

can demonstrate his commitment to protecting our Nation and leaving it better prepared for his successor.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW CONGRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, last November the American people elected a new Congress to get Washington working again. Nearly every day seems to bring more signs that we are. Over the weekend, President Obama signed the FAST Act, a multiyear highway bill, into law. It represents a significant departure from years of short-term extensions and congressional inaction. In fact, the FAST Act is the longest term highway bill to pass Congress in almost two decades, providing 5 full years of highway funding.

Here is what Kentuckians for Better Transportation—a top transportation advocacy organization in my State—had to say about it:

After many, many years of short term continuing resolutions we finally have a long term authorization that will give our states the opportunity to plan for and implement major road projects. . . . We can [now] plan for the future.

That is because in a new and more open Senate, Senator INHOFE, a Republican, and Senator BOXER, a Democrat, were able to work together for its passage. Senator BOXER herself called it “a major accomplishment.”

Here is another major accomplishment: the Every Student Succeeds Act. It is a bipartisan, reformist replacement for No Child Left Behind. Pundits in Washington could never agree on how to replace No Child Left Behind. The issue went unresolved for many years, but in a new and more open Senate, Senator ALEXANDER, a Republican, and Senator MURRAY, a Democrat, worked hard and found success in the bill before us. The House already passed it, 359 to 64. The Senate previously passed a very similar version of the bill, 81 to 17.

Tomorrow we should work together to pass it for a second and final time and send it to the President for his signature. It will be the latest important achievement for the American people from a new Congress that is back to work and back on their side.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY TO DEFEAT ISIS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last night the President addressed the Nation. It was one of the few times during

his Presidency that he addressed the Nation from the Oval Office, signifying that this was going to be an important address by the Commander in Chief. Unfortunately, what the President communicated was that little, if any, change will be made in the current administration’s approach on terrorism following the attack on San Bernardino last week. The President’s approach to eradicating this terrorist threat has only resulted in a tactical stalemate that has kept the morale of ISIS high and their recruitment efforts robust, as we have seen.

In the wake of the shootings last week, an event the President himself called an act of terrorism, the American people deserve a credible and aggressive strategy to combat this terror threat that clearly poses a danger not just over there but over here. A good start would be for the President to listen to his own military leadership as well as members of the intelligence community. If the reports are true—and they certainly haven’t been denied—the President has turned a deaf ear to his own military leadership and leaders of the intelligence community on how to fight and defeat the ISIS threat. Despite the President’s rhetoric on his so-called strategy against ISIS, one thing is clear: It is not working. So our country clearly needs to change course, and that should start with a real plan and real candor from the Commander in Chief on how he intends to defend our interests abroad and at home to keep our people safe.

While I was eager to hear what the President might say about the bad results from his current strategy, unfortunately, we didn’t hear it last night. However, what we did hear was this recent theme from some of our colleagues across the aisle—as we voted on the repeal-ObamaCare set of votes last week—as well as from the President himself during his weekly address, the Democratic leader, and some other Members of the Senate, that what they are basically trying to do is to change the subject. You will recall that one way they tried to do that was by offering an amendment that said people on watch lists would be denied their core constitutional rights under the Bill of Rights, and in this case it happened to be the Second Amendment; that is, you are presumed to be guilty without the necessity of having to go to court and actually prove what you are claiming is true.

I was struck by the fact that the New York Times, back in 2014, noted in an editorial entitled “Terror Watch Lists Run Amok” that “A 2007 audit found that more than half of the 71,000 names on the no-fly list were wrongly included.” This is the New York Times making the case that basically I and others argued for, which is that there cannot be any presumption of guilt just because the government includes your name on a list, particularly when it comes to denying your core constitutional rights. If the Second Amend-

ment isn’t strong enough to withstand this so-called presumption, neither is the freedom to worship according to the dictates of your conscience, the First Amendment rights to free speech and freedom of association. You get my drift.

Rather than address the real problem, which flowed from another speech the President gave a few years ago out of the Oval Office where he announced the precipitous withdrawal of our troops in Iraq that created the vacuum that is now being filled by ISIS and Al Qaeda—rather than talk about the lessons learned and how a new and different strategy was going to be employed after consultation with our military leadership and members of the intelligence community, the President and his supporters decided to try to change the subject and produce a red herring that has nothing to do with the fight to degrade and defeat ISIS. Of course the threat is not only about people traveling from abroad to our country, it is about Americans here and other people on visas, perhaps from visa waiver countries, traveling from the Middle East to the United States. Perhaps the most dangerous of all is the radicalization of people already in the United States. If the preliminary indications prove to be true, that seems to be the thread that connects so many of these attacks, whether it is in San Bernardino or Garland, TX, a short time back, or MAJ Nidal Hasan at Fort Hood back in 2009.

What we need and what the American people deserve from their Commander in Chief is candor and the willingness to show a little humility and say: You know what. The way we have been handling things really isn’t working very well. Instead, the President tries to play partisan politics, and he tries to distract the American people by suggesting that our Constitution is too generous when it comes to the right to keep and bear arms.

For the sake of all Americans, I hope the President reconsiders his flawed strategy and produces a more effective one to eradicate ISIS soon because the safety of the American people is clearly at stake.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we are on the downward trajectory of this year’s Congress, the 114th Congress, and I thought it would be appropriate to take a few minutes to talk about what this Chamber has been able to accomplish since we convened in January. I know there is a lot of cynicism and indeed outright fear about the way the Federal Government has been operating, and unfortunately I think a lot of that is attributable to the fact that this President has shown a complete unwillingness to work with Congress in many areas; for example, such as immigration reform. So when people see the President acting unilaterally—thank goodness the courts have stopped it,

but it causes them to lose confidence in the Federal Government's ability to address the problems they live with day in and day out and which they have a right to see us do our very best to address.

I can't help but think about this time last year and how, with great anticipation and high expectations, the American people decided to give our side of the aisle, the Republican side, the opportunity to serve in the majority. Our task was a daunting one. The Senate had basically been ground to a halt, and I think Members on both sides of the aisle came back in January ready to change the way we do things around here. I think some of our friends across the aisle found that the do-nothing strategy didn't work for them either, even though they were in the majority, because a number of Senate incumbents—having to face the voters without anything to show—ended up being defeated in last November's election. It didn't work for the American people. So it didn't work for the American people, and it didn't work for those Senators. As I said, the American people deserve better.

We tried to do better, and I think we have made some progress. We have been getting a few things done, delivering on promises made to the American people and working to find real solutions to the problems faced by those whom we are honored to represent. One of those areas that has been particularly important to me is doing something about an issue that plagues every State in our country; that is, human trafficking. At the beginning of last year, I was honored to lead a bipartisan effort to pass legislation designed to help victims of human trafficking get a helping hand and hopefully find a path to healing.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which is now the law of the land, will help these victims, who are too often children, be treated like the victims they are instead of common criminals. After about a month on the floor of the Senate, that bill ultimately ended up passing, 99 to 0, and it was signed into law by the President. It points out that the Congress can work with the President on a bipartisan basis to fight some of the most tragic and troubling issues that face our Nation.

There are other examples. In the fall we passed a major cyber security bill that will help protect the American people from cyber attacks. The Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act fosters information sharing to help address the growing cyber threats we face. Of course we read about them in the news, if we haven't experienced them in person ourselves. The need for this legislation couldn't have been more pressing because over the summer the administration confirmed that hackers had accessed sensitive background information of more than 21 million people on the computer systems of the Office of Personnel Man-

agement—21 million Americans. That followed a similar breach at the Internal Revenue Service in which the personal data of more than 100,000 taxpayers was stolen. So passage of the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act was the right thing to do, and it was done on a bipartisan basis. We are now engaged in a conference discussion with the House to try to reconcile the differences between those bills before it goes to the President.

That is the way we ought to be doing business around here—trying to find solutions that make America stronger and make our cyber infrastructure more resilient.

Another example was from last week. Last week we passed a multiyear highway bill for the first time in more than a decade. My State is blessed to be a fast-growing State, and of course that has encouraged a lot of people to move there—voting with their feet, as I like to say, and coming from places where jobs aren't being produced because the economy is not growing.

This bill helps Texas on the State and local level to prepare for those growing infrastructure needs that come with this increased growth. Just as significantly, it will help the rest of the country as well by creating jobs to build and maintain that infrastructure as well as the commerce that travels on that infrastructure and the environment which will be served by avoiding unnecessary congestion.

This bill also specifically grants States like Texas the flexibility to invest in infrastructure projects—in our case, along the border. We have a 1,200-mile common border with Mexico. It is a unique part of our country. I like to kid my constituents back home. I say: What most of my colleagues in Washington know about the border they read in novels or saw in a movie somewhere. It is a unique and wonderful part of our State, but it is also one that deserves our undivided attention because of the security threats, drug trafficking, and other illegal activity. It is no small thing for the Nation's top exporting State, one that shares almost 1,200 miles with Mexico, to be able to direct some of these funds to help build and maintain that infrastructure.

By the way, I know people frequently talk about Mexico and our relationship with Mexico in a negative way, but we also understand there are enormous benefits to our proximity to Mexico and our shared border. There are about 6 million jobs in America that depend on binational trade with Mexico. While Mexico has its problems—and they certainly have serious problems—we are working with them on their security and corruption issues and the like. It will take all of our efforts in order to address them. By promoting better border infrastructure, Texas can build on our strong trade record, which already includes the export of more than \$100 billion in goods to Mexico each year and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs—6 million jobs nationwide.

This multiyear highway bill will also give Texas and other States across the country more certainty. Before this we had been looking at temporary patches, which makes it impossible to plan, and it also makes the expenditure of those dollars enormously inefficient. This bill gives us greater certainty to make sure our States can deliver projects to facilitate greater volumes of trade and travel along interstates and other critical transportation corridors.

An area where we have not yet achieved success but where I think there is great promise—there are other areas, such as criminal justice reform, where I believe we can in the months ahead register another success, again for the benefit of the people we represent.

Last week, at the President's invitation, I joined a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators to come to the White House to discuss a way forward for bringing substantive criminal justice reform to our country.

For too long, in my State we learned that we treated prisons like warehouses, warehousing people and ignoring the fact—or perhaps just not recognizing the significance of the fact—that sooner or later most of them were going to get out of prison. So what we decided to do in Texas in 2007 was to get smart on crime, not just tough on crime. Nobody doubted how tough we were on crime. But what we realized is that some of the money we spent on corrections could be plowed back into educational programs that would help willing inmates actually learn job skills, deal with their drug and alcohol problems, if they had those, and, in short, better prepare for life on the outside so they didn't end up a frequent flyer or in that turnstile, going from prison to the outside and then back again.

So we have been working on this issue for some time, based on the success we enjoyed in Texas and in other States. The product is a bill called the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act, which passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee 15 to 5. I know Chairman GOODLATTE in the House of Representatives is working on a bipartisan bill in that Chamber as well. So I think this is one of those pivotal moments where folks across the political spectrum see the advantage of working together in favor of bringing real progress that will benefit the American people by making our criminal justice system more effective and our communities safer. By the way, we can save money at the same time.

On another matter where we have seen significant progress, this week we will be voting on the conference report that accompanies the Every Child Achieves Act. This is the bill that actually fixes No Child Left Behind. This legislation was passed here in the Senate by wide margins over the summer. Chairman ALEXANDER and the conference committee and Ranking Member MURRAY were able to achieve an

amazing thing in this divided, polarized political environment we are in, with, I believe, a 39-to-1 vote in the conference committee for a bill that combines both the House and the Senate product. This is really landmark education legislation that will help parents and local communities take control of their children's education instead of ceding to the Federal Government. Certainly, this bill is another win for the American people.

Where I come from, people like the fact that we essentially have repealed the common core mandate, that we have eliminated the Federal Government as a national school board, and that we have sent the power back where it belongs, which is to parents and teachers and local school districts, and ceded more of that authority from here in Washington, DC, back to them.

I could continue with this list of legislative accomplishments by noting that the Chamber has also passed legislation that replaced the flawed Medicare payment system for physicians. This is the notorious doc fix. This is another example where for years and years we passed temporary patches and never solved the underlying problem. But Congress did, and I think that is another thing we can be proud of, along with the first budget passed since 2009, and there is more I could add to the list. But my point is there is a difference in the new 114th Congress, and elections do make a difference. We have worked together on a bipartisan basis where we can make progress to solve problems for the American people during this first year of the 114th Congress. A lot of this is due to the steady leadership of the majority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, and all the hard work our colleagues have put in to make this such a productive year.

So we are on track to continue with this momentum into the new year, and with just another week or so of work to do before we break for the holidays, I think we can take some pride in these accomplishments but yet know that there is a lot more we have to do, not only for the remainder of this year but into next year as well.

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

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

NOMINATION OF TRAVIS R. McDONOUGH

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I rise today to support the confirmation of a fellow Chattanooga, Travis R. McDonough, who has been nominated to serve as U.S. district court judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee. I have known Travis personally for

many years, and I have full confidence that he will serve the people of Tennessee honorably if confirmed to the Federal bench.

Travis is well known in Chattanooga as a civic leader and has earned broad respect in our community. He most recently served as chief of staff and counselor to the mayor, having previously served as a partner at the law firm of Miller & Martin, where he specialized in criminal and white-collar litigation. A Truman scholar, he received his undergraduate degree from Sewanee and his law degree from Vanderbilt University.

We had a number of conversations, as you can imagine, during his confirmation process, and he has assured me he will be a fair and independent judge. I wholeheartedly support his nomination and encourage my colleagues to support his confirmation.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO KENNETH E. MANNELLA

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to join my friend and Finance Committee colleague, Ranking Member WYDEN, in offering appreciation to a dedicated public servant, Mr. Kenneth E. Mannella, who has worked steadily for the American people at the Social Security Administration and will soon pursue activities in retirement.

Ken Mannella joined the Social Security Administration in 1996 as a legislative analyst with the Office of Legislation for Congressional Affairs. Currently, he serves as an associate commissioner for the Office of Congressional Affairs.

Before joining the Social Security Administration, Ken worked for 8 years for Governor William Donald Schaefer of Maryland. In Governor Schaefer's final terms, Ken Mannella was director of the Maryland National Relations Office, where he worked with Congress to obtain Federal assistance to help Maryland pursue its priorities. Prior to his work in Maryland, Ken worked for the U.S. Senate for 10 years on the staff of Senator Richard Schweiker and for Senator Charles Mathias as counsel on the Patents, Copyrights, and Trademarks Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

You don't have a career working with the Senate and in congressional relations for as long as Ken has been at it unless you are really good at what you do. And that has been our experience with Ken; he has excelled at developing

relations that facilitate useful flows of information and ideas between whom he represents and Congress. It would be hard to find anyone who would not agree that Ken is always an honest broker and always there to help if you need it.

I appreciate Ken's work with Congress, and I know that my good friend Senator WYDEN does as well. We wish him all the very best as he moves on to pursue what lies ahead for him and genuinely appreciate the work he has done with Congress, for the Social Security Administration, and—of most importance—for beneficiaries of the Social Security programs.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CAVE CITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today, in the United States Senate, I wish to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the founding of Cave City, KY. Next year in 2016, 150 years will have passed since Cave City was first incorporated in 1866.

Located in the south central region of the Commonwealth, Cave City is proud to be known worldwide as the home of Mammoth Cave, the world's longest known cave system with more than 400 miles explored underground. It is one of the oldest tourist attractions in the United States.

Cave City may only have about 2,500 residents, but more than 2 million visitors flock to Mammoth Cave National Park every year. Cave City is proud to host so many visitors from across the globe and present to them their special brand of Kentucky hospitality and charm.

Cave City is not only the gateway to Mammoth Cave, but also home to fine shops and restaurants, privately owned caves open for tours, and many other tourist attractions and places of interest. It is the zip line capital of Kentucky, with three zip line tours close to town. And the Cave City Convention Center is one of the premier meeting and convention venues in the region.

The year 2016 will be a busy year for Cave City. Not only is it the 150th anniversary of the town's founding, it is also the 200th anniversary of the earliest known organized tours being given at Mammoth Cave, the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, and the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Mammoth Cave National Park.

Therefore, I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in recognizing that 2016 is the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Cave City and in extending a heartfelt congratulations to the people of Cave City as they celebrate this important milestone. I am proud to be their voice here in the Senate as Cave City represents the very best of what Kentucky has to offer our Nation and the world.