there are some States that were just under $5,000 per capita. They were doing something right. There are other States here, including an outlier, all the way over to $8,000 per capita. But there is a bulk of States here that run about $7,000 per capita. That is a $2,000-per-Medicare-recipient difference between this group of States and that group of States. That is interesting. Why is it that there is this big difference?

Here is another interesting factor. Look who is doing better on quality—the States that spend less. The lesson from this is if you are delivering high quality health care, you can deliver it less expensively than if you are delivering low quality health care. At a $2,000-per-beneficiary increase in costs, these States are way at the bottom on quality compared to the others. The relationship between quality of the care people receive and the cost it takes to deliver it to them is reversed. This

isn't like Lexus and Mercedes, where you pay more and you get a better car. This is the opposite. You have a really crummy car and it costs more to run it, it doesn't work, and it is expensive because it is not working well. It is backward. It is interesting that way.

If you bring that forward, this shows a recent graph from the Commonwealth Fund that shows the same thing, overall quality score relative to the U.S. median and costs in total Medicare spending. Here is the average right here for cost and the average for quality, and here you have these States down here in the bad box. They are way out here in costs. They are very expensive States. They are all above average. Some of them here are way above average—25 percent above average, 15 percent above average, 20 percent above average. Look what their quality measure is. They stink. They deliver terrible quality health care. Over here you have a bunch of other States that are way above the quality median and at the same time they are way below the cost average. So the principle from that first graph back in 2000 still holds true, according to the Commonwealth Fund.

With that background, here is another way to describe it. These are the 10 worst States in terms of highest cost per capita, and these are the best 10 States. I know we have a country with 50 States. This is only 20. We leave out the middle 30. These are the worst 10 in terms of cost, and these are the 10 best in terms of cost.

Here is the idea. Why should we be reimbursing above average the States that have a per-capita cost above average, instead of the way we did it on the sequester, by taking a 2-percent cut on everybody across the board that nobody can do anything about—just a cold, wet blanket of funds denial? Why not look and say this is the most that a State would get paid—whatever the cost would be—if it were at the average. The rest, you just take it back per capita across the entire reimbursement for that State.

This is what would happen with these high cost States. The very next meeting of the State medical society, the very next time the State met with the Governor, the very next time the Medicaid program got together, they would be hollering, saying: What on Earth? I do a good job. I am going to get my reimbursement cut because of that?

No, we have to fix this. It would give them a massive incentive to stop behaving like this and start behaving like this. If we built in some lead time so they had the chance to actually get there, they might actually never have to cut. They might not ever have to face that cut because what they would have done in the time leading up to when the cut was scheduled to be imposed is begin to behave like the States that have lower costs than average.

We know this could be done because so many States are already doing it. Why would we ever again look at an across-the-board Medicare-provider cut when we have an enormous discrepancy between these high-cost, low-quality States and these low-cost, high-quality States—like this one all the way over here? Oh, my gosh, it is a bargain there; it is top quality care.

That is my point for the day. I hope that anybody listening who is looking at the proposed cuts in the budget and who is looking at the need to manage this exploding health care cost curve that America has had for the last 50 years—steepening health care cost curve—starts to think about ways to do not just dumb and bloody cuts, but smart cuts—smart cuts that give the States that are costing us much more money than their peers the inventive to actually start behaving like their peers and bring down the cost for everyone. That is what I would consider to be a serious win-win.

I look forward to continuing this discussion. We have a couple of years before we are going to face this again with any luck, but I think this is an idea that is worth considering.

Once again, if you give the States enough warning within the 10-year budget period so we can score it but with enough warning that they have got the chance to react—I encourage anybody to read Atul Gawande's last article about Texas. He wrote an article about the terrible cost differential between—I think it was El Paso and a town called McAllen, TX—huge. Then they brought in the ObamaCare affordable care organizations—accountable care organization models and down came the price in McAllen.

So it can be done. We have seen it being done.

With that, I yield the floor.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:03 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 8:32 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SASSE).

TRADE ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, for many months I have been speaking about what I call the Washington cartel. The Washington cartel consists of career politicians in both parties who get in bed with lobbyists and special interests in Washington and grow and grow and grow government. I believe the Washington cartel is the source of the volcanic frustration Americans face across this country, and it is difficult to find a better illustration of the Washington cartel than the charade we are engaged in this evening. This deal we are here to vote on is both shockingly bad on the merits and it is also a manifestation of the bipartisan corruption that suffuses Washington, DC.

What are the terms of this budget deal? Well, in short, what the House of Representatives has passed, and what the Senate is expected to pass shortly, is a bill that adds $85 billion in spending increases—$85 billion to our national debt, $85 billion to your children and my children that they are somehow expected to pay. I don't know about your kids, but my girls don't have $85 billion lying around in their rooms.

This bill is put together in a way only Washington could love. The spending increases, when do they occur? Surprise to nobody, $37 billion in 2016, $36 billion in 2017, and $12 billion in 2018. But we were told, fear not; there are some spending cuts to offset them. And wonderfully, miraculously, ostensibly there are supposed to be a few spending cuts in 2020, then 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. At the very end, 10 years from now—when my daughter Caroline will be getting ready to graduate high school, she is 7 now—we are told $33 billion will be cut in 2025.

If you believe that I have a bridge to sell you in Brooklyn and I have some beachfront property in Arizona. Nobody in this Chamber believes that. Nobody in the House of Representatives believes that. No member of the press believes that. Everyone understands this is a lie. It is an agreed-to lie by everyone. We will spend now for a promise that 10 years hence we will magically cut spending that will never ever, ever occur.

That is on the face of it, but beyond that it is worth thinking about just how much $85 billion is. It is more than the Senate negotiated with the House when HARRY REID was majority leader. When HARRY REID was majority leader the Ryan-Murray budget agreement—which was a flawed agreement and an agreement I voted against—increased spending by $63 billion over 2 years.

So what does it say that a supposedly Republican majority of the Senate negotiates a bigger spending bill than HARRY REID and the Democrats? When HARRY REID and the Democrats were in charge of this body they jacked up spending and our debt $63 billion. When the Republicans take charge, whoo baby, we can do it better—some $85 billion.

Not only that, this deal is not content with spending increases. It also takes the debt ceiling and essentially hands President Obama a blank credit card. It says to the President: You can add whatever debt you like for the remainder of your term with no constraint from this body. We are abdicating any and all congressional authority over the debt that is bankrupting our kids and grandkids.

Now the Presiding Officer and I both campaigned telling the citizens of Nebraska and the citizens of Texas that if we were elected we would fight with

every breath in our body to stop the spending and debt that is bankrupting our kids and grandkids. How, pray tell, does handing President Obama a blank credit card for the remainder of his tenure do anything to follow those commitments?

Let me note that for the remaining 15 months we are going to see a binge from this President that makes the preceding 6½ years pale. For 6½ years we have seen an assault on rule of law, an assault on our constitutional rights, a retreat from the world stage, all of which I think will pale compared to what is coming in the next 15 months. In the next 15 months abroad, I have said before, we are essentially in a Hobbesian state of nature, where the enemies of America have made the judgment that the Commander in Chief is not a credible threat, so they are limited only by the limits of their own strength. It is like ''Lord of the Flies.''

On the regulatory side, we are seeing a press on every front to go after economic freedom—to destroy small businesses, to destroy jobs, to destroy our constitutional liberties. When it comes to spending, I shudder to think what President Obama for the next 15 months will do with a blank credit card that the Republican majority in the House of Representatives and the Republican majority in the Senate are preparing to send him.

American Express has a whole series of credit cards. It has the green card, the introductory card. I remember when I was a freshman in college—I was 17 years old. I got an application for an American Express card. I was really excited. I got an AmEx when I was 17. It was a green card. Now, if you spend more and you spend more, eventually you can upgrade to a gold card, then you can upgrade to a platinum card, and then you can actually upgrade to a black card above that.

Well, I have to say, a multi-trillion-dollar Presidential card has to be an extraordinary card. I assume it is encrusted in diamonds and glows in the dark. That is what the Republican majorities have just given President Obama—a diamond encrusted, glow-in-the-dark AmEx card, and it has a special feature. The President gets to spend it now, and they do not even send him the bill. They send the bill to your kids and my kids. It is a pretty nifty card. You don't have to pay for it. You get to spend it, and it is somebody else's problem.

Not only is this bill spending us deeper and deeper into a hole, it is chock-full of gimmicks. These are gimmicks that everyone writing them knew were there. For example, it contains a spending gimmick that targets single-employer pension plans while ignoring the oncoming union multi-employer pension plan funding tsunami.

Beyond that, this bill also addresses ObamaCare. But what does it do? It provides a targeted ObamaCare fix for big business—those with more than 200 employees. By repealing the law's automatic enrollment provision, which requires employers to automatically enroll new full-time employees in one of the company's health plans unless the employee opts out.

What does it say that the Congress of the United States exists to provide a special exemption for giant corporations but turns a blind eye, turns a deaf ear to the small businesses being driven out of business over and over and over again by ObamaCare? What does it say? If you are a giant corporation in America, if you have armies of lobbyists, then fear not, the Washington cartel is here for you—a special carve-out, no doubt just as soon as you hand over your campaign contribution.

For the small business we are facing a time unique in recorded history, where more small businesses are going out of business than are being created. For as long as they have kept records, that has never been true until recent years under the Obama economy. Why does that matter? That matters because over two-thirds of all new jobs come from small businesses. When you hammer small businesses, you end up getting the stagnation, the misery, the malaise we have right now. When you hammer small businesses, you have young people coming out of school who can't find jobs, who have student loans up to their eyeballs but can't find a job. When you hammer small businesses, you have people like my father, who in the 1950s was a teenage immigrant washing dishes, unable to find a job.

What does it say that Congress will pass a special exemption for giant corporations, but for the single moms, for the teenage immigrants, for the young African-American teenagers struggling to achieve a better life there is no answer to their plight? To some 6 million Americans who had their health insurance canceled and their doctors canceled because of ObamaCare, there is no answer to their plight. To the millions of Americans who have seen their health insurance premiums skyrocket so they can no longer afford them, there is no answer to their plight. But fear not, the cartel is here for the giant corporations.

Let us be abundantly clear. The cartel is not a partisan phenomenon. It is not just the Democrats—although it is most assuredly the Democrats—but there are far too many Republicans as well who are card-carrying cartel members who, when the K Street lobbyists summon action, snap to attention.

Look at what else this deal does. This deal additionally takes $150 billion the next 3 years from the Social Security trust fund and moves it to the disability insurance fund. I would advise all Members of this body the next time you are home and visiting with a senior, the next time the topic of Social Security comes up, if you vote for this deal tonight, be sure to say: Ma'am, just so you know, I voted to take $150 billion out of your Social Security. Because that is what they are doing.

That is what they are doing. They are saying to seniors: Well, there is a little bit of money here, and we are going to take it and move it over here. Why? Because actually fixing the disability program, reforming the program would be too difficult. Stepping forward to address the fraud in that program would be too difficult. Stepping forward to put in place work incentives to help people with disabilities find meaningful work, even if it is not everything they are capable of—a great many people with disabilities are capable of meaningful work—reforming that program to help people work to provide for their families makes a difference in people's lives, but that isn't easy. That is hard work. That is actually what we were elected to do. It is far easier just to raid the Social Security trust fund, far easier to pull $150 billion from our seniors and reallocate it and do nothing, zero, to fix the underlying problem.

The deal also sells 58 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. It is always interesting to see the Federal Government selling off Federal assets. I have argued for a long time that we should be selling off Federal land, far too much of which in this country is owned by the Federal Government. I am not talking about national parks, which are a treasure that should be preserved; I am talking about the vast amounts of land that are held, utterly nonproductive, by the Federal Government.

So it is a good thing that this bill is selling some assets, but it is interesting, No. 1, that they estimate that will yield $5 billion because they estimate it will be selling at $86 a barrel. I have to say, representing the State of Texas, if you know how to sell oil today at $86 a barrel, you are truly a magician because it is selling at about half that right now. But when it comes to budget trickery, just make up a number and put it in there. As I said before, on this chart everyone knows it is a lie. Nobody believes it is true. It is a game. It is the Washington game.

I would note that in selling 58 million barrels of oil, they are not using that revenue to pay down our national debt. If they are actually selling assets, we would think it would go to something at home. If you sell an asset and have a massive credit card debt, the prudent thing to do would be to use the revenue from that asset to pay down that credit card debt. Oh, no. It is just more and more spending.

A group called the Conservative Action Project consists of the CEOs of over 100 organizations representing all of the major elements of the conservative movement, the economic, social, and national security conservatives. They sent a letter to this body. The letter reads as follows:

The latest budget deal negotiated by the White House and outgoing House Speaker John Boehner, the bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, proposes increasing spending by $85 billion over the next three fiscal years. What

the deal doesn't include are meaningful accountability measures that ensure responsible spending levels.

The deal would allow Treasury unfettered borrowing power until 2017 in exchange for theoretical budget cuts down the road. The included offsets are spending gimmicks, at best. According to budget analyses from the Congressional Budget Office and The Heritage Foundation, the deal would result in spending increase of $85 billion over the next three years, while significant spending cuts would not take place for another ten years—until 2025. Furthermore, we cannot reasonably expect that a future Congress will abide by these measures. Moreover, the busting of the caps presently is proof that the gimmicks which promise reform later are hollow.

This ''bipartisan deal'' indicates a dangerous trend that has become commonplace in Washington—rather than hard questions about spending, the Congress is choosing to eliminate the possibility of those conversations or votes for the next two years. Furthermore, the deal represents total surrender on important conserve principles, while capitulating to every demand of the White House.

It is this sort of irresponsible spending that has resulted in a national debt of over 18 trillion dollars. For the first time in nearly six years, Republicans have control of both Houses of Congress and a real chance to send responsible budget reforms to the President's desk. A responsible alternative would acknowledge the importance of appropriating funds for government operations while simultaneously addressing our statutory debt limit and staying within the budget caps.

Instead, lawmakers have forgone the chance at meaningful reforms and instead are digging us deeper into the mire of debt our nation has already accrued.

In potentially the most egregious portion of the deal, the Overseas Contingency Operation or ''OCO'' fund, which is dubious in and of itself, is typically designated for efforts to support troops on the ground in emergency situations, is turned over to a slush-fund for non-defense spending.

We oppose the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 not only because it fails to curtail spending, but it prevents future reform for an entire two years. Lawmakers should reject this deal, and attach earnest, meaningful reform to any hike of the debt limit.

It is signed by former Attorney General Edwin Meese, the Honorable Becky Norton Dunlop, and dozens of respected conservative leaders across this country, across the full spectrum of the conservative movement—across fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, national security conservatives, all united, the conservative movement.

Many of the people who worked very hard to elect us to this body, many of the people who worked very hard to give us a Republican majority in the Senate are now all speaking in unison saying: What in the heck are you doing? Some of them may be using stronger language than that.

This bill we are voting on was not cooked up overnight. This wasn't a slap-dash on a Post-it last night. This represents days or weeks or months of negotiations. This represents the cartel in all of its glory because this is the combined work product of JOHN BOEHNER and NANCY PELOSI and MITCH MCCONNELL and HARRY REID.

The entire time Republican leaders have been promising ''We are going to do something on the budget; we are going to rein in the President,'' they have been in the backroom negotiating to fund every single thing President Obama did. I am reminded that it wasn't too long ago that we saw El Chapo dug out of his prison cell. One of the first things you realized when El Chapo was dug out is that tunnel wasn't dug overnight; the drug cartels spent many weeks or months digging that tunnel. Well, our leadership, the leadership of the Washington cartel, has spent many weeks and months breaking El Chapo out on the American people, digging us deeper into debt. It is contrary to the promises our leaders have made.

In August of 2014, Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL was quoted as saying:

So in the House and Senate, we own the budget. So what does that mean? That means that we can pass the spending bill. And I assure you that in the spending bill, we will be pushing back against this bureaucracy by doing what's called placing riders in the bill. No money can be spent to do this or to do that. We're going to go after them on healthcare, on financial services, on the Environmental Protection Agency, across the board. . . . All across the federal government, we're going to go after them.

Let me ask, have we done any of that—any of that at all? Now wait, leadership might come back and say: Well, sure. We have appropriations bills. There are riders. But the Democrats are filibustering.

Everyone understands why the Democrats are filibustering appropriations bills. When Republican leadership begins the negotiation by peremptorily surrendering, by saying, ''We are going to fund everything, 100 percent of what you want,'' what rational Democrat would ever agree to allow an appropriations bill to go forward?

I am reminded of a football game. In a football game, if the coach comes out at the beginning of the game when the coin is being flipped and forfeits, we know the results in 100 percent of those games. In 100 percent of those games, that team will lose. Sadly, that team is the American people because it is Republican leadership that goes out and forfeits at the coin toss over and over again.

That was in 2014.

In 2015, Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL vowed ''some big fights over funding the bureaucracy,'' saying that his party would use spending bills now being written in the GOP-controlled Congress to extract policy concessions from President Barack Obama. Where are those policy concessions? Where are those fights? I don't recall seeing any fights. Actually, that is not fair. There are fights—fights against conservatives; fights against efforts to rein in the Obama administration; fights against efforts to stop the spending; fights against efforts to turn around our debt. On that, Republican leadership fights ferociously. But where are the promised fights against the Obama agenda, on anything? Name one concession.

Let's go back to the substance of this deal. One of the things this deal does is it utterly makes a mockery of the Budget Control Act. It abrogates the budget caps. It wasn't too long ago that Republican leadership was touting the Budget Control Act as one of the greatest successes of Republican leadership. Indeed, when asked ''Well, why does it matter to have Republicans in control?'' typically the answer would be ''Look at the Budget Control Act.''

Here is another quote from Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL:

Politicians regularly come to Washington promising fiscal responsibility, but too often they can't agree to cut spending when it counts, and that is why the Budget Control Act is such a big deal.

Mind you, a big deal that right now the Republican Congress is abrogating.

Since Congress passed the BCA with overwhelming bipartisan majorities in 2011, Washington has actually reduced the level of government spending for 2 years running. That is the first time this has happened since the Korean war.

Leader MCCONNELL continuing:

The BCA savings are such a big deal, in fact, that the President campaigned on it endlessly in 2012.

Yet the lone fiscal accomplishment supposedly of the Republican majority, this deal throws overboard. They didn't have much to point to, but they had this one: We have the budget caps. Guess what. We don't have those either.

Then there is the debt ceiling. In 2011, then-Minority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL talked about what the debt ceiling should be used for. This is a quote from an op-ed he wrote:

What Republicans want is simple: We want to cut spending now.

Does this do this? No.

We want to cap runaway spending in the future—

Does this do this? No—

and we want to save our entitlements and our country from bankruptcy by requiring the nation to balance its budget.

Again, this does not do this.

We want to finally get our economy growing again at a pace that will lead to significant job growth.

Well, surely there are some pro-growth measures in this. No.

That wasn't an isolated statement. Earlier in 2011, Leader MCCONNELL explained that ''no president—in the near future, maybe in the distant future—is going to be able to get the debt ceiling increased without a re-ignition of the same discussion of how do we cut spending and get America headed in the right direction.'' That was 4 years ago.

Why is it that the Republican leadership is giving President Obama trillions in more debt without any—let's go back to Leader MCCONNELL's words—''re-ignition of the same discussion of how do we cut spending and get

America headed in the right direction''? That was a clear promise made to the American people, and this deal makes that promise a mockery. It makes it an utter mockery. Instead, Republican leadership is taking the lead to remove the debt ceiling from Barack Obama. He will never have to worry about it again.

Why do these matter? Why do we have these fights? To understand why, we have to understand the dynamics of Congress today.

In Congress today, there are essentially three types of spending bills. No. 1, there are show votes. Show votes are a particular favorite of leadership. Show votes are anything, frankly, that men and women who are elected care about. They will tee up a show vote. We have had show votes on Planned Parenthood. We have had show votes on the Iran nuclear deal. We have had show votes on amnesty. Show votes are designed for all the Republicans to vote one way, all the Democrats to vote the other, and for us to lose. Show votes are a game of political posture.

Leadership is happy to give show votes. Frankly, leadership is irked that the men and women who elected us are not satisfied with show votes anymore. There was a time when politicians in Washington could look down at our constituents and say: They don't understand what is going on. If we give them a show vote, they will be satisfied with that.

Well, a funny thing happened on the way to the floor: The electorate has gotten much more sophisticated, much more educated, and much more informed. With the advent of the Internet, with the advent of social media, people can now tell a show vote. A vote that is designed to lose from day one, that is an exercise in political theater, in Kabuki theater, is not, in fact, honoring the commitments made to the men and women who elected us.

There is a second type of legislation which is simply a collective spending bill that pays off the Washington cartel, pays off the lobbyists, and that can often get bipartisan agreement. If you are giving money to giant corporations, it is amazing how many Democrats and Republicans can come together to say: Hey, these corporations write campaign checks; we are all for that. The pesky taxpayers don't know enough to fight against this. We can keep them in the dark, so let's keep robbing the single moms waiting tables to take her paycheck and give it to the giant corporation. That stinks. Do you want to know why America is mad? That is it right there, the legalized looting that occurs in this city every day.

Then there is a third type of vote. That is the must-pass legislation. I would note that this year in the Senate there are a number of Senate freshmen. Senate leadership has done what Senate leadership always does, which is wrap their arms around Senate freshmen and bring them into the bosom. One of the things I am hoping Senate freshmen observe firsthand—I have not been here much longer than Senate freshmen, but one of the things you quickly realize is the only fights that have any chance of actually changing law, the only fights that have any chance of actually changing policy are must-pass bills.

If you want to do more than a show vote, if you want to actually fix a problem, if you want to actually address a wrong, you either fight on the must-pass votes or you do nothing. Those are the choices. Leadership knows that must-pass votes are typically one of three things: They are continuing resolutions, they are Omnibus appropriations bills, or they are debt ceiling increases.

If you look historically at how Congress has reined in a recalcitrant President, it has been through continuing resolutions, Omnibus appropriations, or debt ceiling increases. If leadership foreswears using any of them, we will not use any must-pass legislation to do anything. Do you know what that means? That means Congress in the United States has become all but irrelevant. That is what leadership has done.

It is all captured in one innocuous little statement: no shutdowns. That is what leadership has promised. We are going to have no shutdowns. Listen, to most folks that sounds like a very reasonable proposition. In the private sector, you generally don't shut a business down. Saying we are not going to shut things down seems very commonsensical, but here is the problem. When you are dealing with zealots and when you are dealing with ideologues and you tell them if they do the following, I will surrender—if you tell them ''if you say the word 'zucchini,' I will give in,'' we all know what will happen. Immediately they will begin saying ''zucchini, zucchini, zucchini.''

That is Washington today. Republican leadership in both Chambers has told President Obama we will never ever allow a shutdown because, Lord knows, the last time we had a shutdown, it resulted in us winning nine Senate seats, taking control of the Senate, retiring HARRY REID as majority leader, winning the largest majority in the House, and, goodness gracious, we don't want that to happen again.

Once Republican leadership tells Obama we will never ever allow a shutdown, then suddenly the President has a little furry rabbit's foot in his pocket. On any issue, any fight, any topic that comes up whatsoever, all the President has to do is whisper quietly in the wind ''shutdown'' and Republican leadership runs to the hills. It is a wonderful negotiating tactic. Why is this happening? Because President Obama whispered ''shutdown,'' and leadership said, ''We surrender.''

If you are not willing to fight on any must-pass legislation, we will not win anything. Leadership responds, though, that it is not reasonable. You cannot win. You can never win a fight on must-pass legislation.

The problem with that is history is to the contrary. As John Adams famously said, ''Facts are stubborn things.'' Of the last 55 times Congress has raised the debt ceiling, it has attached meaningful conditions to that 28 times. It has historically proven the most effective leverage Congress has.

When leadership says—and by the way, when press outlets echo leadership in saying that it is hopeless, nothing can be done, do not fight on these issues, they never seem to address the reality of history that is directly to the contrary. Gramm-Rudman, one of the most significant spending restraints in modern times, came from the debt ceiling. If Congress wasn't willing to fight on the debt ceiling, you would have no Gramm-Rudman. Yet leadership might respond: OK. Fine. Historically that was true but not with Barack Obama, not with HARRY REID. This current incarnation of Democrats—they are too partisan, they are too extreme, they are too zealous, and it will never work with them. The only problem is that is not true either.

Indeed, what we are talking about right now—the Budget Control Act—came from the debt ceiling. The newly elected majority in the House of Representatives used the debt ceiling to extract the Budget Control Act from President Obama, which until just recently leadership hailed as their greatest fiscal success in modern times.

If the tool that yielded their greatest fiscal success was the debt ceiling, why would leadership say we will never use it again? It is like the San Francisco 49ers of great saying that we are never going to again allow Joe Montana to throw to Jerry Rice. That worked too well—never again.

If you discover a tool that works, who in their right mind would say we will take off the field forever the tool that has proven most successful in reining in the President? I don't know if anyone in their right mind would, but that is in fact what congressional Republican leadership has done. This debt ceiling is kicked down the road until the end of the Obama Presidency.

I would note that when Speaker BOEHNER announced his resignation on that day, I predicted this outcome. On that day, within minutes of Speaker BOEHNER announcing his resignation, I stated publicly that what this means is that he has cut a deal with NANCY PELOSI to raise the debt ceiling and to fund the entirety of Obama's agenda for the next 2 years.

It was interesting. When I said that, there were those in the media who criticized me: Oh, you don't know that. Why are you so cynical? Why would you say such a thing?

I would say such a thing because I understand how the Washington cartel operates, how it is not two parties, but it is in fact one party—the party of Washington. I mentioned that this deal

took months to negotiate. We are seeing the fruits of it right here. This is exactly what I predicted the day JOHN BOEHNER resigned. Why? Because that then freed the Speaker to pass this through the House of Representatives. How many Democrats do you think voted for this? I will tell you. It was every single one of them. One hundred percent of House Democrats who voted, voted for this, and 79 Republicans voted for it—a handful, a small minority of Republicans. So how did this pass the House? With all the Democrats, House leadership, and a handful of Republicans. How is it likely to pass this body? Every Democrat will vote for it. Republican leadership will vote for it, and they will get some of the Republicans. That pattern—a lameduck Speaker of the House cutting a deal with a lameduck President to add $85 billion to our national debt and to give away any and all leverage for the Obama administration—that is what this deal means.

It is worth understanding. This deal means Republican majorities in Congress will extract nothing of significance from President Obama. This deal means that Republican leadership has fully surrendered.

It is interesting. They call it clearing the decks. That is a uniquely Washington term. You recall back in December the trillion-dollar CRomnibus bill. The very first thing we did after winning majority in both Houses was also called clearing the decks. Boy, these decks need a lot of clearing. I have to say, these chairs get rearranged like they are on the deck of the Titanic, and no one addresses the fact that the ship of the United States is headed toward the iceberg.

With $18 trillion in debt that the party of Washington, the Washington cartel, has created—and it is complicit and growing—the only people losing are our kids and their kids and the future of this country and the future of the free world. That is all that is being lost. But, hey, there are cocktail parties in Washington this week. Lobbyists are hosting them. They are writing checks.

If we actually stood up to that, that would be difficult. There is a reason so many politicians talk about standing up to Washington. Yet so few actually do it because it is far easier to take the path of least resistance. It is far easier to go along to get along. It is far easier simply to agree, to be agreeable, to get along. Why can't you get along with the politicians who are bankrupting your children and my children? Do you know what? I don't make it a habit to acquiesce to people who are doing enormous damage to this country. That is what we are seeing.

What could have been done instead? Imagine a hypothetical. Imagine we had Republican leadership that wanted to fight on something, on anything. For Pete's sake, at this point, I think most voters would say: Give me something that matters and fight on that, whatever it is. They are so frustrated. How can it be that we won majorities in both Houses and there is nothing, nothing that matters to the people that we are willing to fight on?

Do I think the continuing resolution or the debt ceiling could have magically transformed this country? Do I think we could have done fundamental, wholesale reforms? Probably not. That would have taken truly inspired leadership. That may be asking too much. If we couldn't have solved every problem, is the alternative really that we could have solved nothing? Is the alternative really that we had to give Obama everything and do nothing to fix the problems?

Let me suggest seven things this deal could have included. How about the Default Prevention Act? It is legislation PAT TOOMEY introduced. He also calls it the Full Faith and Credit Act. Every time we have a debt ceiling fight, the Democrats scaremonger. They say: If you don't raise the debt ceiling, America will default on its debt.

Let's be clear. That is a blatant lie. They know it is a lie. I will note that when Barack Obama was Senator Obama, he voted against George W. Bush raising the debt ceiling. He said it was unpatriotic to raise the debt ceiling. That is when the debt was about half of what it is now.

Everyone who votes here later tonight, you should remember that Senator Obama said that if you are voting to raise this debt ceiling, what you are doing is unpatriotic. Those are the words of a young Barack Obama, but there is reason it is a lie. Every month's Federal revenue is about $200 billion. Interest on the debt runs between $30 billion and $40 billion a month, which means in any given month there are ample revenues to service the debt. No responsible President would ever allow a default on the debt. Indeed, what a responsible President should do is stand up at the very outset and say: Let me be clear. Under no circumstances will the United States ever, ever default on its debt. That is what a responsible President would do. Sadly, that means that is not what President Obama has done. Instead, what he does consistently when we approach a debt ceiling is to threaten to default on the debt if we don't give him a blank credit card.

What does the Default Prevention Act do? It says that in the event the debt ceiling is not raised, we will always, always, always service our debt. We will never ever, ever, ever default on the debt. I recognize that there are some skilled demagogues in Washington, but how exactly does the Democratic Party demagogue Republicans for risking a default on the debt in order to pass legislation preventing defaults on the debt? That is some slick talking. But you know what. The Republican leadership didn't want to do that, because if we did that, then when we face the next debt ceiling, conservatives would expect us to say: OK, let's use this leverage to fight for something, and they don't want to fight for something.

The Democratic scaremongering is useful because they are working to meet the same priorities. If you pass the Default Prevention Act, then suddenly some spines might stiffen and people might be prepared to fight, and that is a nightmare to leadership—that we would actually fight. So, no, no, no, no, we will not attach the Default Prevention Act.

How about another one—shutdowns? Senator PORTMAN has legislation preventing government shutdowns. There is one promise that Republican leadership has made that is carved in stone, and that is that we will never, ever, ever, ever allow a shutdown. So if there was anything on Earth to attach to this deal, it would be that. Senator PORTMAN's legislation says: In the event a continuing resolution isn't passed, in the event that appropriations expire, funding will continue, but it will gradually ratchet down slowly over time. If we pass that bill, there will never ever, ever again be a government shutdown.

Gosh, if I listened to the rhetoric of leadership, I would think they would want to pass that bill. Why isn't it in this? The answer is simple: Because if it were in this, Members of this body would actually expect us to stand up and fight for something. Instead, leadership wants to be able to tell the freshmen—the new Members of the Senate—that a shutdown is terrible. It is the worst thing in the world. So we can't fight for anything; so you must acquiesce in everything that Obama wants. If we actually passed legislation prohibiting shutdowns, that scaremongering would be taken off the table. Democrats don't want that because Democrats support shutdowns.

If we look at the last shutdown over ObamaCare—revisionist history aside, because the media loves doing revisionist history—Republicans voted over and over and over to fund the government, and it was HARRY REID and Barack Obama who shut down the government. Reporters scoff at that when they hear it without ever acknowledging that HARRY REID very publicly said: Gosh, we think shutdowns help Democrats politically. Why is it a difficult proposition? If the leader of the Democratic Party says that we think a shutdown is politically beneficial, why is it difficult to understand that they are the ones forcing a shutdown? The last thing Democrats want is to take shutdowns off the table.

The dirty little secret—the mendacity in this body—is that the Republican leadership doesn't want that either. They don't want us standing and resisting anything because it is not two parties; it is one party.

What else could we have done? How about growth? Remember MITCH MCCONNELL's comments about economic growth? Why doesn't this bill have a provision lifting the ban on

crude oil exports? That would produce economic growth across this country. It is a no-brainer economically. Is this in there? No. Did we try? No. Maybe it was brought up behind closed doors, and the Democrats laughed and said no and we surrendered. I don't know. It doesn't matter because leadership is not willing to fight for it. If you are not willing to fight for it, it won't happen.

What else could we have done? We could have repealed the waters of the United States rule, one of the most crushing rules that is hammering farmers and ranchers and poses an immense threat to jobs across this country. By the way, there is even some bipartisan opposition to it in this body. But fear not, next week we have a show vote on the waters of the United States bill scheduled. Leadership is very happy. We will have a show vote. We will get to vote, and it will fail.

Every farmer and rancher that is facing hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs because of this rule should rest assured that our show vote will allow us to pretend to be with them. Why not attach to this a provision rescinding the waters of the United States? Because that would actually prompt a fight.

How about another option on the spending side? How about putting in a work requirement for welfare? In the mid-1990s, welfare reform was one of the most successful policy reforms in modern times. It moved millions people off of welfare and into work, out of poverty and into the middle class. It lifted their spirits, their hopes, their dreams. It provided the dignity of work. It provided children with homes that were more stable, had more future and more opportunity. We could have added that to this. Is that here? No. Why? Because President Obama would fight it. It is contrary to his big government agenda to expect anyone receiving welfare to work or look for work.

By the way, let me say as an aside, that you are not helping anyone when you make them dependent on government. You are not doing them a favor when you sap them of the dignity and self-respect of going to work. Arthur Brooks has a wonderful new book out. One of the things that he talks about is the happiness that comes from going to work and working hard, the dignity that comes from looking your kids in the eyes and having a job.

The Democrats are not helping the people they trap with dependency; they are hurting them profoundly. I have said many times that when my dad was a teenage immigrant in the 1950s, washing dishes and making 50 cents an hour, and he couldn't speak English, thank God some well-meaning liberal didn't come put his arm around him and say: Let me take care of you. Let me make you dependent on government. Let me give you a check. Let me sap your dignity and self-respect. It would have been the most destructive thing you could have done to my father.

We could have fought that fight. But did we do that? No.

What about adding a provision of Internet tax freedom—permanently? The Internet will be tax free in perpetuity. I tried to bring that up numerous times. The Democrats can be expected to routinely block it. Why? Because they want to threaten taxing the Internet. That is some money. Ain't nothing politicians in Washington like more than a chance to get their grubby little hands on our dollars and our freedom.

How precisely did we lose this fight if in the course of this we simply attached permanent Internet tax freedom to this fight? Are Republicans really that lousy at political battle that we fear the President would shut down the government, blame us, and we would collapse in ignominy because we fought for Internet tax freedom? Holy cow—if we are that bad at this, why are we doing this?

I have one other option. How about auditing the Federal Reserve? That is something else that has bipartisan support, something else that would address the effects of debasing the currency. One of the effects of debasing the currency is seniors, people who saved their whole lives are seeing their savings devalue. They are people who are struggling and living paycheck to paycheck. Single moms are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet. Those are seven things we could have added to this.

By the way, I would note that when leadership says, ''Gosh, you are being unrealistic to expect us to fight,'' I didn't say any one of those is a must-have. I gave a choice of seven. Is it really the case that we could have fought for nothing? Is that really the case? That is what leadership tells us. No, nothing pro-growth, nothing limiting spending, nothing addressing any of the promises we make—that is the position of leadership.

I ask my Republican colleagues to name one thing President Obama is unhappy with regarding this deal. There is an old line that if it is a good negotiation, both sides are unhappy, both sides will have given something. Name one thing that President Obama is unhappy with. What did we get in return? Name one thing. The answers to both questions are exactly the same—nothing.

The fact is, President Obama has already told us what he thinks of this deal. Just this week he stated: ''I'm pretty happy about the budget deal because it reflects our values.'' Whose values are those? He is right. This budget deal reflects the Obama values. Who negotiated this budget deal? That would be Republican leadership. What does it say that Republican leadership's budget deal gives President Obama everything he wants because it reflects Obama's values? This is why the American people are so frustrated. We keep winning elections and nothing changes.

In 2009, we were told that if only you had a Republican majority in the House of Representatives, then things would be different. We rose up, and millions of us in 2010 won a majority. And very little changed. Then we were told the problem was the Senate—HARRY REID and the Senate. If only we had a Republican majority in the Senate, then things would be different. In 2014, millions of Americans rose up again, and we won another historic tidal wave victory. We won nine Senate seats and retired HARRY REID as the majority leader. The Presiding Officer and I have been here 10 months. Is there one single accomplishment we can point to that the Republican majority has given to the men and women who elected us? Mind you, there are things we have accomplished. It just wasn't anything we promised the men and women back home.

One of the things I discovered as a freshman is how often leadership would effectively pat you on the head and say: Now, son, that is what you tell the folks back home. We don't actually do it. You don't expect us to actually do those things.

A few weeks back, I was meeting with a number of House Republicans. I suggested to them to go back to their districts and convene a townhall and set up a whiteboard and just ask their constituents: What should be the top priorities of Republican majorities in both Houses of Congress? Make a list. If you make a list of 20 things from your constituents—the Presiding Officer is from Nebraska and I am from Texas—I guarantee you that of those 20 things at least 18 of them will be nowhere on the leadership's priority list. They are simply not what majorities are endeavoring to do.

The second thing I suggested to the House Republicans was to go down to K Street and assemble the biggest lobbyists in Washington. Take out that same whiteboard and ask them: What are your top priorities? Write a list of 20 things, and 18 of them will be leadership's priorities. That is the divide.

People ask me: Is it that leadership is unwilling to fight? Is it that they are not very good? Do they not know how to fight? Sadly, it is worse than that. They know how to fight. They are actually quite capable of it. They are willing to fight. It is whom they are fighting for. Washington is working, but it is just not working for the American people. It is working for the giant corporations, it is working for the lobbyists, and it is working for the rich and powerful. Six of the 10 wealthiest counties in America are in and around Washington, DC. That is whom the Washington cartel works for. That is the basic divide.

Indeed, as we look back over the last 10 months, one is left with the conclusion—and a rather shocking conclusion—that Majority Leader MCCONNELL has proven to be the most effective

Democratic leader in modern times. Now, that is, in the parlance of Washington, a surprising statement.

Let's take a moment to review the statistics. Between January and September 30 of this year, there have been a total of 269 rollcall votes. In the same time period in the prior Congress under HARRY REID, there were 211 rollcall votes. Let's look at the differences, and in particular, I want to focus on the total number of times a majority of Democrats voted aye, a majority of Republicans voted no, and the measure passed.

Now, if someone is an effective Democratic leader, you would expect them to be able pass legislation when a majority of Democrats support it and a majority of Republicans oppose it. Indeed, if you are a partisan Democrat, that would be almost the definition of an effective Democratic leader. Nineteen times in the last 9 months, this so-called Republican majority has passed legislation and has had a vote succeed where a majority of Democrats supported it and a majority of Republicans opposed it.

One example we can look to is DHS funding—funding for the Department of Homeland Security when President Obama issued his lawless and unconstitutional Executive amnesty.

Republicans across the country campaigned, promising to stop it. The Presiding Officer and I campaigned together in his home State of Nebraska. I spent 2 months in the year 2014 campaigning with Republican Senate candidates all over this country. I think for those 2 months before that election I slept in my own bed about 5 days. Over and over again, Republican Senate candidates said: If you give us a majority in the Senate, we will stop this unconstitutional amnesty.

I have to tell my colleagues I shared with Republican leadership, How about we honor that commitment. The response from leadership was, I didn't say that. I can tell my colleagues Senate candidates across this country did because I was standing next to them when they said it.

What happened? When we voted, all 45 Democrats voted aye; 100 percent of them. That is impressive for a leader to get 100 percent unanimity among his party. Notice I said ''his party.'' There is a reason I said that. Right now, sadly, the majority leader MITCH MCCONNELL is the most effective Democratic leader we have seen in modern times. One hundred percent of the Democrats were united. How about Republicans? Well, 31 voted no and 23 voted yes. So under this majority leader, the Democrats had their way and a majority of Republicans lost.

Surely that is an outlier. Yes, the President was behaving lawlessly. Yes, he was behaving unconstitutionally. Yes, indeed, he was behaving, in his own terms, like an emperor. Let me note calling a President an emperor, that is fairly overheated rhetoric, but it is not my rhetoric, it is President Obama's.

President Obama was asked by activists, could he decree amnesty unilaterally, and he said: I don't have the constitutional authority to do so. I am not an emperor. Those are Barack Obama's words: I am not an emperor. Just months later, magically, that same power he said he didn't have under the Constitution—just months before a Presidential election—it materialized. Suddenly, the man who said ''I am not an emperor'' apparently became an emperor, in his own assessment. Yet what did the Republican majority in the Senate do? It joined with 100 percent of the Democrats to overrule a majority of the Republicans in funding President Obama's lawless amnesty, acting as an emperor.

The Presiding Officer and I both sat through a Republican lunch a couple of weeks ago where our colleagues were quite puzzled why approval of the Republican majority is at such low levels. They couldn't understand why right now Republicans in Congress have a 10-percent lower approval rating than we had in the middle of the shutdown. They were utterly befuddled by this. I am going to suggest a very easy reason. When our leader acts like an effective Democratic leader, the people who elected us, their heads explode. Surely one might say this is an isolated example.

Well, let's look at the next example, yet another example, the Bennet climate change amendment. This climate change amendment said climate change is real, it is manmade, it is a national security threat, and we need to act to stop it. Listen, let me say something on global warming. I am the son of two mathematicians and scientists. I believe we should be driven by the scientific evidence. Sadly, the far left is not interested in science or evidence, they are interested in politics and political power. So when it comes to global warming, they do not want to confront the inconvenient truth, as Al Gore might put it, that the satellite data demonstrates there has been no significant warming whatsoever for 18 years. They get very angry when we point that out.

We had an amendment on that. How many Democrats voted for it? Oh, look, again, 46, 100 percent, every single Democrat. How many Republicans voted against it? Forty-seven and just seven Republicans voted for it. Yet it passed.

That is an impressive victory for a Democratic leader. We just have 46 Democrats. For a Democratic leader to get a win with just 46 Democrats, that is impressive. That is what the current majority leader did. He produced a win, ran over the wishes of 47 Republicans.

Let's use another example: a motion to waive the budget rules on H.R. 2. This was the so-called doc fix. The doc fix has been a perennial challenge in Congress. It is part of Medicare that assumed unreasonable cuts in doctor reimbursement rates. For a time, it served a purpose. It actually allowed Washington politicians to shake down the doctors election after election after election to write checks. So for a time the Washington cartel liked the doc fix, but it came time to get rid of it, and getting rid of it was a good thing. Here is the problem. When we got rid of it, we didn't pay for it. We just put it on a credit card. We didn't do the hard work of figuring out how to pay for it, we just accepted more debt. Well, but at least it is not that much more debt. Well, unfortunately, it is. This so-called doc fix will spend more than $200 billion and add more than $140 billion to our deficits over the first 10 years and more than $500 billion to our Nation's deficits over 20 years—$500 billion. Look, even in the world of Washington, $500 billion is real money, but surely it is unreasonable to expect anyone to figure out how to pay for a doc fix.

It is interesting that since 2004 Congress has passed periodic doc fixes, and since 2004 doc fixes have been fully offset 94 percent of the time—and 98 percent of the time if we count some of the budget gimmicks. If we count the gimmicks, it is 98 percent of the time. Just this time, $500 billion, no, we are not going to offset that. We are just going to put it on the credit part. After all, Obama has a platinum-encrusted, glow-in-the-dark AmEx. We will put it on your kids and my kids.

What does that irresponsible profligate spending do? Well, how many Democrats voted for it? There is a surprise, every single one of them: 46 Democrats. The Republicans: 29 Republicans vote no, 25 vote yes. Now, for a Democratic leader, what a great victory. A Democratic leader, with just 46 Democrats, added $500 billion in spending without paying for it. Holy cow. I don't recall HARRY REID ever being able to campaign saying: Give me a Democratic majority and I will add $500 billion in spending without paying for it. This is an accomplishment the prior Democratic leader, HARRY REID, was not able to achieve. Yet the current majority leader got this win for the Democrats.

Let's look at the next example: Confirmation of the Attorney General, Loretta Lynch. I serve on the Judiciary Committee. I participated in multiple hearings where Ms. Lynch over and over again refused to acknowledge any limits on President Obama's authority whatsoever. When Ms. Lynch was asked how she would differ from Eric Holder, who has been the most lawless and partisan Attorney General this Nation has ever seen, she said: No way whatsoever. When pressed repeatedly if she could articulate even a single limit on the authority of this President, who has since implicitly declared himself an emperor, she refused to articulate even a single limit. When asked if she would appoint an independent prosecutor to investigate the IRS for wrongfully targeting citizens because of their free speech, because of their political views—mind you, something

that when Richard Nixon tried to do it, the career professionals at the IRS refused. Richard Nixon was rightly denounced in bipartisan terms for attempting to use the IRS to target his political enemies. When the Obama administration not only attempted but succeeded in doing so, no one has been held to account. Instead, the Holder Justice Department, appointed and charged with the investigation a major Democratic donor who has given over $6,000 to President Obama and the Democrats. There is a Yiddish word for that, ''chutzpah.'' When you appoint a major Obama donor to be in charge of the investigation as to whether the Obama administration is targeting the political opponents of the President, miraculous, miraculous, the results we just saw: a whitewash, everyone was exonerated.

Mistakes were made, we were told. It was rather classic. They used the same passive tense, passive voice as in the Watergate scandal: Mistakes were made. Yes, mistakes were made. Well, Ms. Lynch told us, no, she would not appoint a special prosecutor.

Now, a number of Members of this body, a number of Republicans voted to confirm Eric Holder. That may or may not have been a mistake. I was not here at that time. I did not have the opportunity to examine his record prior to his being appointed Attorney General. I can understand those who voted yes. Prior to becoming Attorney General, Eric Holder had built a reputation, by and large, as a law-and-order prosecutor, and so we can understand Senators who would believe that his tenure as U.S. attorney, his tenure as Deputy Attorney General might suggest he would not be partisan in laws. With Ms. Lynch it was qualitatively different. With Ms. Lynch she told us she would do the very same thing.

I suspect that quite a few people on this side of the aisle have given speeches about the IRS target. No one should be surprised the Department of Justice has now exonerated everyone, because, you know what, we confirmed the Attorney General who basically told us she would do that. I would note, by the way, the majority leader had complete and unilateral authority. If we hadn't taken up this nomination, she would not have been confirmed. Indeed, when President Obama put in place his illegal Executive amnesty, I publicly called on the soon-to-be majority leader. If the President violates the checks and balances of the Constitution, if the President usurps the authority of Congress, if the President ignores our immigration laws, then the majority leader should have responded and said the Senate will not confirm any Obama nominees, executive or judicial, other than vital national security positions, unless and until the President rescinds his illegal amnesty.

Now, that would have been strong medicine, to be sure. That is a serious pushback. It happens to be an authority directly given to the Congress by the Constitution as a check and balance. How do we get an imperial Presidency? We get an imperial Presidency when the other branches of the government lie down and hand over their authority. Nothing prevented the majority leader from doing so, other than that violates the norms of the Washington cartel, and so instead it was the majority leader who brought this up for a vote. And what happened? Sadly, there is no drama or suspense anymore in looking to what happened. With the Democrats, all 46 Democrats voted to confirm Loretta Lynch—all 46—and 34 Republicans voted no. Yet she is confirmed, and the lawlessness continues at the Department of Justice.

I have to say for a Democratic leader, it is not clear to me HARRY REID could have gotten this done. HARRY REID, in charge of this floor, with just 46 Democrats, it is not clear to me at all he could have gotten this done, but I have to say, Leader MCCONNELL has proven to be a very effective Democratic leader. With just 46 Democrats, the outcome is exactly what HARRY REID and the Democrats would want.

Is this not a curious state of affairs? Why is a Republican majority leader fighting to accomplish the priorities of the Democratic minority?

We will look at one other example, the Export-Import Bank. Now, President Obama, when he was Senator Obama, described this as a classic example of corporate welfare. Over $100 billion in taxpayer-funded loan guarantees going to a handful of giant corporations, predominantly. Yet as we talked about before, if there is one thing the Washington cartel is good at, it is corporate welfare. The Export-Import Bank, how many Democrats? Here is a shot: Only 42 Democrats, not 100 percent. We had one, I believe it was BERNIE SANDERS. I will commend Senator SANDERS for standing up against this corporate welfare. On that, he and I are on exactly the same page. Yet 42 Democrats, just 22 Republicans in favor of this corporate welfare; 28 Republicans voted no. Yet what happens? It passes. Now, it is not at all clear that HARRY REID, as Democratic leader with just 42 Democrats—it is not at all clear he could have gotten this done, but Leader MCCONNELL, once again, is a very effective Democratic leader.

And I would note one of Speaker BOEHNER's parting farewells was to tee up the Export-Import Bank in the House of Representatives. It expired this summer. We talked before about how the Budget Control Act was one of the few victories Republican majorities could point to. Actually, the expiration of the Ex-Im Bank is another one. An example of over $100 billion of taxpayer loan guarantees to a handful of giant corporations, and it expired.

What does it say that in the period of 2 weeks Republican majorities in both Houses are working to undo not one but both of the only two meaningful victories the Republican majorities have produced? And, mind you, for the same reason—because the cartel demands it, because the giant corporations want it, and because they want checks.

What does that say? What does that say, indeed. Well, if you want to know what it says, we can look to the previous Democratic leader, HARRY REID, who tweeted out:

> I commend Senate majority leader for setting up a vote to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. This bill is critically important for U.S. businesses.

Set aside how rich it is for the Democrats to be claiming to be fighting for U.S. businesses. Any time they say that, what they mean is cronies, because when Washington, particularly under the Obama administration, fights for U.S. businesses, it is giant corporations and not the little guys. Over and over and over again it is those who employ armies of lobbyists and lawyers and accountants who get favors from Washington, because when Washington is handing out favors, it empowers politicians. Ayn Rand wrote in ''Atlas Shrugged'' about how productive members of society, business owners, would be forced to go to parasitical politicians—although some suggest that is a redundant phrase—to go to parasitical politicians on bended knee begging for special dispensation. When you are standing for business, it means giant corporations that pay little to no taxes because they have tax loopholes carved in. It never means the mom and pop, it never means the little guy, it never means the Sabina Lovings of the world.

Who is Sabina Loving? Sabina Loving is a woman who testified before the Senate in a hearing I chaired a couple of weeks ago. Sabina Loving is an African-American woman, a single mom who started a small tax preparation company on the South Side of Chicago. The Obama IRS put in place new rules regulating tax preparation authority, rules for which they had no legal authority. In fact, they used a statute called the Dead Horse Act as their justification for regulating tax returns.

The Obama IRS regulation exempted lawyers, it exempted high-priced accountants, it exempted the rich and powerful, the giant accounting firms, but Ms. Loving, who started this business on the South Side of Chicago, was facing thousands of costs—costs she felt that would drive her out of business. Ms. Loving sued the IRS and Ms. Loving won. If you want a historic and incredible story of a single mom standing up against Big Government and the lawless regulations of the Obama IRS—well, you know what. Sabina Loving has no lobbyists in Washington. The Washington cartel doesn't listen to the Sabina Lovings. It listens to the rich and powerful corporations that write checks to both parties because it is one party, the party of Washington. That is the sad reality of where we are.

You want to know why the American people are frustrated. You want to know why they are ticked off. You

want to know why they cannot understand. It is not that we keep losing elections. That would be frustrating, but you could understand. We have to do a better job. We have to motivate people. We have to convince people. We have to get a message that resonates. We keep winning and the people we elect don't do what they said they would do.

By the way, to leave the Ex-Im Bank unauthorized all Congress had to do was do nothing. If there is one thing the U.S. Congress is good at doing, it is doing nothing.

Yet the phrase that gets repeated so often—Washington is broken—is actually not true. Washington is working. It is just not working for the American people. It is working for the cartel, it is working for the lobbyists, the giant corporations, and those with power and influence in the Obama administration. This deal is a classic example of the Washington cartel.

I would note, by the way, today we have a new Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN. I congratulate PAUL RYAN on his speakership. I hope we see bold, principled leadership from the new Speaker. One of the things Speaker RYAN articulated was the Ryan rule, that under Speaker RYAN they would not bring to the floor of the House any bill that didn't have majority support among the Republican conference.

I ask the Presiding Officer: Why doesn't Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL articulate a similar rule for the U.S. Senate? If the Ryan rule is good enough for the U.S. House, why is the Ryan rule not good enough for the U.S. Senate?

In every one of the examples I just gave were a majority of Democrats—in fact typically unanimous Democrats—beat a majority of Republicans. Every one of those would never have come to the floor if the Senate followed the Ryan rule. How about that for a meaningful reform; that if the majority leader disputes the characterization that he is the most effective Democratic leader modern times has seen, how about the majority leader promulgate a similar rule to the Ryan rule, that we will not bring to the Senate floor something that does not have majority support from Republicans. That would be a sensible reform. Sadly, I think the odds of it happening are not significant.

Here is the reality that the American people understand and it frustrates them. The cartel is all one happy home. The lameduck Speaker on his way out will no doubt land in a plush easy chair in the Washington cartel, will soon be making millions of dollars living off the cartel. The lameduck President when he moves on, like Bill Clinton before him, will make hundreds of millions of dollars. The cartel operates as one. In the Senate we have one leadership team. It is the McConnell-Reid leadership team, and in the House we have had the Boehner-Pelosi leadership team. They operate in complete harmony in Washington. That frustration is what is driving the growing and growing rage of the American people every day.

The truth is Republican leadership does not spend time thinking, How do we beat President Obama? How do we beat HARRY REID? How do we beat NANCY PELOSI? How do we change any of these disastrous policies that are hurting millions of Americans? Instead, leadership spends all their time thinking, How do we beat the conservatives in the House? How do we crush this freedom caucus—these crazy radicals who actually believe we do what we said we would do. What a shocking, revolutionary, radical statement for Washington, DC, that elected officials actually do what we told our constituents we would do.

Republican leadership with recent deals on Planned Parenthood—Republican leadership led the fight to fund Planned Parenthood. Indeed, their press team went to the press and said: Isn't it great, we boxed out conservatives. We played the procedural game so there was nothing conservatives could do to stop $500 million in taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood. What does it say when I said Majority Leader MCCONNELL is the most effective Democratic leader we have seen in modern times? You know what. HARRY REID didn't spend that much time thinking about how to beat Republicans. Leader MCCONNELL spends more time focused on how to defeat conservatives than HARRY REID ever did. That is the problem. It is our own leadership that cooks up deals.

Why do you think we are voting at 1 o'clock in the morning? Is that an accident? It is by design, 1 o'clock in the morning. Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. Pay no attention to another $85 billion in debt. Pay no attention to the fact that it is the Republican majority giving a blank credit card to Barack Obama. Votes at 1 in the morning, Republican leadership hopes no one notices, so right after we vote on it we can run out, get on planes, and fly home to our constituents, and say: We have to stop the debt.

I shudder to think for anyone standing too close to a politician who says we have to stop the debt after voting for this, the lightning strike that may hit them—the mendacity of this city.

Leadership always counsels prudence and reasonableness. How is it prudent to continue bankrupting this Nation? How is it prudent to have gone from $10 trillion to over $18 trillion in debt? How is it prudent to stay with languishing economic growth. From 2008 to today, the economy has grown on average 1.2 percent a year. That is prudent? How is it prudent to watch as your children and my children's future is washed away? How is that reasonable? How is that pragmatic?

Why are we not instead trying to fix these problems and not even just fix them all, not even solve everything with a perfect magical bow—because leadership plays this game: ''You can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.'' Where is the good?

Leadership's position is we can't do anything. Leadership's position is that with Republican majorities in both Houses, we should spend more—$85 billion—than we did with a Democratic majority, $63 billion. Leadership will harumph us about expectations. You shouldn't set unreasonable expectations. Gosh, it seems to me it was leadership who said if we had a Republican majority in the Senate then we would fight.

On what are we willing to fight? We may have some more show votes. By the way, we just had a show vote on sanctuary cities and Kate's Law. Why wasn't Kate's Law attached to this bill? Why wasn't sanctuary cities attached to this bill? Because that was something we actually campaigned on and we promised our constituents and the Democrats wouldn't like that.

Remember my question: What in this is Barack Obama unhappy about? Nothing. Because leadership's position is we can do nothing. If we can do nothing then it makes one wonder what was all the fuss about winning the majority?

I don't believe we can win every fight. I don't believe we can magically transform everything—at least not without winning the Presidency—but surely the alternative is not we can do nothing. Is there not a reasonable middle ground that we can accomplish something?

I would note the last time we had Republican majorities in Congress and a Democratic President was Newt Gingrich as Speaker of the House and Bill Clinton as President. We accomplished a great deal. We accomplished welfare reform. We balanced the budget. What have these Republican majorities done? Made the problem worse.

As a result, with apologies to the late great journalist Michael Kelly, I want to sum up my views as simply saying I believe.

I believe. I believe what Republican leadership tells us. I believe that every time the mainstream media echoes, leadership listens. Of course it is right that we cannot set expectations too high. We cannot promise too much. We cannot be expected to deliver on any of our promises.

I believed Republican leadership when they said if only we had a Republican majority in the House, then we would stand and fight. After winning the House in 2010, I believed the leadership, that if only we had a Republican majority in the Senate also, then we would stand and fight.

Today I believe Republican leadership that if only we had 60 votes in the Senate, then we would stand and fight. And if we were to get 60 votes, I will believe Republican leadership when they tell us, that if only we had 67 votes in the Senate, then we will finally stand up and fight.

I believe that there is no way Congress could do anything whatsoever to

stop ObamaCare or even to try to provide meaningful relief to millions who are hurt by that failed law every day.

I believe that Congress has no power to do anything about the President's unconstitutional Executive amnesty or sanctuary cities or anything else that might secure our borders.

I believe that Republican majorities in both Houses of Congress can do nothing meaningful on spending or the debt or tax reform or regulatory reform, that we can do nothing to rein in the EPA or CFPB, no matter how many millions of jobs they kill.

I believe that Congress must acquiesce to the Obama administration's declaring the Internet to be a regulated public utility and the administration's attempt to give away control of the Internet to an international cartel of stakeholders, including Russia and China.

I believe that Congress can do nothing—absolutely nothing—to stop this catastrophic Iranian nuclear deal. Yes, it will send over $100 billion to the Ayatollah Khamenei, who chants ''Death to America'' in front of mobs burning American and Israeli flags, and even though it threatens the security of Israel and potentially the lives of millions of Americans.

I believe that Congress has the constitutional power of the purse, but I believe Congress can still do nothing whatsoever to protect the American citizens.

I believe that Congress can do nothing to protect religious liberty or free speech, that Congress must quietly accept an IRS that targets citizens for exercising their constitutional rights and a President who ignores Federal law and Federal judges who disregard the text of the Constitution.

I believed Republican leadership when they promised the American people that if only we had congressional majorities, we would fight ObamaCare and amnesty and lawlessness. And today, I believe Republican leadership when they say: Of course we cannot and will not do any of that. It was unreasonable for anyone to have believed those promises in the first place.

I believe that anytime President Obama threatens a shutdown, Republican leadership is exactly right to surrender and fund all of Obama's Big Government priorities, to fund ObamaCare and amnesty and Planned Parenthood and the Iranian nuclear deal. Otherwise, Obama might shut down the government and it would be our fault. So we must do whatever he demands no matter what.

I believe that it is unreasonable—radical even—to expect Congress to do any of the things we promised the voters on the campaign trail.

I believe that when a Republican Speaker joins with NANCY PELOSI and the Democrats to fund all of Obama's priorities, that it is the Republican Freedom Caucus who are the crazy ones saying we should stand for something.

I believe that when the Republican Senate majority leader publicly promises there is no secret deal to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank and then 1 month later contorts procedural rules to force through the deal that he had claimed did not exist, that it is not his public lie that matters but, rather, it is the junior Senator who has violated decorum by pointing it out, out loud.

I believe that the only thing we can expect Republican majorities to do is expand government, reauthorize corporate welfare, and grow the debt. That is called governing—always said one octave lower in Washington. Governing is measured by how many bills you pass, and one cannot govern without agreeing with Democrats across the board. If we pass a lot of bills, even if they do nothing to address the debt or bring back jobs or economic growth and even if they actually expand Washington power and make the problem worse, then I believe we should celebrate.

I believe that Democrats can never be forced to compromise on anything, that it is always unreasonable to ever try to win a political battle with them, and so it must always be the Republicans who agree to the Democrat's Big Government priorities. I believe the only way Republicans can win is to continue making these same mistakes over and over and over again.

Of course, I do sometimes wonder why it matters if we have Republican majorities in Congress. After all, leadership has told me that they cannot accomplish anything different from the Democrats, that it is an unreasonable demand to expect them to fight Obama on anything. Since it is only the crazy ''kamikaze caucus'' who thinks we can fight Obama on any issue, anything whatsoever, I believe that leadership is right to fight on nothing, to pass the very same bills filled with pork and corporate welfare, the Export-Import Bank, ObamaCare funding, and amnesty, and confirm the very same Attorney General the Democrats would have confirmed.

I do wonder sometimes, as Hillary Clinton would have put it, what difference does it make? But then I put aside such foolish thoughts. Instead, I believe.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Republicans continue to object to requests for unanimous consent on basic things we should be able to do in a bipartisan manner here in the Senate. In addition to my request about gender discrimination, Republicans have previously objected to unanimous consent requests to allow votes on noncontroversial judicial nominees with bipartisan support to fill vacancies in our Federal judiciary. These requests are not remotely controversial; yet the Republicans continue to obstruct for obstruction's sake.

Since the Republicans took over in January, their leadership has allowed only nine judges to be confirmed. A few district court judges have been confirmed in the last few weeks, but this recent increase in activity is in sharp contrast to their inaction all year. When Senate Democrats were in the majority during the last 2 years of the Bush Presidency, we had already confirmed 34 judges by this point—nearly four times more judges than Republicans have confirmed this year.

Republicans have tried to justify their poor record by accusing Senate Democrats of scheduling votes for 11 judges during the lameduck session last December. They suggest that those 11 confirmations under last year's Democratic majority should somehow be counted towards this year's confirmation numbers. First, it is well-established Senate precedent to approve all pending consensus nominees before the end of a year. And second, even if we did ignore reality and count these 11 judges towards the Republicans majority's record, that would only bring their count up to 20 confirmations this year. That is still far behind the 34 nominees that Democrats confirmed in the last 2 years of the Bush administration.

The glacial pace in which Republicans are currently confirming uncontroversial judicial nominees is a failure to carry out the Senate's constitutional duty of providing advice and consent. We should be responding to the needs of our Federal judiciary so that, when hard-working Americans seek justice, they do not encounter the lengthy delays that they currently face today. Because of Republican obstruction, judicial vacancies have increased by more than 50 percent since they took over the majority this January and caseloads are piling up in courts throughout the country.

We can and should take action right now to alleviate this problem by holding confirmation votes on the 16 judicial nominees pending on the floor. A number of these pending nominees have the support of their Republican Senators; yet they continue to languish on the calendar without a vote.

If Republican obstruction continues and if home State Senators cannot persuade the majority leader to schedule a vote for their nominees soon, then it is unlikely that even highly qualified nominees with Republican support will be confirmed by the end of the year. These are nominees that members of the majority leader's own party want confirmed, including several from Tennessee and Pennsylvania. Last week,

we had a hearing for two Iowa nominees. I expect they will be reported out of the Judiciary Committee soon. We also have nominees from Massachusetts, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Hawaii, and Maryland who are waiting for their confirmation hearings. None of these nominees are likely to be confirmed by the end of the year if Senate Republicans continue at this historically slow pace.

I hope Republican Senators will implore their leadership to vote on the pending judicial nominees without delay for the sake of the American people who seek justice before those courts.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and commend the National Association of Social Workers, NASW, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Today NASW is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with 130,000 members, including 3,500 in my home State of Maryland. As a social worker myself, I am proud to be a dues-paying, card-carrying member of NASW, and I congratulate them on 60 wonderful years.

In 1955, seven organizations had the vision to come together to form NASW in an effort to unify and strengthen the social work profession. The visionary leaders of those organizations understood that we can achieve more when we work together.

And they have achieved so much. In the six decades since NASW's founding, members have been on the front lines, advocating and organizing for just causes such as fighting for child welfare and juvenile justice, working to end poverty, and protecting victims of domestic violence. NASW was directly involved in passing the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Violence Against Women Act and supported the creation of Medicaid and Medicare. I have seen the importance of this work firsthand, as I began my own career as a social worker in Baltimore, helping at-risk children and educating seniors about the Medicare program.

NASW has been there time and again, to help social workers do what they do best—care for people at every stage and every age. Social workers reach every part of our communities, from hospitals and mental health clinics to corporations and schools. Working every day and in every way for others, social workers truly put service above themselves. They meet people where they are—in their communities, in their homes, in their everyday lives.

I am so glad that NASW has been such a wonderful champion and partner, fighting to make sure social workers have what they need to make a difference for countless people nationwide. From professional development, to ethics consultation, to publications on standards and changing trends in the profession, NASW continues to make a difference in the social work profession as it reaches its 60 year mark.

Social workers do so much, and they deserve someone in their corner who works as hard for them as they work for others. That is why I was proud to reintroduce the Social Work Reinvestment Act this year, which would create a National Coordination Center for supporting and sharing the good work and research that social workers are doing around the country. The bill also includes grant funding for education, training, and research; and it is going to help address the social worker shortage with better recruitment, retention, and compensation. Just this month, I was also glad to be an original cosponsor of the Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2015, which would help seniors gain access to vital mental health services provided by social workers through the Medicare Program.

Social workers constantly seek solutions that reduce economic inequality, racism, hunger, and all forms of discrimination. They also ensure access to health care and mental health care for our Nation's most vulnerable populations. For the past 60 years, NASW members have cleared paths to brighter days in America. And I am excited for what social workers and NASW will do in the next 60 years. Thank you.

REMEMBERING WWII VETERANS IN UMATILLA COUNTY, OREGON

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the honorable veterans and civilians of Umatilla County, OR, who worked tirelessly and fought valiantly for their community and country during the Second World War. These brave men and women served in a variety of capacities on all fronts, working to support the war effort at home, defending our coastlines from attack, and risking their lives in battle overseas. As the country continues to mark the 70th anniversary of World War II this year, I am proud to raise my voice to pay tribute to the men and women of Umatilla County for their part in the Allied victory.

Umatilla County played a unique and important role in helping our country achieve victory in World War II. In 1941, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers created an airport in Pendleton, OR, which became home to the U.S. Army Air Forces 17th Bombardment Group. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the 17th Bombardment Group was called upon to defend the west coast from Japanese submarines. The group's aircraft and many of its members participated in the daring Doolittle Raid on Tokyo—the first U.S. bombing of the Japanese homeland. All 80 of Jimmy Doolittle's raiders trained in Pendleton, and 5 of them were Oregonians.

Umatilla County also played home to another facility vital to the war effort: the Umatilla Army Depot, located near Hermiston, OR. The Umatilla Army Depot was a repository for munitions and supplies in hundreds of semisubterranean silos. The depot created an economic boom for Hermiston—then a town of 800—which ended up harboring 7,000 new workers. The Umatilla County Depot became the largest munitions facility in the world and stayed active in Hermiston until 2001.

Umatilla County lost 86 people during World War II, but their spirit and stories live on through their families and in their communities. One of these men, SGT Modie L. Hubbard, even has a great nephew who now works in my office. Sergeant Hubbard was killed in action, and his is just one of many stories of those fearless men and women who died preserving the freedom of future generations.

There is sometimes a temptation to focus on the massive scale of events like World War II, on the number of tanks built or brigades in the field. As we reflect on these and other aspects of America's war effort, I would encourage people to remember the communities across this country—communities like Umatilla County—that built those tanks or provided those soldiers. It must be our responsibility to honor these communities and their sacrifices to this great country, and it is my hope that their stories will continue to live on and inspire future generations of Americans to service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ALEX COLLIE

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the incredible service of Alex Collie from Mackenzie, MT. Mr. Collie is the recipient of the National Weather Service's General Albert J. Myer award for completing 65 years of service as a cooperative weather observer.

The cooperative weather observers consists of 11,000 nationwide volunteers who record official weather observations across the country. Mr. Collie joins an elite group of cooperative weather observers and is currently the longest serving observer in Montana's history. Nationally, only 16 others have served in Mr. Collie's capacity or 65 years or longer. His services are critical to Montana—from supporting our farmers and ranchers by providing accurate forecasts and helping our truck drivers complete their routes safely and on schedule.

This prestigious award was established in honor of General Myer, who was an observer at Eagle Pass, TX, and became the chief of the Signal Service. In 1870, by a joint resolution of Congress and signed by President Ulysses S. Grant, General Myer was appointed to establish and direct the Division of Telegrams and Reports for the Benefit

of Commerce, now known as the National Weather Service. Mr. Collie is truly following in tremendous footsteps.

Mr. Collie has provided a valuable service not only to his neighbors, but the entire State of Montana. Thank you, Mr. Collie, and I look forward to seeing your work continue in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING THE LAS VEGAS LATIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 40th anniversary of an important organization to southern Nevada, Las Vegas' Latin Chamber of Commerce. I am proud to honor this chamber that contributes so much in support of Las Vegas' Hispanic business community. As the premier Latin Chamber serving our Great State, it is a key contributor to the success of Nevada. I am pleased to see the Latin Chamber of Commerce reach this significant milestone, continuing to serve as an important ally to Las Vegas' Hispanic community.

Without a doubt, the many Hispanic businesses, both small and large, located throughout the southern Nevada valley have greatly contributed to our State's achievements. With the help of the Latin Chamber of Commerce, Las Vegas' Hispanic business community has continued to grow and thrive, contributing to our State's economy. Even in difficult economic times, the Latin Chamber of Commerce was there to support local Hispanic businesses and keep hard-working southern Nevada businessowners on their feet. The chamber has helped to cultivate a flourishing Hispanic business community through innovation, creativity, and ingenuity. The strong foundation it has built will be felt for years to come.

Aside from helping local businesses expand, the Latin Chamber of Commerce also brings southern Nevada's Hispanic entrepreneurs unique opportunities. The chamber provides numerous networking events, including luncheons, leadership programs, and seminars. It also prioritizes Nevada's Hispanic youth by providing an academic scholarship program for students, which offers opportunities for those wishing to pursue higher education. Alongside this program, the Latin Chamber of Commerce sponsors the Latino Youth Leadership Conference that brings together students from high schools across Nevada to provide them tools for a prosperous future.

I have attended multiple Latin Chamber of Commerce events where I have spoken with the men and women who participate in this chamber, and I can attest to the incredible role they play within our community. Sixteen members serve on the Board of Directors, bringing structure and direction to this significant entity. I am thankful for their leadership and for the great things they are doing for businesses in southern Nevada.

For the past 40 years, Las Vegas' Latin Chamber of Commerce has proven its unwavering dedication to the great State of Nevada. The hard work of those that have served this chamber has greatly contributed to the excellent growth that we see in the city of Las Vegas today. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Latin Chamber of Commerce on its 40th anniversary and thanking it for all it does to make Nevada's business community the best it can be.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3819. An act to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 12:36 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 455. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a northern border threat analysis, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2643. An act to direct the Attorney General to provide State officials with access to criminal history information with respect to certain financial service providers required to undergo State criminal background checks, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 504, resolving that the Senate be informed that PAUL D. RYAN, a Representative from the State of Wisconsin, has been elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 623) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 455. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a northern border threat analysis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2643. An act to direct the Attorney General to provide State officials with access to criminal history information with respect to certain financial service providers required to undergo State criminal background checks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2159(i) and section 601(b)(4) of Public Law 94–329, and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 20. Joint resolution relating to the approval of the proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Korea Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 597. An act to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 1324. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to fulfill certain requirements before regulating standards of performance for new, modified, and reconstructed fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–159).

S. 1500. A bill to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–160).

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works:

Report to accompany S. 1523, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–161).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Brian R. Martinotti, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Robert F. Rossiter, Jr., of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

Edward L. Stanton III, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 2217. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to improve and clarify certain disclosure requirements for restaurants and similar retail food establishments, and to amend the authority to bring proceedings under section 403A; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. DONNELLY):

S. 2218. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 2219. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to conduct an assessment and analysis of the outdoor recreation economy of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TESTER, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CASEY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KAINE, Mr. COONS, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 2220. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to provide for a special enrollment period for pregnant women, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. ENZI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COATS, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 2221. A bill to preserve the companionship services exemption for minimum wage and overtime pay, and the live-in domestic services exemption for overtime pay, under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2222. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to support community college and industry partnerships, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 2223. A bill to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2224. A bill to establish in the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services the Federal Interagency Working Group on Reducing Child Poverty to develop a national strategy to eliminate child poverty in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 313

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to add physical therapists to the list of providers allowed to utilize locum tenens arrangements under Medicare.

S. 405

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 405, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make loan guarantees and grants to finance certain improvements to school lunch facilities, to train school food service personnel, and for other purposes.

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 746

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 746, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer.

S. 1132

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1132, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for patient protection by establishing safe nurse staffing levels at certain Medicare providers, and for other purposes.

S. 1249

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1249, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to provide protections for active duty military consumers, and for other purposes.

S. 1286

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1286, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reduce the backlog of appeals of decisions of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by facilitating pro bono legal assistance for veterans before the United States Court of Veterans Appeals and the Board of Veterans' Appeals, to provide the Secretary with authority to address unreasonably delayed claims, and for other purposes.

S. 1559

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1559, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 1659

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1659, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1731

At the request of Mr. HELLER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1731, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to waive the minimum period of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces for receipt of certain benefits for homeless veterans, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish such benefits to homeless veterans with discharges or releases from service in the Armed Forces with other than dishonorable conditions, and for other purposes.

S. 1830

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 1830, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1865

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1865, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to eating disorders, and for other purposes.

S. 1915

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1915, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to make anthrax vaccines and antimicrobials available to emergency response providers, and for other purposes.

S. 1947

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1947, a bill to exclude the discharge of certain Federal student loans from the calculation of gross income.

S. 2042

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2042, a bill to amend the National

Labor Relations Act to strengthen protections for employees wishing to advocate for improved wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment and to provide for stronger remedies for interference with these rights, and for other purposes.

S. 2066

At the request of Mr. SASSE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2066, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

S. 2148

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2148, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prevent an increase in the Medicare part B premium and deductible in 2016.

S. 2168

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2168, a bill to encourage greater community accountability of law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 2184

At the request of Mr. COONS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2184, a bill to direct the President to establish guidelines for United States foreign development and economic assistance programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2203

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2203, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make residents of Puerto Rico eligible for the earned income tax credit and to provide equitable treatment for residents of Puerto Rico with respect to the refundable portion of the child tax credit.

S. 2206

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2206, a bill to reduce the incidence of sexual harassment and assault at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to reauthorize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002, and to reauthorize the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998, and for other purposes.

S. 2213

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2213, a bill to prohibit firearms dealers from selling a firearm prior to the completion of a background check.

S. RES. 275

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 275, a resolution calling on Congress, schools, and State and local educational agencies to recognize the significant educational implications of dyslexia that must be addressed and designating October 2015 as ''National Dyslexia Awareness Month''.

S. RES. 299

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 299, a resolution honoring the life, legacy, and example of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the twentieth anniversary of his death.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2755. Mr. LANKFORD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2756. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2757. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2758. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2759. Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2760. Mrs. MURRAY (for Mr. HELLER) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1731, to amend title 38, United States Code, to waive the minimum period of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces for receipt of certain benefits for homeless veterans, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish such benefits to homeless veterans with discharges or releases from service in the Armed Forces with other than dishonorable conditions, and for other purposes.

SA 2761. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2755. Mr. LANKFORD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike title VIII and insert the following:

TITLE VIII—SOCIAL SECURITY

Subtitle A—Protecting the Disability Insurance Trust Fund

SEC. 801. UPDATE AND ADJUSTMENT OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE MEDICAL-VOCATIONAL GUIDELINES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) AGE CRITERIA.—Notwithstanding appendix 2 to subpart P of part 404 of title 20, Code of Federal Regulations, with respect to disability determinations or reviews made on or after the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, age shall not be considered as a vocational factor for any individual who has not attained the age that is 12 years less than the retirement age for such individual (as defined in section 216(l)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 416(l)).

(2) WORK WHICH EXISTS IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY.—With respect to disability determinations or reviews made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, in determining whether an individual is able to engage in any work which exists in the national economy (as defined in section 223(d)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(2)(A)), the Commissioner of Social Security shall consider the share and ages of individuals currently participating in the labor force and the number and types of jobs available in the current economy.

(b) UPDATING THE MEDICAL-VOCATIONAL GUIDELINES AND DATA ON WORK WHICH EXISTS IN NATIONAL ECONOMY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 10 years thereafter, the Commissioner of Social Security shall prescribe rules and regulations that update the medical-vocational guidelines, as set forth in appendix 2 to subpart P of part 404 of title 20, Code of Federal Regulations, used in disability determinations.

(2) JOBS IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every year thereafter, the Commissioner of Social Security shall update the data used by the Commissioner to determine the jobs which exist in the national economy to ensure that such data reflects the full range of work which exists in the national economy, including newly-created jobs in emerging industries.

SEC. 802. MANDATORY COLLECTION OF NEGOTIATED CIVIL MONETARY PENALTIES.

Section 1129(i)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–8(i)(2)) is amended by inserting ''and shall delegate authority for collecting civil money penalties and assessments negotiated under this section to the Inspector General'' before the period.

SEC. 803. REQUIRED ELECTRONIC FILING OF WAGE WITHHOLDING RETURNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 6011(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as subparagraphs (B) and (C), respectively,

(2) by inserting before subparagraph (B), as so redesignated, the following new subparagraph:

''(A) shall—

''(i) require any person that is required to file a return containing information described in section 6051(a) to file such return on magnetic media, and

''(ii) provide for waiver of the requirements of clause (i) in the case of demonstrated hardship for—

''(I) for any period before January 1, 2020, a person having 25 or fewer employees, and

''(II) for any period after December 31, 2019, a person having 5 or fewer employees,'', and

(3) by inserting ''except as provided in subparagraph (A),'' before ''shall not require'' in subparagraph (B), as so redesignated.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (4) of section 6011(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''paragraph (2)(A)'' and inserting ''paragraph (2)(B)''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to returns filed after December 31, 2016.

SEC. 804. DISQUALIFICATION ON RECEIPT OF DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS IN A MONTH FOR WHICH UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION IS RECEIVED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 223(d)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(4)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C)(i) If for any week in whole or in part within a month an individual is paid or determined to be eligible for unemployment compensation, such individual shall be deemed to have engaged in substantial gainful activity for such month.

''(ii) For purposes of clause (i), the term 'unemployment compensation' means—

''(I) 'regular compensation', 'extended compensation', and 'additional compensation' (as such terms are defined by section 205 of the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act (26 U.S.C. 3304 note)); and

''(II) trade adjustment assistance under title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2251 et seq.).''.

(b) TRIAL WORK PERIOD.—Section 222(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 422(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(6)(A) For purposes of this subsection, an individual shall be deemed to have rendered services in a month if the individual is entitled to unemployment compensation for such month.

''(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'unemployment compensation' means—

''(i) 'regular compensation', 'extended compensation', and 'additional compensation' (as such terms are defined by section 205 of the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act (26 U.S.C. 3304 note)); and

''(ii) trade adjustment assistance under title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2251 et seq.).''.

(c) DATA MATCHING.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall implement the amendments made by this section using appropriate electronic data.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to individuals who initially apply for disability insurance benefits on or after January 1, 2016.

SEC. 805. STUDY AND REPORT ON CONSULTATIVE EXAMINATION FEES.

Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration shall submit a report to the Committees on Finance and Homeland Security and Government Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Ways and Means and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives on fees paid by Disability Determination Services agencies to medical providers for consultative examinations, including—

(1) the average rate paid by the Disability Determination Services agencies in each State for such examinations;

(2) a comparison between the rates described in paragraph (1) and the highest rates paid by Federal agencies and other agencies in each State for similar services; and

(3) the number of cases in which a Disability Determination Services agency ordered a consultative examination which resulted in an initial denial of disability insurance benefits and a subsequent appeal.

SEC. 806. REALLOCATION OF PAYROLL TAX REVENUE.

(a) WAGES.—Section 201(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''and (R) 1.80 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 1999, and so reported,'' and inserting ''(R) 1.80 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 1999, and before January 1, 2016, and so reported, (S) 2.37 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 2015, and before January 1, 2019, and so reported, and (T) 1.80 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 2018, and so reported,''.

(b) SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME.—Section 201(b)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 401(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''and (R) 1.80 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1999'' and inserting ''(R) 1.80 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1999, and before January 1, 2016, (S) 2.37 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 2015, and before January 1, 2019, and (T) 1.80 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 2018''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to wages paid after December 31, 2015, and self-employment income for taxable years beginning after such date.

Subtitle B—Program Integrity

SEC. 811. PROVIDING FOR AN EXPEDITED ADJUDICATION PROCESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 205(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''In any'' and inserting ''Subject to paragraph (4), in any''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) Any review of an initial adverse determination with respect to an application for disability insurance benefits under section 223 or for monthly benefits under section 202 by reason of being under a disability shall only be made before an administrative law judge in a hearing under paragraph (1).''.

(b) REVIEW BY FEDERAL COURTS.—It is the sense of Congress that, in reviewing disability determinations, the Federal courts shall make their rulings based solely on the determination made by the administrative law judge of the Social Security Administration and rely solely on the evidence that was considered by such judge during the initial hearing.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to initial adverse determinations on applications for disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 812. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF MEDICAL EVIDENCE; EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN MEDICAL EVIDENCE.

(a) CLOSING OF RECORD FOR SUBMISSION OF MEDICAL EVIDENCE.—Section 205(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''The Commissioner of Social Security is directed'' and inserting—

''(A) The Commissioner of Social Security is directed''; and

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

''(B)(i) Notwithstanding the last sentence of subparagraph (A), in the case of a hearing before an administrative law judge to determine if an individual is under a disability (as defined in section 223(d)) or a review of such a determination before the Appeals Council of the Office of Appellate Operations of the Social Security Administration, medical evidence (other than the evidence already in the record) shall not be received if the evidence is submitted less than 30 days prior to the date on which the hearing is held unless the individual can show that the evidence is material and there is good cause for the failure to submit it before the deadline, but in no case shall medical evidence be received if it is—

''(I) based on information obtained during the period that begins after a determination is made by an administrative law judge; or

''(II) submitted more than 1 year after a determination is made by an administrative law judge.

''(ii) At the request of an individual applying for benefits under this title or such individual's representative, and for the purpose of completing the record, an administrative law judge may postpone a hearing to determine if the individual is under a disability (as so defined) to a date that is no more than 30 days after the date for which the hearing was originally scheduled if—

''(I) the request is made no less than 7 days prior to the date for which the hearing was originally scheduled; and

''(II) the party making the request shows good cause for why the hearing should be postponed.''.

(b) EXCLUSION OF MEDICAL EVIDENCE THAT IS NOT SUBMITTED IN ITS ENTIRETY OR FURNISHED BY A LICENSED PRACTITIONER.—Section 223(d)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(5)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''In'' and inserting ''Subject to subparagraphs (C) and (D), in''; and

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

''(C)(i) An individual and, if applicable, such individual's representative shall submit, in its entirety and without redaction, all relevant medical evidence known to the individual or the representative to the Commissioner of Social Security.

''(ii) In the case of a hearing before an administrative law judge to determine if an individual is under a disability (as defined in paragraph (1)), the Commissioner of Social Security shall not consider any piece of medical evidence furnished by an individual or such individual's representative unless such individual and, if applicable, such individual's representative, certifies at the hearing that all relevant medical evidence has been submitted in its entirety and without redaction.

''(iii) For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'relevant medical evidence' means any medical evidence relating to the individual's claimed physical or mental impairments that the Commissioner of Social Security should consider to determine whether the individual is under a disability, regardless of whether such evidence is favorable or unfavorable to the individual's case, but shall not include any oral or written communication or other document exchanged between the individual and such individual's attorney representative that are subject to attorney-client privilege or work product doctrine, unless the individual voluntarily discloses such communication to the Commissioner. Neither the attorney-client privilege nor the work product doctrine shall prevent from disclosure medical evidence, medical source opinions, or any other factual matter that the Commissioner may consider in determining whether or not the individual is entitled to benefits.

''(iv) Any individual or representative who knowingly violates this subparagraph shall be guilty of making a false statement or representation of material fact, shall be subject to civil and criminal penalties under sections 208 and 1129, and, in the case of a representative, shall be suspended or disqualified from appearing before the Social Security Administration.

''(D) The Commissioner of Social Security shall not consider any evidence furnished by a physician or health care practitioner who is not licensed, has been sanctioned, or is

under investigation for ethical misconduct.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply to applications for disability insurance benefits filed on or after that date.

SEC. 813. PROCEDURAL RULES FOR HEARINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security, in consultation with the administrative law judges of the Social Security Administration, shall establish and make available to the public procedural rules for hearings to determine whether or not an individual is entitled to disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.). These rules shall include those established in this Act as well as—

(1) rules and procedures for motions and requests;

(2) rules related to the representation of individuals in such a hearing, such as the qualifications and standards of conduct required of representatives;

(3) rules and procedures for the submission of evidence;

(4) rules related to the closure of the record; and

(5) rules and procedures for imposing sanctions on parties for failing to comply with hearing rules.

(b) AUTHORITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES TO SANCTION CLAIMANT REPRESENTATIVES.—Section 206(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 406(a)(1)) is amended by inserting after the fifth sentence the following: ''The Commissioner of Social Security shall establish rules under which an administrative law judge may impose fines and other sanctions the Commissioner determines to be appropriate on a representative for failure to follow the Commissioner's rules and regulations.''

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Any rules adopted pursuant to this section or the amendment made thereby shall take effect on the date that is 6 months after the date of their publication and shall apply to hearings held on or after that date.

SEC. 814. PROHIBITING ATTORNEYS WHO HAVE RELINQUISHED A LICENSE TO PRACTICE IN THE FACE OF AN ETHICS INVESTIGATION FROM SERVING AS A CLAIMANT REPRESENTATIVE.

Section 206(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 406(a)(1)), as amended by section 813(b), is further amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by inserting '', and, in cases where compensation is sought for services as a representative, shall'' before ''prescribe'';

(2) in the second sentence, by striking ''Federal courts,'' and inserting ''Federal courts and certifies to the Commissioner that such attorney has never (A) been disbarred or suspended from any court or bar to which such attorney was previously admitted to practice or disqualified from participating in or appearing before any Federal program or agency, or (B) relinquished a license to practice in, participate in, or appear before any court, bar, or Federal program or agency in connection with a settlement of an investigation into ethical misconduct,''; and

(3) in the third sentence—

(A) by striking ''may'' each place it appears and inserting ''shall'';

(B) by striking ''or who has been disqualified from participating in or appearing before any Federal program or agency'' and inserting '', who has been disqualified from participating in or appearing before any Federal program or agency, or who has voluntarily relinquished a license to practice in, participate in, or appear before any court, bar, or Federal program or agency in settlement of an investigation into ethical misconduct''; and

(C) by inserting ''or who has voluntarily relinquished a license to practice in any court or bar in settlement of an investigation into ethical misconduct'' before the period.

SEC. 815. APPLYING JUDICIAL CODE OF CONDUCT TO ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3105 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''Each agency'' and inserting

''(a) Each agency''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) The Code of Conduct for United States Judges adopted by the Judicial Conference of the United States shall apply to administrative law judges appointed under this section.

''(c) If, in applying a standard of conduct to an administrative law judge appointed under this section, there is a conflict between the Code of Conduct for United States Judges and any other law or regulation, the stricter standard of conduct shall apply.

''(d) Pursuant to section 7301, the President may issue such regulations as may be necessary to carry out subsections (b) and (c).''.

(b) LIMITATION ON REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—Section 1305 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''3105'' and inserting ''3105(a)''.

SEC. 816. EVALUATING MEDICAL EVIDENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security shall ensure that all administrative law judges within the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review of the Social Security Administration receive training on how to appropriately evaluate and weigh medical evidence provided by medical professionals.

(b) OPINION EVIDENCE.—Section 223(d)(5)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(5)(B)), as amended by section 812(b), is further amended by adding at the end the following new sentences: ''In weighing medical evidence, the Commissioner of Social Security may assign greater weight to certain opinion evidence supplied by an individual's treating physician (or other treating health care provider) than to opinion evidence obtained from another source, but in no circumstance shall opinion evidence from any source be given controlling weight.''

(c) HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SUPPLYING CONSULTATIVE EXAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, in determining whether an individual applying for disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act is disabled, the Commissioner of Social Security shall not consider medical evidence resulting from a consultative exam with a health care provider conducted for the purpose of supporting the individual's application unless the evidence is accompanied by a Medical Consultant Acknowledgment Form signed by the health care provider who conducted the exam.

(2) MEDICAL CONSULTANT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM.—

(A) DEFINITION.—As used in this subsection, the term ''Medical Consultant Acknowledgment Form'' means a form published by the Commissioner of Social Security that meets the requirements of subparagraph (B).

(B) REQUIREMENTS.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall develop the Medical Consultant Acknowledgment Form and make it available to the public not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act. The contents of the Medical Consultant Acknowledgment Form shall include—

(i) information on how medical evidence is used in disability determinations;

(ii) instructions on completing a residual functional capacity form;

(iii) information on the legal and ethical obligations of a health care provider who supplies medical evidence for use in a disability determination, including any civil or criminal penalties that may be imposed on a health care provider who supplies medical evidence for use in a disability determination; and

(iv) a statement that the signatory has read and understands the contents of the form.

(3) PENALTIES FOR FRAUD.—In addition to any other penalties that may be prescribed by law, any individual who forges a signature on a Medical Consultant Acknowledgment Form submitted to the Commissioner of Social Security shall be guilty of making a false statement or representation of material fact, and upon conviction shall be subject to civil and criminal penalties under sections 208 and 1129 of the Social Security Act and, in the case of a representative, shall be suspended or disqualified from appearing before the Social Security Administration.

(d) SYMPTOM VALIDITY TESTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of evaluating the credibility of an individual's medical evidence, an administrative law judge responsible for conducting a hearing to determine whether an individual applying for disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act or for monthly benefits under section 202 of such Act by reason of a disability may require the individual to undergo a symptom validity test either prior to or after the hearing.

(2) WEIGHT GIVEN TO SVTS.—An administrative law judge may only consider the results of a symptom validity test as a part of an individual's entire medical history and shall not give controlling weight to such results.

(e) EVIDENCE OBTAINED FROM PUBLICLY AVAILABLE SOCIAL MEDIA.—For purposes of evaluating the credibility of an individual's medical evidence, an administrative law judge responsible for conducting a hearing to determine whether an individual applying for disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act is disabled shall be permitted to consider information about the individual obtained from publicly available social media.

(f) REGULATIONS RELATED TO EVALUATING MEDICAL EVIDENCE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security shall promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the purposes of this section, including regulations relating to when it is appropriate for an administrative law judge to order a symptom validity test or to consider evidence obtained from publicly available social media.

SEC. 817. REFORMING FEES PAID TO ATTORNEYS AND OTHER CLAIMANT REPRESENTATIVES.

(a) PROHIBITION ON REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security shall establish rules and regulations relating to the fees payable to representatives of individuals claiming entitlement to disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) to prohibit a representative from being reimbursed by the Social Security Administration for travel expenses related to a case.

(b) ELIMINATING DIRECT PAYMENTS TO CLAIMANT REPRESENTATIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 206 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 406) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking paragraph (4); and

(ii) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (4);

(B) in subsection (b)(1)(A), by striking ''and the Commissioner of Social Security'' and all that follows through ''as provided in this paragraph'' and inserting ''with such amount to be paid out of, and not in addition to, the amount of such past-due benefits''; and

(C) by striking subsections (d) and (e).

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to determinations made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) REVIEW OF HIGHEST-EARNING CLAIMANT REPRESENTATIVES.—

(1) REVIEW.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration shall conduct a review of the practices of a sample of the highest-earning claimant representatives and law firms to ensure compliance with the policies of the Social Security Administration. In reviewing representative practices, the Inspector General shall look for suspicious practices, including—

(A) repetitive language in residual functional capacity forms;

(B) irregularities in the licensing history of medical professionals providing medical opinions in support of a claimant's application; and

(C) a disproportionately high number of appearances by a representative before the same administrative law judge.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than December 1 of each year in which a review described in paragraph (1) is conducted, the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration shall submit a report containing the results of such review, together with any recommendations for administrative action or proposed legislation that the Inspector General determines appropriate, to the Committees on Finance and Homeland Security and Government Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Ways and Means and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives.

(d) APPLICABILITY OF THE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT.—Section 205 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(v) Sections 504 of title 5 and 2412 of title 28, United States Code (commonly known as the 'Equal Access to Justice Act'), shall not apply to—

''(1) any review under this title of a determination of disability made by the Commissioner of Social Security; or

''(2) if new evidence is submitted by an individual after a hearing to determine whether or not the individual is under a disability, judicial review of a final determination of disability under subsection (g) of this section.''.

SEC. 818. STRENGTHENING THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) REVIEW.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Division of Quality of the Office of Appellate Operations of the Social Security Administration shall conduct a review of a sample of determinations that individuals are entitled to disability insurance benefits by outlier administrative law judges and identify any determinations that are not supported by the evidence.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than December 1 of each year in which a review described in paragraph (1) is conducted, the Division of Quality Review of the Office of Appellate Operations of the Social Security Administration shall submit a report containing the results of such review, including all determinations that were found to be unsupported by the evidence, together with any recommendations for administrative action or proposed legislation that the Division determines appropriate, to—

(A) the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration;

(B) the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration;

(C) the Committees on Ways and Means and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of the Representatives; and

(D) the Committees on Finance and Homeland Security and Government Affairs of the Senate.

(3) DEFINITION OF OUTLIER ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ''outlier administrative law judge'' means an administrative law judge within the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review of the Social Security Administration who, in a given year—

(A) issues more than 700 decisions; and

(B) determines that the applicant—

(i) is entitled to disability insurance benefits in not less than 85 percent of cases; or

(ii) is not entitled to disability insurance benefits in not less than 15 percent of cases.

(b) MANDATORY CONTINUING DISABILITY REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall ensure that, not less than 6 months after receiving a report described in subsection (a)(2), every determination of entitlement found to be unsupported by the evidence is in the process of being reviewed under section 221(i)(1) of the Social Security Act.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 221(i)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 421(i)(1)) is amended by inserting ''or under section 818(b) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015'' after ''administration of this title''.

SEC. 819. PERMITTING DATA MATCHING BY INSPECTORS GENERAL.

Clause (ix) of section 552a(a)(8)(B) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''the Secretary of Health and Human Services or the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services'' and inserting ''the Inspector General of an agency, or an agency in coordination with an Inspector General''.

SEC. 820. ACCOUNTING FOR SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM INTEGRITY SPENDING.

Amounts made available for Social Security program integrity spending by the Social Security Administration for a fiscal year shall be—

(1) included in a separate account within the Federal budget; and

(2) funded in a separate account in the appropriate annual appropriations bill.

SEC. 821. USE OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF NEW HIRES.

Beginning with the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security shall consult the National Directory of New Hires established under section 453(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653(i)) in determining whether any individual who submits an application or reapplication for disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act or for monthly benefits under section 202 of such Act by reason of a disability is able to engage in substantial gainful activity.

SEC. 822. ENSURING PROPER APPLICATION OF THE MEDICAL IMPROVEMENT REVIEW STANDARD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall establish within the Social Security Administration an office to ensure the proper identification of individuals who should not be entitled to benefits on the basis of a finding that the physical or mental impairment on the basis of which such benefits are provided has ceased, does not exist, or is not disabling, as described in sections 223(f) and 1614(a)(4) of the Social Security Act.

(b) ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS.—The office described in subsection (a) shall carry out the functions described in such subsection by providing training to officers and employees of the Social Security Administration, carrying out data collection and reviews, and proposing such policy recommendations and clarification as are determined appropriate.

(c) TRAINING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall establish a program to provide for more efficient and effective training for all individuals and agencies involved in the disability determination process under section 221 of the Social Security Act, including Disability Determination Services agencies and the administrative law judges of the Social Security Administration, in regards to making determinations in which an individual should not be entitled to benefits on the basis of a finding that the physical or mental impairment on the basis of which such benefits are provided has ceased, does not exist, or is not disabling, as described in sections 223(f) and 1614(a)(4) of the Social Security Act.

(d) APPLICATION OF INITIAL DISABILITY STANDARD IN CERTAIN CASES.—

(1) DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS.—Section 223 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''Application of Initial Disability Standard

''(k)(1) For purposes of subsection (f), in the case of an individual whose case file (including new evidence concerning the individual's prior or current condition which is presented by the individual or secured by the Commissioner of Social Security) does not provide sufficient evidence for purposes of making a determination under paragraph (1) of such subsection, a recipient of benefits under this title or title XVIII based on the disability of such individual shall not be entitled to such benefits unless such individual furnishes such medical and other evidence required under subsection (d) to determine that such individual is under a disability.

''(2) Any determination made under this subsection shall be made on the basis of the weight of the evidence and on a neutral basis with regard to the individual's condition, without any initial inference as to the presence or absence of disability being drawn from the fact that the individual has previously been determined to be disabled.

''(3) For purposes of this subsection, a benefit under this title is based on an individual's disability if it is a disability insurance benefit, a child's, widow's, or widower's insurance benefit based on disability, or a mother's or father's insurance benefit based on the disability of the mother's or father's child who has attained age 16.''.

(2) SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BENEFITS.—Section 1614 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1382c) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''Application of Initial Disability Standard

''(g)(1) For purposes of paragraph (4) of subsection (a), in the case of an individual whose case file (including new evidence concerning the individual's prior or current condition which is presented by the individual or secured by the Commissioner of Social Security) does not provide sufficient evidence for purposes of making a determination under subparagraph (A) of such paragraph, a recipient of benefits based on disability under this title shall not be entitled to such benefits unless such individual furnishes such medical and other evidence required under subsection (a)(3) to determine that such individual is under a disability.

''(2) Any determination made under this subsection shall be made on the basis of the

weight of the evidence and on a neutral basis with regard to the individual's condition, without any initial inference as to the presence or absence of disability being drawn from the fact that the individual has previously been determined to be disabled.''.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Subsection (f) of section 223 of such Act is amended by striking ''A recipient of benefits'' and inserting ''Subject to subsection (k), a recipient of benefits''.

(B) Paragraph (4) of section 1614(a) of such Act is amended by striking ''A recipient of benefits'' and inserting ''Subject to subsection (g), a recipient of benefits''.

(4) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to determinations made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2756. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. NO BUDGET NO PAY.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''No Budget, No Pay Act''.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''Member of Congress''—

(1) has the meaning given under section 2106 of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) does not include the Vice President.

(c) TIMELY APPROVAL OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET AND THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS.—If both Houses of Congress have not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget as described under section 301 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 632) for a fiscal year before October 1 of that fiscal year and have not passed all the regular appropriations bills for the next fiscal year before October 1 of that fiscal year, the pay of each Member of Congress may not be paid for each day following that October 1 until the date on which both Houses of Congress approve a concurrent resolution on the budget for that fiscal year and all the regular appropriations bills.

(d) NO PAY WITHOUT CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET AND THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds may be appropriated or otherwise be made available from the Treasury for the pay of any Member of Congress during any period determined by the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate or the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under subsection (e).

(2) NO RETROACTIVE PAY.—A Member of Congress may not receive pay for any period determined by the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate or the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under subsection (e), at any time after the end of that period.

(e) DETERMINATIONS.—

(1) SENATE.—

(A) REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATIONS.—On October 1 of each year, the Secretary of the Senate shall submit a request to the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate for certification of determinations made under clause (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (B).

(B) DETERMINATIONS.—The Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate shall—

(i) on October 1 of each year, make a determination of whether Congress is in compliance with subsection (c) and whether Senators may not be paid under that subsection;

(ii) determine the period of days following each October 1 that Senators may not be paid under subsection (c); and

(iii) provide timely certification of the determinations under clauses (i) and (ii) upon the request of the Secretary of the Senate.

(2) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(A) REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATIONS.—On October 1 of each year, the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives shall submit a request to the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives for certification of determinations made under clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (B).

(B) DETERMINATIONS.—The Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives shall—

(i) on October 1 of each year, make a determination of whether Congress is in compliance with subsection (c) and whether Members of the House of Representatives may not be paid under that subsection;

(ii) determine the period of days following each October 1 that Members of the House of Representatives may not be paid under subsection (c); and

(iii) provide timely certification of the determinations under clauses (i) and (ii) upon the request of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on February 1, 2017.

SA 2757. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title V, insert the following:

SEC. 505. BENEFIT SUSPENSIONS FOR MULTIEMPLOYER PLANS IN CRITICAL AND DECLINING STATUS.

(a) ERISA AMENDMENTS.—Section 305(e)(9)(H) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1085(e)(9)(H)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii)—

(A) by striking ''Except as provided in clause (v), the'' and inserting ''The''; and

(B) by striking ''a majority of all participants and beneficiaries of the plan'' and inserting '', of the participants and beneficiaries of the plan who cast a vote, a majority'';

(2) by striking clause (v);

(3) by redesignating clause (vi) as clause (v); and

(4) in clause (v), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking ''(or following a determination under clause (v) that the plan is a systemically important plan)''; and

(B) by striking ''(or, in the case of a suspension that goes into effect under clause (v), at a time sufficient to allow the implementation of the suspension prior to the end of the 90-day period described in clause (v)(I))''.

(b) IRC AMENDMENTS.—Section 432(e)(9)(H) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in clause (ii)—

(A) by striking ''Except as provided in clause (v), the'' and inserting ''The''; and

(B) by striking ''a majority of all participants and beneficiaries of the plan'' and inserting '', of the participants and beneficiaries of the plan who cast a vote, a majority'';

(2) by striking clause (v);

(3) by redesignating clause (vi) as clause (v); and

(4) in clause (v), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking ''(or following a determination under clause (v) that the plan is a systemically important plan)''; and

(B) by striking ''(or, in the case of a suspension that goes into effect under clause (v), at a time sufficient to allow the implementation of the suspension prior to the end of the 90-day period described in clause (v)(I))''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall apply to any vote on the suspension of benefits under section 305(e)(9)(H) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1085(e)(9)(H)) and section 432(e)(9)(H) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that occurs after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 2758. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. AUTOMATIC CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1310 the following new section:

''§ 1311. Continuing appropriations

''(a)(1) If any appropriation measure for a fiscal year is not enacted before the beginning of such fiscal year or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations is not in effect, there are appropriated such sums as may be necessary to continue any program, project, or activity for which funds were provided in the preceding fiscal year—

''(A) in the corresponding appropriation Act for such preceding fiscal year; or

''(B) if the corresponding appropriation bill for such preceding fiscal year did not become law, then in a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year.

''(2)(A) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be at a rate of operations not in excess of the lower of—

''(i) 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for in the regular appropriation Act providing for such program, project, or activity for the preceding fiscal year;

''(ii) in the absence of such an Act, 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for such program, project, or activity pursuant to a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year; or

''(iii) 100 percent of the annualized rate of operations provided for in the most recently enacted joint resolution making continuing appropriations for part of that fiscal year or any funding levels established under the provisions of this Act;

for the period of 120 days. After the first 120-day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate

of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage point. For each subsequent 90-day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage point. The 90-day period reductions shall extend beyond the last day of that fiscal year.

''(B) If this section is in effect at the end of a fiscal year, funding levels shall continue as provided in this section for the next fiscal year.

''(3) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for any fiscal year pursuant to this section for a program, project, or activity shall be available for the period beginning with the first day of a lapse in appropriations and ending with the date on which the applicable regular appropriation bill for such fiscal year becomes law (whether or not such law provides for such program, project, or activity) or a continuing resolution making appropriations becomes law, as the case may be.

''(b) An appropriation or funds made available, or authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be subject to the terms and conditions imposed with respect to the appropriation made or funds made available for the preceding fiscal year, or authority granted for such program, project, or activity under current law.

''(c) Expenditures made for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a regular appropriation bill or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations until the end of a fiscal year providing for such program, project, or activity for such period becomes law.

''(d) This section shall not apply to a program, project, or activity during a fiscal year if any other provision of law (other than an authorization of appropriations)—

''(1) makes an appropriation, makes funds available, or grants authority for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period; or

''(2) specifically provides that no appropriation shall be made, no funds shall be made available, or no authority shall be granted for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections of chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1310 the following new item:

''1311. Continuing appropriations.''.

SA 2759. Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REDUCING EXCESSIVE GOVERNMENT.

(a) SHORT TITLE; DEFINITIONS.—

(1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Reducing Excessive Government Act of 2015'' or the ''REG Act''.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(A) the term ''agency'' has the meaning given the term ''Executive agency'' under section 105 of title 5, United States Code;

(B) the term ''amount of the increase in the debt limit'' means—

(i) the dollar amount of the increase in the debt limit specified in the Act increasing the debt limit; or

(ii) in the case of an Act that provides that the debt limit shall not apply for a period and that the amount of the debt limit is increased at the end of such period, the amount by which the Secretary of the Treasury estimates the debt limit shall be increased at the end of the period of the suspension, which the Secretary shall submit to Congress on the date of enactment of such an Act;

(C) the term ''debt limit'' means the limitation imposed by section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code;

(D) the term ''direct cost of Federal regulation'' means all costs incurred by, and expenditures required of, the Federal Government in issuing and enforcing Federal regulations, rules, statements, and legislation;

(E) the term ''Federal regulatory cost''—

(i) means all costs incurred by, and expenditures required of, the private sector in complying with any Federal regulation, rule, statement, or legislation; and

(ii) does not include the value of any benefit under the Federal regulation, rule, statement, or legislation;

(F) the term ''joint resolution'' means a joint resolution—

(i) reported by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate or the House of Representatives in accordance with subsection (d)(3);

(ii) which does not have a preamble;

(iii) the title of which is as follows: ''Joint resolution relating to repeal of costly rules.''; and

(iv) the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That the following rules shall have no force or effect: _____.'', the blank space being filled in with the list of major rules recommended to be repealed under subsection (d) by the committees of the House in which the joint resolution is reported; and

(G) the term ''major rule'' means any rule that has or is likely to result in an annual effect on the economy of $100,000,000 or more.

(b) REDUCTIONS IN REGULATORY COST.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the debt limit is increased or a suspension of the debt limit takes effect, Congress shall enact legislation eliminating rules that results in a reduction of the direct cost of Federal regulation during the 10-fiscal year period beginning with the next full fiscal year by not less than the amount of the increase in the debt limit.

(c) ACTION BY AGENCIES.—

(1) IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR RULES.—If the amount of the debt limit is increased or a suspension of the debt limit takes effect, each agency shall submit to the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States a report identifying each major rule of the agency, as determined by the head of the agency.

(2) CERTIFICATION BY GAO.—After receipt of all reports required under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Senate and the House of Representatives a statement certifying whether the repeal of all major rules identified in such reports would result in a decrease in the direct cost of Federal regulation during the 10-fiscal year period beginning with the next full fiscal year by not less than the amount of the increase in the debt limit.

(d) ACTION BY COMMITTEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives shall submit to the Committee on the Budget of its House a list of the major rules that—

(A) are within the jurisdiction of the committee, which may include major rules identified in the report of an agency under subsection (c)(1); and

(B) the committee recommends should be repealed.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining whether to recommend repealing major rules within its jurisdiction, a committee of the Senate or the House of Representatives shall consider—

(A) whether the major rule achieved, or has been ineffective in achieving, the original purpose of the major rule;

(B) any adverse effects that could materialize if the major rule is repealed, in particular if those adverse effects are the reason the major rule was originally enacted;

(C) whether the costs of the major rule outweigh any benefits of the major rule to the United States;

(D) whether the major rule has become obsolete due to changes in technology, economic conditions, market practices, or any other factors; and

(E) whether the major rule overlaps with another rule.

(3) COMBINING OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Committee on the Budget of the Senate and the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives, upon receiving recommendations from all relevant committees under paragraph (1), shall report to its House a joint resolution carrying out all such recommendations without any substantive revision.

(e) EXPEDITED PROCEDURES.—

(1) CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(A) PLACEMENT ON CALENDAR.—Upon a joint resolution being reported by the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives, or upon receipt of a joint resolution from the Senate, the joint resolution shall be placed immediately on the calendar.

(B) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—It shall be in order, not later than 60 days after the date on which the debt limit is increased or a suspension of the debt limit takes effect, to move to proceed to consider a joint resolution in the House of Representatives.

(ii) PROCEDURE.—For a motion to proceed to consider a joint resolution—

(I) all points of order against the motion are waived;

(II) such a motion shall not be in order after the House of Representatives has disposed of a motion to proceed to the joint resolution;

(III) the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion;

(IV) the motion shall not be debatable; and

(V) a motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

(C) CONSIDERATION.—The House of Representatives shall establish rules for consideration of a joint resolution in the House of Representatives.

(2) EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION IN SENATE.—

(A) PLACEMENT ON CALENDAR.—Upon a joint resolution being reported by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate, or upon receipt of a joint resolution from the House of Representatives, the joint resolution shall be placed immediately on the calendar.

(B) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order, not later than 60 days after the date on which the debt limit is increased or a suspension of the debt limit takes effect (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of a joint resolution.

(ii) PROCEDURE.—For a motion to proceed to the consideration of a joint resolution—

(I) all points of order against the motion are waived;

(II) the motion is not debatable;

(III) the motion is not subject to a motion to postpone;

(IV) a motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order; and

(V) if the motion is agreed to, the joint resolution shall remain the unfinished business until disposed of.

(C) FLOOR CONSIDERATION GENERALLY.—If the Senate proceeds to consideration of a joint resolution—

(i) all points of order against the joint resolution (and against consideration of the joint resolution) are waived;

(ii) consideration of the joint resolution, and all amendments thereto and debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 10 hours, which shall be divided equally between the majority and minority leaders or their designees;

(iii) an a motion to postpone or a motion to commit the joint resolution is not in order; and

(iv) a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business is not in order.

(D) REQUIREMENTS FOR AMENDMENTS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—No amendment that is not germane to the provisions of a joint resolution shall be considered.

(ii) REPEAL OF MAJOR RULES.—Notwithstanding clause (i) or any other rule, an amendment or series of amendments to a joint resolution shall always be in order if such amendment or series of amendments proposes to repeal a major rule that would result in a decrease in the direct cost of Federal regulation during the 10-fiscal year period beginning with the next full fiscal year.

(E) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—The vote on passage shall occur immediately following the conclusion of the consideration of a joint resolution, and a single quorum call at the conclusion of the debate if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate.

(F) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCEDURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of this subsection or the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to a joint resolution shall be decided without debate.

(3) CONSIDERATION AFTER PASSAGE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If Congress passes a joint resolution, the period beginning on the date the President is presented with the joint resolution and ending on the date the President takes action with respect to the joint resolution shall be disregarded in computing the period described in subsection (g).

(B) VETOES.—If the President vetoes the joint resolution—

(i) the period beginning on the date the President vetoes the joint resolution and ending on the date Congress receives the veto message with respect to the joint resolution shall be disregarded in computing the period described in subsection (g); and

(ii) consideration of a veto message in the Senate under this section shall be not more than 2 hours equally divided between the majority and minority leaders or their designees.

(4) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—This subsection is enacted by Congress—

(A) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively, and as such is deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of a joint resolution, and supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such rules; and

(B) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

(f) EFFECT OF JOINT RESOLUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A major rule shall cease to have force or effect if Congress enacts a joint resolution repealing the major rule.

(2) LIMITATION ON SUBSEQUENT RULEMAKING.—A rule that ceases to have force or effect under paragraph (1) may not be reissued in substantially the same form, and a new rule that is substantially the same as such a rule may not be issued, unless the reissued or new rule is specifically authorized by a law enacted after the date of the joint resolution repealing the original rule.

(g) FAILURE TO ENACT REDUCTIONS IN SPENDING.—

(1) DETERMINATION.—On the date that is 61 days after the date on which the debt limit is increased or a suspension of the debt limit takes effect, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall determine whether legislation has been enacted eliminating rules that reduces the direct cost of Federal regulation during the 10-fiscal year period described in subsection (b)(1) by not less than the amount of the increase in the debt limit.

(2) INSUFFICIENT REDUCTIONS.—If the Director of the Office of Management and Budget determines that legislation has not been enacted that eliminates rules that reduces the direct cost of Federal regulation during the 10-fiscal year period described in subsection (b)(1) by not less than the amount of the increase in the debt limit, effective on the date of the determination, the limitation in section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall be equal to the sum of the face amount of obligations issued under chapter 31 of title 31, United States Code, and the face amount of obligations whose principal and interest are guaranteed by the United States Government (except guaranteed obligations held by the Secretary of the Treasury) outstanding on the date of the determination.

SA 2760. Mrs. MURRAY (for Mr. HELLER) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1731, to amend title 38, United States Code, to waive the minimum period of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces for receipt of certain benefits for homeless veterans, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish such benefits to homeless veterans with discharges or releases from service in the Armed Forces with other than dishonorable conditions, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 4, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF PER DIEM PAYMENTS FOR FURNISHING CARE TO DEPENDENTS OF CERTAIN HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2012(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) Services for which a recipient of a grant under section 2011 of this title (or an entity described in paragraph (1)) may receive per diem payments under this subsection may include furnishing care for a dependent of a homeless veteran who is under the care of such homeless veteran while such homeless veteran receives services from the grant recipient (or entity).''.

SA 2761. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VIII, insert the following:

Subtitle E—Private Disability Insurance Plans

SEC. 851. REDUCTION OF PAYROLL TAX FOR ENROLLMENT IN A PRIVATE DISABILITY INSURANCE PLAN.

(a) SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME TAX.—Section 1401 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''In addition to'' and inserting ''Except as provided in subsection (d), in addition to'', and

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

''(d) REDUCTION OF TAX RATE FOR SELF-EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN A PRIVATE DISABILITY INSURANCE PLAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For any self-employment income received in any calendar year after 2015 by an applicable individual, the tax imposed under subsection (a) for each taxable year shall be equal to—

''(A) for the first calendar year in which such individual is enrolled in a private disability insurance plan which satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3), 11.5 percent, and

''(B) for any subsequent calendar year in which such individual is enrolled in a private disability insurance plan, 12.15 percent.

''(2) PENALTY RATE FOR TERMINATION OF COVERAGE.—In the case of an applicable individual who terminates enrollment in a private disability insurance plan within 5 years of the date on which such enrollment began, for any self-employment income received in the calendar year beginning after the date of termination, the tax imposed under subsection (a) for any taxable year beginning in such calendar year shall be equal to 13.95 percent.

''(3) APPLICABLE INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'applicable individual' means an individual enrolled in a private disability insurance plan which satisfies the following requirements:

''(A) The plan shall be subject to regulation and oversight by the appropriate State insurance regulator.

''(B) The plan shall provide periodic payments to the enrolled individual which, on an annual basis, are equal to an amount that is not less than 50 percent of the annual self-employment income of such individual during the preceding calendar year.

''(C) The plan shall provide payments to the enrolled individual for a period of 2 years.

''(D) The plan may not require the enrolled individual to file an application for disability insurance benefits under section 223 of the Social Security Act during the first 18 months in which such individual is provided payments under such plan.

''(E) The plan may, as a condition of receiving payments under such plan, require the enrolled individual to receive any medical treatment or vocational rehabilitation which has been determined as likely to improve the ability of such individual to return to employment.

''(F) In the case of an individual who has applied for disability insurance benefits following the period described in subparagraph (D), the plan shall agree to provide the Commissioner of Social Security with any records relevant to the disability determination made under such plan for such individual.''.

(b) EMPLOYER TAX.—Section 3111 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''In addition to'' and inserting ''Except as provided in subsection (f), in addition to''; and

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

''(f) REDUCTION OF TAX RATE FOR EMPLOYERS PROVIDING PRIVATE DISABILITY INSURANCE PLANS TO EMPLOYEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For any wages paid by an employer in any calendar year after 2015 to an applicable individual in their employ, the tax imposed under subsection (a) shall be equal to—

''(A) for the first calendar year in which such individual is enrolled in a private disability insurance plan which satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3), 5.3 percent, and

''(B) for any subsequent calendar year in which such individual is enrolled in a private disability insurance plan, 5.95 percent.

''(2) PENALTY RATE FOR TERMINATION OF COVERAGE.—In the case of an employer who terminates coverage under a private disability insurance plan for an applicable individual within 5 years of the date on which enrollment in such plan began, for any wages paid by the employer to such individual (provided that such individual continues in their employ) in the calendar year beginning after the date of termination, the tax imposed under subsection (a) for during such calendar year shall be equal to 7.75 percent.

''(3) APPLICABLE INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'applicable individual' means an individual enrolled in a private disability insurance plan which satisfies the following requirements:

''(A) The plan shall be subject to regulation and oversight by the appropriate State insurance regulator.

''(B) The plan shall provide periodic payments to the enrolled individual which, on an annual basis, are equal to an amount that is not less than 50 percent of the annual wages paid to such individual during the preceding calendar year.

''(C) The plan shall provide payments to the enrolled individual for a period of 2 years.

''(D) The plan may not require the enrolled individual to file an application for disability insurance benefits under section 223 of the Social Security Act during the first 18 months in which such individual is provided payments under such plan.

''(E) The plan may not require the enrolled individual to contribute to the payment of any insurance premiums for such plan.

''(F) The plan may, as a condition of receiving payments under such plan, require the enrolled individual to receive any medical treatment or vocational rehabilitation which has been determined as likely to improve the ability of such individual to return to employment.

''(G) In the case of an individual who has applied for disability insurance benefits following the period described in subparagraph (D), the plan shall agree to provide the Commissioner of Social Security with any records relevant to the disability determination made under such plan for such individual.''.

(c) ASSISTANCE FROM DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—The Secretary of the Department of Labor shall provide appropriate guidance and technical assistance to any State insurance regulator that requests such guidance and assistance for purposes of regulation and oversight of private disability insurance plans described in sections 1401(d)(2) and 3111(f)(2) of the Social Security Act, as added by this section.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 223(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''An applicable individual (as described in section 1401(d)(3) or section 3111(f)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) may not file an application for disability benefits during the first 18 months in which such individual is provided payments under a private disability insurance plan which satisfies the requirements under section 1401(d)(3) or section 3111(f)(3) of such Code.''

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to remuneration paid in any calendar year after 2015.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 29, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 29, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Welfare and Poverty in America.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 29, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 29, 2015, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Treaties.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 29, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders in America: Priorities, Challenges, and Opportunities.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 29, 2015, at 10 a.m. in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 29, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 12:01 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:07 p.m., adjourned until Friday, October 30, 2015, at 12:01 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate October 29, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

EDWARD L. GILMORE, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. THOMAS K. WARK

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. HOWARD P. PURCELL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. ALLAN L. SWARTZMILLER

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. DAVID D. HALVERSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. KENNETH R. DAHL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY VETERINARY CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 3064 AND 3084:

To be brigadier general

COL. ERIK H. TORRING III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. THOMAS S. VANDAL

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. VALERIA GONZALEZ–KERR

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. JOHN J. MORRIS

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. STEPHEN E. MARKOVICH

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. MARTA CARCANA

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BRANDON R. ABEL AND ENDING WITH BRANDON A. ZUERCHER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JUNE 24, 2015.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MICHELLE T. AARON AND ENDING WITH KIRK P. WINGER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2015.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH QUENTIN D. BAGBY AND ENDING WITH MARY A. WORKMAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2015.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ROBERT H. ALEXANDER AND ENDING WITH JUSTIN DAVID WRIGHT, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2015.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF MATTHEW P. TARJICK, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JUDITH S. MEYERS, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH THOMAS W. WISENBAUGH AND ENDING WITH HAROLD P. XENITELIS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATION OF MICHAEL A. BLAINE, TO BE COLONEL.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF TERRY A. PETROPOULOS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FOCUSING ON WORKING FAMILIES

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, thank you, Congresswoman BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN, for your tireless advocacy for working families. I'd also like to thank Ranking Member BOBBY SCOTT for leading the way, as ranking member of the Education and Workforce Committee, and with this important agenda.

Let me start by telling Andre's story.

Andre is from California, he's 31 and a father of four boys. He was a trained apprenticed carpenter.

When he began to look for work, he learned quickly that without a personal connection, it was nearly impossible to get a job in the construction industry. Every morning, he hustled to get to work sites by 5 AM to introduce himself to employers and show them his skills.

Seldom did he receive the opportunity to actually apply for a job.

As a result, he could barely sustain his family. Any income he had went to food, transportation and rent. So, he began volunteering with the Los Angeles Black Workers Center, which connected him to a good-paying job building new rail lines that let him provide for his family.

The unemployment and underemployment that Andre and other Black workers experience is not unique. The use of informal networks in hiring means that Black workers are often excluded and discriminated against before they even get a shot. Andre said: "Too many people are out there talking about training, like we're not trained enough. Training is not the issue. I was trained really well. The issue is access."

Andre is right—all the training in the world won't help if in the end, employers won't give people like Andre a fair shot.

And this agenda is designed to give Andre, his family and all families, a fair chance.

Andre's struggle reflects the divide in our economy and our country: while some have recovered fully from the Great Recession, too many working families are still struggling.

And in communities of color, which were the hardest hit by the Great Recession, unemployment and underemployment remains sky-high—and wage discrimination and formal and informal barriers to employment continue to slow economic growth.

For example, African American women in my home state of California still earn just 64 cents for every dollar paid to white men. And Latinas earn a mere 44 cents. This persistent wage gap is a reflection of our economy, which is leaving too many working families behind—especially communities of color.

That's why the Working Family Agenda is so important.

It takes long overdue steps to level the playing field for all.

Specifically, this agenda would: raise the wage for millions, strengthen collective bargaining and improve working conditions, provide paid sick and family leave, and expand access to childcare.

Furthermore, it would provide long overdue protections for women and LGBT Americans in the workplace.

And as a former small business owner, I know the importance and value of providing your employees with a living wage: it's better for your company and for retaining good workers.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time to take action on this agenda—families need it and our economy needs it. Let's boost wages, make it easier for families to balance work and family life, and bring an end to workplace discrimination.

That's what American families want—and it's what Congress should be working on.

RECOGNIZING JERRY DAVIS AS THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize Mr. Jerry Davis from Florida's First Congressional District, for being selected as the Northwest Florida Agricultural Innovator of the Year.

Jerry's love of farming derives from his childhood, when he helped grow soybeans and wheat on his family's farm. Since the beginning, Jerry has been an innovator in the agricultural arena. By the time he was 20, he designed a seed conditioning plant to clean and bag seed for planting. In 1987, he became involved in the testing of a crop simulation model developed by scientists in USDA's Agricultural Research Services and Mississippi State and Clemson Universities. The model allowed participants to optimize inputs in relation to weather, nitrogen, moisture stress, crop maturity, growth resultants, and harvest aid materials. As a result of this innovative project, Jerry and the other participating growers saw net profits on test fields increase by more than $30 per acre.

In the late 1990s, Jerry began expanding his farming operation from Santa Rosa County to Escambia County in Florida and Baldwin and Hale counties in Alabama. At the time, he was the only peanut grower in Hale and one of the first in Baldwin. Similarly, he was one of the first farmers to grow 30-inch twin row peanuts and use grid sampling and precision agriculture to perfect his technique over thousands of acres.

Most recently, Jerry has partnered with the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to grow carinata, a plant that has the potential to help meet the renewable energy demands of the United States. Along with Northwest Florida scientists, Jerry is testing the viability of carinata in Northwest Florida and its potential use as a source of renewable jet fuel.

The Davis family farming tradition continues today as his wife Patty and daughter Caitlynn are also active on the farm, which comprises cotton, peanuts, wheat, corn, soybeans, vegetables, livestock, and other crops.

Aside from his agricultural contributions, Jerry is known throughout his community for his kind nature and willingness to help others. Jerry has participated in 12 mission trips to Central and South America, spreading his faith and helping those in need, and every Thanksgiving, he and his family donate sweet potatoes that are included in a box of Thanksgiving food that is provided to members of the Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in need.

Despite his busy schedule, Jerry is always happy to promote Northwest Florida agriculture and also has a very extensive civic resume including serving as District I Florida Farm Bureau Director since 2009, Santa Rosa County Farm Bureau President, Chairman of the Agricultural Research Committee for Cotton Incorporated, a member of the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Peanut Advisory Committee, a member of the Southern Cotton Growers Farm Bill Task Force, and a director of the Florida and Southeastern Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Inc. Board.

Mr. Speaker, Northwest Florida and our Nation share a proud agricultural tradition built by the hard work of farmers and their families. The Northwest Florida Agricultural Innovator of the Year Award is a reflection of Jerry's tireless work and dedication to improving farming practices. On behalf of the United States Congress, I would like to offer my congratulations to Jerry Davis for being outstanding in his field. My wife Vicki and I extend our best wishes to him and the Davis family for their continued success.

RECOGNIZING GUITARS FOR HEROES

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special veterans program in North Texas known as Guitars For Heroes. As an initiative through the Recreation Therapy Services of the VA North Texas Health Care System, the program was founded in 2012 by Fort Worth VA Outpatient Clinic Supervisor Donna Gerron with the objective of assisting veterans through music therapy.

Guitars For Heroes provides veterans 12 sessions of free instruction, acoustic guitars, and accessory kits with the intent of restoring joy and a renewed purpose in life. Veterans from all different backgrounds who are overcoming traumatic experiences, depression, or

isolation have found solidarity and restoration through the program.

For over three years, Guitars For Heroes has mentored veterans into becoming fine musicians. I am pleased to announce that they will be performing at the Annual Veterans Fair on November 7, 2015, in Grapevine, Texas. This annual event, made possible by the tireless work of dedicated personnel, helps introduce veterans to important benefits, programs, and services. It will be a privilege to have Guitars For Heroes perform in front of the hundreds of attending veterans.

As a special acknowledgment, I am pleased to recognize each member of Guitars For Heroes performing at the fair. These honorable veterans are Mike Andersen, James Benson, Steve Brenner, James Bullard, Rondal Burns, Keith Burrowes, Marco Garcia, Dujuan Jackson, Brian Michel, Frank Precure, Juan Reyes, Alfred Schram, Roy Vaughn, Glen Wilson, and Bill Yohn.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the success of Guitars For Heroes, and I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing this special program.

RECOGNIZING OCTOBER 29, 2015 AS DIRECT SELLING DAY

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize today, October 29, 2015, as Direct Selling Day.

For years, the direct selling industry has made a significant impact on both families and the economy in Texas and across the nation.

Today, more than 18 million Americans, hailing from every state, Congressional district and community in the United States, are involved in direct selling.

For many individuals, direct selling is one of the most flexible businesses there is, and in today's busy world having an opportunity to work at one's own pace and earn additional income is beneficial and convenient when individuals are trying to balance work with family and other priorities.

Out of the more than 18 million Americans involved in direct selling, more than two million reside in Texas. Many of the residents I represent in Dallas and Fort Worth chose direct selling to provide economic security for their families.

Their efforts contribute more than $34 million to the U.S. economy, helping individuals build their businesses while supporting their local and national economies.

As the economy continues to change and place more emphasis on flexibility, the direct selling industry will continue to grow and prosper.

It is clear that the direct selling companies across Texas and around the country are committed to helping the next generation of American entrepreneurs. Since its founding in September 2015, the Direct Sellers Caucus has worked to build greater awareness of direct selling and discuss policy issues relevant to the industry, ensuring that these companies can continue to make an impact on the lives of those involved.

In honor of the Direct Sellers Association's day on the Hill and the impact the industry has on both local communities and the nation as a whole, this statement will be submitted.

IN RECOGNITION OF SERGEANT MAJOR ALAN M. GIBSON

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend Sergeant Major Alan M. Gibson, the Division G3 Sergeant Major for the 4th Infantry and Fort Carson, Colorado, who will be retiring from the United States Army after 32 years of distinguished service to the United States of America. He will be honored at a retirement ceremony on Friday, October 30, 2015 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

A Georgia man through and through, Sergeant Major Alan Gibson is originally from Columbus, Georgia and graduated from Morris Brown College in Atlanta, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Therapeutic Recreation/Kinesiology in 1982. He is currently working on a Master's degree from Central Michigan University. SGM Gibson joined the United States Army in October 1983 and completed basic training at Fort McClelland, Alabama and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Benning, Georgia. In his first assignment, he served as an Infantryman in the Berlin Brigade from March 1984 to October 1985.

After departing Berlin, Germany, SGM Gibson attended Airborne School and the Ranger Indoctrination Program (RIP) prior to being assigned to 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, at Fort Benning while he served as a Rifleman, Team Leader, and Squad Leader from October 1985 to April 1989. In fact, he would return to Fort Benning several times throughout his career. He also served in numerous leadership and staff positions at Fort Myer, Virginia; Yongsan, Korea; Fort Monroe, Virginia; and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where he was the Sergeant Major for the Center for Army Leadership for the Combined Arms Center (CAC).

SGM Gibson served four combat tours, including Operation Just Cause in Panama; Operation Iraqi Freedom 1 in Iraq; Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF 13–14) in Afghanistan; and he deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Kuwait.

SGM Gibson is a highly decorated non-commissioned Army officer. His numerous awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with V devices, Bronze Star w/ 1OLC, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge (2nd Award), Expert Infantryman Badge, Master Parachutist Badge with Bronze Star, Pathfinder Badge, Aviation Crewmember Badge, Canadian Parachutist Badge, German Schutzenschnur Badge (Silver), and the coveted Ranger Tab, among many others. SGM Gibson also was awarded the Order of Saint Maurice (Infantry), and Order of The Combat Spurs (Cavalry).

On a personal note, I am proud to call SGM Alan Gibson my friend. I have witnessed firsthand his compassionate leadership and his enduring dedication to our great nation. Throughout his distinguished career, SGM Gibson has consistently exhibited the Seven Core Army Values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

SGM Gibson has certainly accomplished many things in his life but none of this would have been possible without the love and support of his wife, Cheryl, and their three daughters, Asia Rochelle, Alana Shantelle and Ariel Danaè.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me and my wife, Vivian, in extending our sincerest gratitude and best wishes to Sergeant Major Alan Gibson and his family, on the occasion of his retirement from a stellar career of 32 years in the United States Army.

RECOGNIZING THE HENDRICKS FAMILY AS THE 2015 SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA, OUTSTANDING FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize the Hendricks Family from Jay, Florida, for being selected as the 2015 Santa Rosa County, Florida, Outstanding Farm Family of the Year.

A fourth generation farmer, Rick Hendricks was only six years old when he first began to work on the farm alongside his father, B.D. By the age of 12, he had graduated to using a selective tractor, and as a teenager, he worked on the farm after school and athletic practices before going off to college at Livingston University. Rick played football at Livingston before his love of the farm brought him home.

During Rick's farming career, several changes have taken place in the agricultural industry, and he has witnessed and experienced the new picker/balers, as well as changes in cotton and peanut production equipment from two-row to six-row. Over the years, the Hendricks' family farm has grown and incorporated new technology, and today, in addition to his own farming operation, Rick manages Hendricks and Son Farms, Inc. and B.D. Hendricks Farm, which in total covers 2,250 acres and includes 200 brood cows and row crops of cotton, peanuts, and hay.

To Rick, his wife Nina of 27 years, and their children, Brandt, Rush, and Tessa, farming is an investment in their future. It is Rick's hope, that the value of hard work instilled in him by his parents, will also create the strong foundation for future success for his children. It is also truly a family affair, and today the Hendricks family farm is also operated by Rick's sister, Vicki; nephews, Tanner and Todd; as well as full time employee, Dylan Barnes.

In addition to the hours spent on the farm, Rick has served as a member and advisor of many organizations including terms as President of the Board for Santa Rosa County Farm Bureau and the Jay Peanut Farmers Cooperative.

Mr. Speaker, Northwest Florida and our Nation share a proud agricultural tradition built by the hard work of farmers and their families. The Santa Rosa County Outstanding Farm Family of the Year Award is a reflection of Rick and his family's tireless work and dedication. On behalf of the United States Congress,

I would like to offer my congratulations to the Hendricks Family for being outstanding in their field. My wife Vicki and I extend our best wishes for their continued success.

CONGRATULATING VICTOR MORENO ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Victor Moreno on his retirement from serving as Chief of Police for East Moline Police Department. Victor is rightfully being honored by the East Moline Police Department for his longstanding dedication to the community.

Victor has served a total of 26 years with the department. He has been Chief of Police since 2004 and has given so much comfort to the community with his dedication to public safety. Victor has held himself to the highest moral standard.

Victor has enriched the lives of all those around him. Fortunately, he will continue to serve his community by teaching law enforcement and public safety at United Township High School.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Victor for his commitment to the East Moline Community. I congratulate him again on his well-earned retirement and wish him luck in his future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING MASTER SERGEANT DANIEL LIND WILLIAMS ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE MARINE CORPS

HON. MARK TAKAI

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and Congresswoman TAMMY DUCKWORTH, I would like to take the time today to recognize Master Sergeant Daniel Lind Williams, an American patriot who has devoted his career to working in the United States Marine Corps.

In 1995, Master Sergeant Williams joined the Marine Corps and has served honorably as a Marine ever since. Starting as a training instructor, he was responsible for range scheduling and marksmanship. He was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for high standards of professionalism as a junior Marine and has been decorated with numerous commendations since, including the Bronze Star.

Throughout his career working in counterintelligence and in special operations he has worked on a variety of vital projects leading to a more stable Afghanistan and Iraq. From assisting with the re-opening of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, to working as a counterintelligence representative to the interim Iraqi Government, he has worked to ensure that the society that we live in today is a safer one.

Master Sergeant Williams, thank you for all your years of service to the United States; you have the deepest gratitude of a thankful nation. As you are surely aware, the Marine Corps and the United States are proud of all that you have accomplished for our safety and security as well as the safety and security of our international allies abroad. Thank you very much (mahalo nui loa) for your devotion and patriotism to our country.

SPEAKER BOEHNER TRIBUTE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to pay tribute to my friend, JOHN BOEHNER, who has proudly served as Speaker of the House of Representatives since January 5, 2011.

As many people know, Speaker BOEHNER is the son of a bartender and one of 12 children. The people of southwest Ohio have elected him to serve as their Representative in the House on thirteen separate occasions.

During his service in the House, Speaker BOEHNER has distinguished himself by regularly stepping forward to tackle important challenges facing his Ohio constituents and the country.

JOHN BOEHNER was elected to serve as House GOP Conference Chairman following the election of a historic Republican majority in 1992. As Conference Chairman, BOEHNER played a key role in the adoption of the Balanced Budget Act, which limited spending, helped grow the economy, and resulted in the first budget surplus in decades. He played a central role in shaping and fulfilling the Contract with America.

Later while serving as Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, BOEHNER co-wrote the bill establishing the first private school choice program in the District of Columbia, and worked to ensure historic parental choice provisions were included in the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act.

In 2007, JOHN was chosen by his Republican colleagues to serve as the House Republican Leader. In that role, he led the charge and a unified Republican Conference in opposition to job-killing bills like ObamaCare and a cap-and-trade energy tax, as well as the opposition to the wasteful Obama-Pelosi economic stimulus bill of 2009.

As Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER has continued his legacy of reform. The House has enacted landmark changes that increase transparency and give Americans access to data and information that it never had before. Speaker BOEHNER also oversaw the first meaningful change to entitlement programs in many years as well as significant reductions to the reckless spending levels that became the norm under the previous Democratic majority.

Earlier this year, Speaker BOEHNER's longtime goal of having a Pope address Congress for the first time was realized when Pope Francis addressed a Joint Meeting of Congress. That historic address was a source of inspiration for Congress and the nation, and was a clear crowning achievement for Speaker BOEHNER.

It is clearly evident by his record that Speaker BOEHNER has been one of the most instrumental and effective members to ever serve in this body. However, I must tell you that in my opinion, he is an even better person than he is a Member of Congress. JOHN BOEHNER, and his wife Debbie, have become close and dear friends of mine. I will always value their friendship, support, and words of encouragement.

Thank you, Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, for your service as a happy warrior. Godspeed, old pal.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, 2015 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE CYBER DEFENSE COMPETITION NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Central Florida's Collegiate Cyber Defense Club, for winning the National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition this past April. They beat nine other teams to become national champions for the second year in a row.

The club, also known as Hack@UCF, was created in 2012 by students who wanted to compete in regional and national cyber defense competitions. The competition, organized by the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security, is the nation's most prestigious collegiate data defense competition. Ten regional contests around the country included roughly 200 teams consisting of more than 2,400 students. The winning students are, Alexander Davis, Andres Giron, Austin Brogle, Carlos Beltran, Conner Brooks, Jason Cooper, Jonathan Lundstrom, Kevin Colley, Kevin DiClemente, Nathan Dennis, Shane Welch, and Tyler Dever.

It is my pleasure to recognize the University of Central Florida and the students of the Collegiate Cyber Defense Club for winning its second national championship. I congratulate the hard-working faculty and outstanding students that make the University a destination for our nation's best and brightest minds. Go Knights.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, on October 28, 2015 I was attending a family member's funeral and missed votes. Had I been present, I would have voted Aye on Roll Call 577, Aye on Roll Call 578, and Nay on Roll Call 579.

NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, October is National Farm to School Month, an important opportunity to celebrate the close connection between local schools and local food in communities throughout the country. Farm to School initiatives play an important role in growing that connection, improving child nutrition, supporting local jobs and economies, and educating the next generation about the sources of their food.

Many of our rural communities are struggling. Meanwhile, access to affordable, nutritious food continues to be a challenge for many inner city communities. With these trends at work, it will be especially important to grow our Farm to School initiatives. One such initiative in Sandusky, Ohio connects students and their families with fresh, healthy food and local food producers. These programs are vitally important because they bridge the gap between rural and urban communities and help build local food systems that provide food security and independence.

It is no wonder that Farm to School programs are cropping up all over the country, today reaching more than 40,000 schools and over 25.5 million students. Here are the outcomes:

For Farmers: Growing sales opportunities. Reliable demand. Expanded community interest in local foods.

For Schools: Reduction in child obesity; fresh and local food options that increase participation rates in school food programs, thereby boosting revenues.

For the Community: Keeps food dollars in the community; ensures healthy local farms that provide jobs, pay taxes, and protect working agricultural land.

Mr. Speaker, America's Farm to School programs are a win-win-win scenario.

So as we conclude this month long celebration, I urge my colleagues in the House to support H.R. 1061, The Farm To School Act of 2015 introduced by Congressman FORTENBERRY, which reauthorizes Farm to School programs through FY 2021 and allows land grant colleges and universities to participate as well.

Connecting our nation's schools to locally produced nutritious foods is not a partisan issue. It affects both Democratic and Republican districts. The House has an opportunity to act on this pressing matter with dispatch today. I suggest we take it.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF FORMER WASHINGTON STATE SENATOR SCOTT BARR

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my close mentor and friend, former Washington State Senator Scott Barr, who passed away in his Colville, Washington home last week at the age of ninety-nine. It is especially sad that we will not be able to celebrate his 100th birthday at Edwall Park in August. Washington State lost a passionate leader, one who faithfully served his community and the people of Northeastern Washington.

Before serving in the state legislature, Senator Barr grew wheat and raised cattle near Edwall, Washington. His experience as a farmer encouraged him to become more involved in his local community, culminating in his run for a seat in Washington's 7th Legislative District. In 1976, Senator Barr was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives where he served for seven years before being elected to the Washington State Senate. In the Senate, Senator Barr was a tireless champion for Northeastern Washington, focusing on issues closest to his constituents, agriculture and natural resources. It was often said that if three people were gathered at a meeting in the 7th Legislative District, Senator Barr would be one of them.

Throughout his career, Senator Barr served as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Western States Legislative Forestry Task Force, co-chaired the Joint Select Committee on Water Resource Policy, and served as the Ranking Republican Member on the Agriculture and Ecology and the Parks committees. In December 1993, Senator Scott Barr announced his retirement from the Washington State Senate, at the age of seventy-seven. Even after his retirement, Senator Barr continued to be a champion for the 7th Legislative District, working to preserve the way of life that those in his community enjoy.

Senator Barr served as the president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, headed up the Expo Food and Soil Association, and supported youth development through local 4–H programs. Senator Barr was also instrumental in ensuring 4–H programs continued to function and thrive throughout Washington State. Before running for the state legislature, Senator Barr was also a key advocate on behalf of the Lincoln County Conservation District.

On a personal level, Scott was a friend and a role model, not only to me but to everyone serving in Eastern Washington and across our state. Scott desired to better the lives of those around him and to support young people in order that they may reach their full potential. Even in his late nineties, Scott had a contagious energy and excitement for life—he was committed to giving back and remained active in his community.

I rise to thank Senator Scott Barr for his years of service to Northeastern Washington. He leaves behind a legacy in leadership and devotion to his community and will be remembered for his commitment to issues close to the hearts of the people of Washington State. My thoughts and prayers remain with his wife, Dollie Mae, his children, and other family members and friends. Washington State lost a truly dedicated and passionate leader. He will be missed.

CONGRATULATING DAVIS & ELKINS COLLEGE

HON. ALEXANDER X. MOONEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, West Virginia for their recent acceptance into the Museum Assessment Program (MAP). This program will help develop and improve the College's already outstanding collection, which includes pieces from Native American history, to traditional Appalachian culture, and showcases West Virginia's rich history. This accomplishment required the hard work and dedication of the students, faculty, and staff of Davis & Elkins College. It makes me proud to see colleges like Davis & Elkins thriving. I wish everyone involved with this great achievement the best in their future studies and careers.

HONORING MR. RONALD S. MOULTRIE

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Ronald S. Moultrie, a United States Intelligence Officer for the National Security Agency (NSA), on the occasion of his retirement. Mr. Moultrie has honorably served our country for over 36 years, including time spent in the United States Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Throughout his illustrious career, Mr. Moultrie's most notable position was his tenure as Director of the Signals Intelligence Directorate (SIGINT) program at NSA. As Director, he led a civilian and military workforce, while effectively guiding the integration and transformation of SIGINT reporting, dissemination, and collection capabilities.

His duties at NSA led him to be a key voice in global operational activities of critical importance to the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community. He is considered to be one of NSA's foremost active senior executives, with a strong focus on diversity efforts.

Throughout Mr. Moultrie's career he has been awarded numerous honors including, the USAF Meritorious Service Medal (1983), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (1986), NSA Meritorious Civilian Service Award (1996, 1998), NSA Exceptional Civilian Service Award (2000, 2001, 2015), NSA Director's Distinguished Service Medal (2004), National Intelligence Superior Service Medal (2008), Presidential Rank Award: Meritorious Executive (2011), and the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal (2014).

Mr. Moultrie graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts. He then attended the Defense Intelligence College, where he earned a Master's of Science. Subsequently, he enrolled at the Federal Executive Institute and later became an Intelligence Fellow at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Business.

Mr. Moultrie is married and lives with his wife near Annapolis, Maryland where they are

notable philanthropists. Mr. Moultrie is also a blood donor and a proud member of NSA's Red Cross 10-Gallon Club.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor Mr. Moultrie and his lifelong dedicated service to the United States government and the Intelligence Community. It is with great pride that I congratulate Mr. Moultrie on his retirement and wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING OCTOBER AS DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to recognize October as Down Syndrome Awareness Month. Down syndrome is a congenital disorder arising from a chromosome defect, likely a full or partial copy of chromosome 21. This defect causes intellectual impairment and physical abnormalities.

Approximately 1 in 700 babies in the United States are born with Down syndrome. Infants with Down syndrome are more likely to have other medical issues such as hearing loss, heart defects, and various eye diseases. Furthermore, African American infants born with Down syndrome have a lower chance of surviving past the first year of life than infants with Down syndrome from other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The economic impacts on the families of those with Down syndrome are also staggering. Medical care costs for children in their first four years are twelve times higher than the costs associated with a child without Down syndrome. Nearly 40 percent of families have suffered a financial setback or have forced a family member to stop working because of the child's condition.

Progress has been made in some areas that impact individuals with Down syndrome. The life expectancy for individuals with this disability has greatly increased. The 21st Century Cures Act, a bipartisan bill that passed the House of Representatives earlier this session, provides additional funding to the National Institute of Health for medical research that one day may move the needle of innovation in research and treatment forward enough to improve the lives of individuals with Down syndrome.

I am pleased to recognize the 400,000 Americans with Down syndrome and the families who have sacrificed so that these individuals can live their lives to the fullest.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE DEEP LOSS BEING EXPERIENCED BY NEW MEXICAN COMMUNITIES DUE TO THE DEATH OF LILLY GARCIA

HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express the sorrow and profound loss that is being felt in communities across New Mexico following a heinous act of violence that took the life of an innocent young girl.

Four year-old Lilly Garcia was in the back seat of her car with her family, when in a case of road rage, a bullet that was fired at her car, hit her, and killed her. This senseless violence was shocking and heartbreaking. It has shaken our community to its core. We cannot turn a blind eye to violence like this. Sadly this story of violence is not unique.

In Rio Rancho we lost Officer Gregg Benner who was shot and killed in the line of duty, and in Albuquerque, Officer Daniel Webster died this week after he too was shot in the line of duty. We must have a real discussion about how we address the violence that has taken the lives of too many loved ones, and only by coming together as a community can we make a change.

My heart goes out to the family of Lilly Garcia and all those who have lost someone they love to violence.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7601–S7664

Measures Introduced: Eight bills were introduced, as follows: S. 2217–2224. **Pages S7654–55**

Measures Reported:

S. 1324, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to fulfill certain requirements before regulating standards of performance for new, modified, and reconstructed fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units. (S. Rept. No. 114–159)

S. 1500, to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters. (S. Rept. No. 114–160)

Report to accompany S. 1523, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program. (S. Rept. No. 114–161) **Page S7654**

Measures Passed:

Homeless Veterans Services Protection Act: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 1731, to amend title 38, United States Code, to waive the minimum period of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces for receipt of certain benefits for homeless veterans, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish such benefits to homeless veterans with discharges or releases from service in the Armed Forces with other than dishonorable conditions, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S7621–22**

Murray (for Heller) Amendment No. 2760, to authorize per diem payments under comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans to furnish care to dependents of homeless veterans. **Page S7622**

House Messages:

Bipartisan Budget Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations, taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S7604–21, S7622–24, S7625–52**

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill. **Page S7604**

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell Amendment No. 2750, to change the enactment date. **Page S7604**

McConnell Amendment No. 2751 (to Amendment No. 2750), of a perfecting nature. **Page S7604**

McConnell motion to refer the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, McConnell Amendment No. 2752, to change the enactment date. **Page S7604**

McConnell Amendment No. 2753 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 2752), of a perfecting nature. **Page S7604**

McConnell Amendment No. 2754 (to Amendment No. 2753), of a perfecting nature. **Page S7604**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill at approximately 12:01 a.m., on Friday, October 30, 2015, with the time until 1:01 a.m., equally divided between the two Leaders, or their designees. **Page S7642**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Edward L. Gilmore, of Illinois, to be United States Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois for the term of four years. **Page S7663**

4 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

7 Army nominations in the rank of general.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, and Navy. **Pages S7663–64**

Messages from the House: **Page S7654**

Measures Referred: **Page S7654**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S7602, S7642, S7654**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S7654**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7655–56**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Additional Statements: Pages S7653–54

Amendments Submitted: Pages S7656–63

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S7663

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:07 p.m., until 12:01 a.m. on Friday, October 30, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7642.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

DEFENSE STRATEGY AND FORCE STRUCTURE

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine alternative approaches to defense strategy and force structure, after receiving testimony from Thomas M. Donnelly, American Enterprise Institute Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies, Shawn Brimley, Center for a New American Security, Andrew F. Krepinevich, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, Christopher A. Preble, Cato Institute, and Dakota L. Wood, The Heritage Foundation, all of Washington, D.C.

WELFARE AND POVERTY IN AMERICA

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine welfare and poverty in America, after receiving testimony from Jon S. Pierpont, Utah Department of Workforce Services Executive Director, Salt Lake City; Pamela Loprest, Urban Institute, and Aretha J. Jackson, America Works, both of Washington, D.C.; and H. Luke Shaefer, University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy School of Social Work, Ann Arbor.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs), and Laura S. H. Holgate, of Virginia, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador, and to be Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

TREATIES

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Swiss Confederation for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington on October 2, 1996, signed on September 23, 2009, at Washington, as corrected by an exchange of notes effected November 16, 2010 and a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes on September 23, 2009 (Treaty Doc. 112–01), protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed on May 20, 2009, at Luxembourg (the ''proposed Protocol'') and a related agreement effected by the exchange of notes also signed on May 20, 2009 (Treaty Doc. 111–08), convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Hungary for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on February 4, 2010, at Budapest (the ''proposed Convention'') and a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes on February 4, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 111–07), the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Chile for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed in Washington on February 4, 2010, with a Protocol signed the same day, as corrected by exchanges of notes effected February 25, 2011, and February 10 and 21, 2012, and a related agreement effected by exchange of notes (the ''related Agreement'') on February 4, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–08), the Protocol Amending the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, done at Paris on May 27, 2010 (the ''proposed Protocol''), which was signed by the United States on May 27, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–05), the Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and its Protocol, signed at Madrid on February 22, 1990 (Treaty Doc. 113–04), the Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on February 13, 2013, at Warsaw (Treaty Doc. 113–05), and the Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Japan for

the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and a related agreement entered into by an exchange of notes (together the ''proposed Protocol''), both signed on January 24, 2013, at Washington, together with correcting notes exchanged March 9 and March 29, 2013 (Treaty Doc. 114–01), after receiving testimony from Robert B. Stack, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Tax Affairs; and Thomas A. Barthold, Chief of Staff, Joint Committee on Taxation.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine mental health and substance use disorders in America, focusing on priorities, challenges, and opportunities, after receiving testimony from Kana Enomoto, Acting Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, James Macrae, Acting Administrator, Health Resources and Services Administration, and Thomas Insel, Director, National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health, all of the Department of Health and Human Services.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Brian R. Martinotti, to be a United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, Robert F. Rossiter, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska, and Edward L. Stanton III, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 11 public bills, H.R. 3857–3867; and 5 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 89; and H. Res. 503–506 were introduced. **Pages H7346–47**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H7347**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 3763, to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–318). **Page H7346**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Monsignor Donn Heiar, St. John Vianney Catholic Church, Janesville, Wisconsin. **Page H7335**

Call of the House: On the Call of the House, 421 Members reported their presence, Roll No. 580. **Page H7335**

Election of Speaker: The Honorable Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives and received 236 votes. The Honorable Nancy Pelosi received 184 votes, The Honorable Daniel Webster (FL) received 9 votes, The Honorable Jim Cooper received 1 vote, The Honorable John Lewis received 1 vote, and The Honorable Colin Powell received 1 vote. Earlier, the Clerk appointed Representatives Miller (MI), Brady (PA), Kaptur, and Ros-Lehtinen to act as Tellers. **Pages H7337–38**

Escort Committee: The Chair appointed the following committee to escort the Speaker-elect to the Chair: Representatives McCarthy, Pelosi, Scalise, Hoyer, McMorris Rodgers, Clyburn, Walden, Becerra, Messer, Crowley, Jenkins (KS), Israel, Foxx, Ben Ray Luján (NM), Wagner, DeLauro, Edwards, Sessions, Van Hollen, McHenry, and Mimi Walters (CA); and the members of the Wisconsin delegation: Representatives Sensenbrenner, Kind, Moore, Duffy, Ribble, Pocan, and Grothman. **Page H7338**

Administration of the Oath of Office: The Dean of the House, the Honorable John Conyers, Jr., administered the oath of office to the Speaker. **Page H7340**

Notify the President of the Election of the Speaker: The House agreed to H. Res. 503, instructing the Clerk to inform the President of the election of the Speaker. **Page H7340**

Notify the Senate of the Election of the Speaker: The House agreed to H. Res. 504, instructing the Clerk to inform the Senate of the election of the Speaker. **Page H7340**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Ryan (WI) wherein he resigned from the

Committee on Ways and Means and the Joint Committee on Taxation, as a result of his election as Speaker. **Page H7340**

Succession of the Speaker of the House: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he designated Representative McCarthy to exercise any authority in the event of the death or inability of the Speaker, to notify Members of the House and Senate, respectively, of any reassembly. **Page H7340**

Speaker Pro Tempore: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Denham, Representative Thornberry, Representative Upton, Representative Harris, Representative Comstock, and Representative Messer to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through the remainder of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress. **Page H7340**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12 noon on Monday, November 2nd for Morning Hour debate. **Pages H7340, H7345**

Quorum Calls—Votes: One quorum call developed during the proceedings of today and appears on pages H7337–38.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

12:01 a.m., Friday, October 30

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will continue consideration of the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1314, Bipartisan Budget Act. At 1:01 a.m., Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

12 noon, Monday, November 2

House Chamber

Program for Monday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue.

HOUSE

Bishop, Sanford D., Jr., Ga., E1562
Bustos, Cheri, Ill., E1563
Calvert, Ken, Calif., E1563
Grayson, Alan, Fla., E1563
Hudson, Richard, N.C., E1563
Johnson, Eddie Bernice, Tex., E1565
Kaptur, Marcy, Ohio, E1564
Lee, Barbara, Calif., E1561
Luján, Ben Ray, N.M., E1565
Marchant, Kenny, Tex., E1561
McMorris Rodgers, Cathy, Wash., E1564
Miller, Jeff, Fla., E1561, E1562
Mooney, Alexander X., W.Va. E1564
Ruppersberger, C.A. Dutch, Md., E1564
Takai, Mark, Hawaii, E1563
Veasey, Marc A., Tex., E1562

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