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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015 No. 182

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Mississippi).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 15, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TRENT KELLY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago when Secretary of Defense Ash Carter testified before the House Armed Services Committee, I asked him if Congress' debating and voting on an Authorization for Use of Military Force,

NOTICE

If the 114th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 24, 2015, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 114th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Thursday, December 31, 2015, to permit Members to insert statements.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT–59 or S–123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Wednesday, December 30. The final issue will be dated Thursday, December 31, 2015, and will be delivered on Monday, January 4, 2016.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event, that occurred after the sine die date.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

GREGG HARPER, *Chairman.*

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an AUMF, would help in the cause of defeating ISIL. Secretary Carter said it would be helpful because we would need to show the troops that Congress supports them.

Two weeks ago, the Obama administration announced that it would be sending an expeditionary force into Iraq and Syria to fight ISIS. In his column last week entitled ''Obama's Quiet Shift in War on ISIS,'' syndicated columnist Doyle McManus wrote: ''If the first expeditionary forces succeed, as their record suggests they will, they will almost surely be followed by more.'' I completely agree with Mr. McManus.

Mr. Speaker, on November 6, my colleague JIM MCGOVERN and I, along with 33 of our colleagues, wrote a letter to Speaker RYAN urging him to allow debate on an AUMF on the House floor. We never received a response. Last week, JIM and I wrote Speaker RYAN another letter urging him to allow a debate on the AUMF on the House floor as one of the first actions Congress takes when we come back in January 2016.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama continues to escalate our involvement against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Our fight with ISIS isn't going away any time soon, which is why it is high time Congress fulfills its constitutional duty and debates our role in the Middle East. As James Madison said: ''The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature.'' The most important vote by a Member of Congress is to commit a young man or woman to fight and die for this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have two letters that I include in the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, November 6, 2015.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Among the issues that require urgent attention by the U.S. House of Representatives is the question of the extent of involvement by the U.S. military in the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Given the recent announcement by President Obama of a deepening entanglement in Syria and Iraq, it is critical that the House schedule and debate an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) as quickly as possible.

Last week, the president announced initiatives that escalate U.S. engagement in combat operations in Syria and Iraq. Specifically, the U.S. will deploy a U.S. Special Operations contingent into northern Syria to be embedded with and to advise opposition militant forces in that region; and U.S. military advisors and special operations forces already in Iraq will be embedded with Kurdish and Iraqi forces on the front lines of combat. Secretary of Defense Carter also stated that U.S. air operations in both Syria and Iraq will increase their bombing campaigns. Taken all together, these represent a significant escalation in U.S. military operations in the region and place U.S. military personnel on the front lines of combat operations.

We do not share the same policy prescriptions for U.S. military engagement in the region, but we do share the belief that it is past time for the Congress to fulfill its obligations under the Constitution and vote on an AUMF that clearly delineates the authority and limits, if any, on U.S. military engagement in Iraq, Syria and the surrounding region. U.S. bombing campaigns have been going on for more than a year, and U.S. troops on the ground have been increasingly close to or drawn into combat operations, including the recent death in combat of a special operations soldier in Iraq.

Consistent with your pledge to return to regular order, we urge you to direct the committees of jurisdiction to draft and report out an AUMF as soon as possible. We do not believe in the illusion of a consensus authorization, something that only happens rarely. We do believe the Congress can no longer ask our brave service men and women to continue to serve in harm's way while we fail in carrying out our constitutional responsibility in the area of war and peace.

As long as the House fails to assert its constitutional prerogatives and authority, the Administration may continue to expand the mission and level of engagement of U.S. Armed Forces throughout the region. We strongly urge you, Mr. Speaker, to bring an AUMF to the floor of the House as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern; Tom Cole; Barbara Lee; Walter B. Jones; Peter Welch; John Lewis; Bill Posey; John Abney Culberson; Ryan K. Zinke; Richard L. Hanna; Thomas Massie; Ted S. Yoho; Ed Whitfield; Dana Rohrabacher; Justin Amash; Mark Sanford; Paul A. Gosar; Mick Mulvaney; John J. Duncan, Jr.; Matt Salmon; Raúl R. Labrador; Janice D. Schakowsky; Peter A. DeFazio; Charles B. Rangel; Louise M. Slaughter; Janice Hahn; Joseph P. Kennedy; Michael C. Burgess; Chellie Pingree; John Garamendi; Joseph Crowley; David N. Cicilline; John Conyers, Jr.; Beto O'Rourke; Daniel T. Kildee.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2015.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: We write to you again to strongly urge you to bring before the U.S. House of Representatives an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) related to U.S. military involvement in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere against the Islamic State. We ask that you schedule the debate and vote on an AUMF resolution in January when the 114th Congress reconvenes in 2016.

As you are aware, U.S. involvement in Iraq and Syria continues to escalate. In both countries, U.S. special operations forces are engaged in front-line operations. Last month a bipartisan group of 35 Members of the House, representing a broad ideological spectrum, called on you to schedule such a debate as soon as possible. As that letter stated: ''We do believe the Congress can no longer ask our brave service men and women to continue to serve in harm's way while we fail in carrying out our constitutional responsibility in the area of war and peace.'' We are attaching a copy of that letter for your convenience and review. In subsequent media reports, we were deeply disappointed to read that you do not believe that the 114th Congress needs to act on a new AUMF to wage war against the Islamic State, but rather that the 14-year-old and 13-year-old AUMFs approved by the 107th Congress under starkly different circumstances provide the president with all the authority he requires.

We firmly believe that among the most important duties of Congress is that of debating and voting on whether to send U.S. armed forces into battle. On this matter, the Constitution is crystal clear: it is the duty of Congress to authorize such engagement. We believe that it violates our oath of office to continue to ignore this urgent and serious matter.

Ten months ago, the president sent a draft AUMF to Congress for consideration and last Sunday he called, once again, on Congress to approve a new AUMF. It is now the role of the Speaker to direct the committee of jurisdiction to approve the Administration's draft, or to amend it, or to draft a new version of the AUMF and to schedule that resolution for consideration and a vote by the full House as expeditiously as possible.

Once again, we strongly urge you to bring an AUMF before the House in January 2016 so that the House may debate and vote on authorizing U.S. military operations in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere against the Islamic State. We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

JAMES P. MCGOVERN,
Member of Congress.
WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, if we do not meet our responsibility, we will become complicit in the loss of life among our troops. How many young children will have a loved one that doesn't come home from fighting for this country?

The picture here, Mr. Speaker, is the first one that I brought after we went into an unnecessary war known as Iraq. His daddy, Phillip Jordan, was a gunnery sergeant who was killed in 2003. The little boy's name is Tyler Jordan. This is actually 12 years ago, and now he is 18 years of age. How many more children will have to go without a father or a mother or a brother or sister who lost their life in war?

We need to meet our constitutional responsibility. It is embarrassing that we in Congress—I don't even think we have a right to criticize the President, quite frankly. Let's do our job based on the Constitution. Let's do our job and debate a new AUMF or a declaration of war. Let's meet our responsibility for the good of our men and women in uniform and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our Nation, bless our men and women in uniform, and, please, God, continue to bless America.

TAX EXTENDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, within the next few days, the House could take up a tax package that extends a number of tax breaks permanently. The cost of such a package runs in the $600 billion to $800 billion range—none of which is paid for—ballooning our deficits in a way that reinforces a misguided double standard that investments in the growth of jobs and opportunities must be offset, but tax cuts are always free.

Tax cuts, like everything else, have a cost. If we fail to pay for them, we will

once again increase deficits and debt, which in turn will be used as the catalyst for another round of cuts to the very programs I believe are vital to our economy and to our people. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will oppose an unpaid-for tax extenders package like this that is proposed, should it come to the floor.

Before going through my concerns about this deal in greater detail, let me say that the package being discussed has a number of tax preferences that I and many others support. These include making permanent expansions of the earned income tax credit, the child tax credit, and the American opportunity tax credit launched under the Recovery Act in 2009. It would also provide incentives to businesses and individual filers for investment, research, charitable contributions, and teaching expenses, among others. Most of us support those efforts.

In many ways, this would be a bill where everyone gets something they want. But, Mr. Speaker, our children and grandchildren will get the bill.

What concerns me most about this deal is that it further entrenches the false notion that offsets only matter when it comes to spending priorities. The direct consequences will be providing Republicans with the ammunition they need to propose even deeper cuts to the very investments that help grow the economy and create jobs both in the short term and in the long term.

Frankly, I am surprised that we haven't heard more of an outcry that the roughly $800 billion in lost revenue from this package is nearly the same amount as the $813 billion in discretionary cuts Republicans insisted upon in the sequester. It would appear that we are setting ourselves up for Republicans demanding the next round of severe cuts that harm our economy and our people, both on the nondefense side and on the national security side. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, we must move away from this dangerous pattern.

Republicans have continued to argue that tax cuts pay for themselves by spurring economic growth, a theory that has been proven wrong, and, sadly, as I said, our children will pay the price for the deficits that have resulted. Others will argue that the effect on our deficits and debt of another $700 billion in unpaid-for tax expenditures over the next 10 years can be ignored because we would extend them every year anyway. While convenient, neither of these is a responsible position for governing.

In a Wall Street Journal piece last Monday, Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget—the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget—asked: ''How do we explain to our children that we borrowed more than $1 trillion—counting interest—not because it was a national emergency or to make critical investments in the future but because we just don't like paying our bills?''

Our answer has to be not to justify the irresponsible behavior, but to correct it. And this tax extenders package will make that much more difficult. First, this package undermines Congress' ability to invest in creating jobs and opportunities that make the American Dream possible for millions of families.

When we cut taxes without paying for them, there are consequences. Every dollar in lost revenue is a dollar that must be made up somewhere else in the budget. As I said earlier, these unpaid-for tax extenders will set the table for further Republican attempts to slash critical investments in our Nation's future.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, it will hinder our ability to restore fiscal stability by making it less likely that we will be able to protect the future sustainability of entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security.

In order to appear balanced, recent Republican budgets proposed trillions of dollars in cuts to health programs for seniors and the most vulnerable in our society. Worsening our deficit outlook by passing this bill invites them to continue that tack.

While we face a challenge to our most critical retirement and health programs—a challenge driven by the retirement of the baby boom generation and the looming effect of compound interest on our debt—my Republican friends continue to offer budget proposals that severely cut benefits for seniors and the most vulnerable Americans and they try to justify doing so because our deficits are too high. Their proposal would exacerbate that by about $1 trillion, as Maya MacGuineas said. Here we are, though, about to consider proposals to raise the deficits even higher.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, this type of unpaid-for, permanent extension will undercut our economic competitiveness by making comprehensive tax reform more difficult to achieve, not easier. We need comprehensive tax reform, and this will make it more difficult. Locking in preferences while lowering the revenue baseline by more than half a trillion dollars will ensure a plunge into further debt.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to believe that the business community would much prefer to see rates go down through comprehensive reform than simply an extension of individual preferences. This bill promises them both—more preferences and lower rates—at the cost of deficits, debt, and diminished investment in our economic competitiveness.

There are certainly components of this tax extenders package that I, as I said before, would like to make permanent. I wish we could make them even better, in fact. For instance, the child tax credit should be structured to keep up with inflation so those working the hardest to get by don't continue to see their resources dwindle year after year.

Again, let me quote Maya MacGuineas when she highlighted this important point in her op-ed when she said: ''Most of the extensions under consideration are sensible enough policy—and their merit is an argument for paying for them.''

I couldn't agree more. This tax extenders package, itself, serves as a powerful argument for Democrats and Republicans to come together to achieve that which we really need: comprehensive tax reform.

So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, while I agree we need short-term certainty for tax filers before the end of the year, I believe the price this package would have us pay is too steep and too irresponsible in the short term and in the longer term. Instead, we could provide that same immediate certainty with a simple 2-year extension. That is what we ought to do.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to think carefully about the long-term impact and consequences of this tax extenders package on the ability to create jobs and opportunities, grow our economy, invest in strengthening our security, reduce our Nation's debt, and balance our budget.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Congress and our people expect us to do better. We have a responsibility to our country and to our children to do better. Let's do it.

□ 1215

ANDERSON TRUCKING: A MINNESOTA SUCCESS STORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Anderson Trucking Service for their impressive 60 years of business.

The founder of Anderson Trucking, Harold Anderson, grew up in the transportation industry and began hauling granite with his father. In those early years, Harold developed a strong interest in machinery and driving. So it was no surprise when he chose to pursue a career in trucking.

Harold officially started Anderson Trucking Service after he returned home from World War II. The company is now run by Harold's sons, Rollie and Jim, as well as his grandsons, Brent and Scott.

Over the years, Anderson Trucking has grown and prospered, but the Anderson family has never forgotten their roots. The company and the Anderson family represent the best St. Cloud and central Minnesota have to offer. The customer service of Anderson Trucking is only matched by the community service provided by the Andersons and their great employees.

Today Anderson Trucking has thousands of rigs, hundreds of drivers, and has driven millions of miles. The Andersons, however, do not just measure success by the number of miles driven or the number of deliveries made, but also by the high level of the customer service that the company provides.

For the past 6 decades, this international transportation company has successfully and safely delivered freight to their valued customers.

We look forward to seeing the continued success of Anderson Trucking for this generation and generations to come.

Congratulations on your first 60 years.

PREFERRED CREDIT, INC., EMBODIES MINNESOTA NICE

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Preferred Credit, Inc., of St. Cloud, Minnesota, for winning a Torch Award for Ethics from the Minnesota Better Business Bureau.

Preferred Credit was established in St. Cloud in 1982 and quickly realized their goal of becoming one of the preferred finance companies for the direct sales industry throughout the United States. This outstanding Minnesota company accomplished this goal by giving their clients the best possible customer service and building strong, personal relationships.

The way Preferred Credit achieves success is evidence of how deserving they are of this award. The Torch Awards are meant to recognize companies that go above and beyond for their customers, employees, vendors, and community.

I would like to congratulate Preferred Credit, Incorporated, for receiving this prestigious award and for representing what Minnesota is all about.

Thank you for everything you have contributed to the St. Cloud community and to the great State of Minnesota. We would not be where we are today without great businesses like yours.

THE BACKBONE OF MINNESOTA SMALL BUSINESS AND AMERICA

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss overregulation.

Chair of the Federal Reserve, Janet Yellen, recently said that small community banks really are suffering from regulatory overload. I absolutely agree.

Community banks and credit unions are struggling with excessive and overly burdensome regulation.

Today 17 of my colleagues on the House Financial Services Committee and I sent a letter to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, better known as the CFPB, regarding the most recent addition to the pile of regulations harming consumers and community financial institutions, the newly revised Regulation C.

Regulation C requires most banks and credit unions to collect new personal data on loan applications beginning January 1, 2018. This regulation essentially doubles the current requirements triggered by Dodd-Frank.

The CFPB, without adequate justification of need, now wants personal information, including business or commercial information, property values, property addresses, credit scores, and interest rates. This appears to be a government agency fishing expedition that should raise serious concerns relating to our personal privacy and liberties.

This significantly higher regulatory hurdle means community financial institutions will have to allocate more of their limited resources to deal with Washington's red tape, rather than providing loans to families and businesses in Minnesota.

It is my hope that the CFPB will exempt small community financial institutions from this new burden, or we will have to work to draft legislation that will help our small community banks in Minnesota because, as I often say, Mr. Speaker, what is good for Minnesota is good for America.

JUSTICE FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and I stand in the well of the House as a proud American.

I love my country, Mr. Speaker. Because I love my country, I have tried not to forget those who go to distant places, those who go into harm's way. They do it because they love the country. Many of them do not come back the same way they left, Mr. Speaker. They are the men and women who serve in our military. I never want to forget the sacrifices that they make.

Today I want to salute and honor them for the many causes that they have taken up and for the many times that they have left their homes and their loved ones to stand up for liberty and justice for all, to make real the great American ideals, and to provide us the safety and security that we have today.

But I also stand here today in the well of the House, Mr. Speaker, to announce my solidarity for justice, my solidarity with the Muslim community for justice, because I understand what it is like to be a part of a community that is treated unjustly.

I lived through segregation in the United States of America. I know what it is like to go to the back door. I know what it is like to drink from filthy ''colored'' water fountains. I know what injustice looks like. I have seen its face. I know what it smells like.

I have been in waiting rooms where only Blacks could sit. They were for Blacks only because there were other places for others. I don't want to see anything like that, similar to that—anything that is remotely similar—occur to someone else.

I am standing here today in solidarity with the Muslim community because of the injustice that is being perpetrated against Islam.

I am a Christian. My grandfather was a Christian minister. But I stand here to support Islam today, one of the great religions of the world. I do this, Mr. Speaker, because to demean Islam by adding the word terrorist with it is an injustice to the religion.

Islam is a peaceful religion. No religion condones the taking of innocent lives intentionally. Let me repeat this. No religion condones taking the lives of innocent persons intentionally.

This is why I am here, because I want to make it clear that Islam does not condone this. We should not be talking about Islamic terrorists. Why not call them what they are: people who commit dastardly deeds. If you do it in the name of a religion, that doesn't make what you do a part of the religion. People ought not be found guilty by their affiliation with a religion.

What these people are doing—ISIL, al Qaeda, Daesh, ISIS, any name—is evil, and we ought to call it such. It is not Islam. We ought not, as a result, decide that we are going to bar all members of the Islamic faith from this country. That would be wrong, Mr. Speaker. To even consider it is something that I find repugnant: barring all people because of their faith.

The Islamic faith is not—is not—the motivating factor behind all of this injustice that we see perpetrated by ISIL. They can claim what they want, but the members of the faith have spoken up.

In Houston, Texas, we met just recently and discussed this at length. Every Muslim in that room denounced what was being perpetrated and perpetuated by ISIL, by ISIS, by any name—evil. We ought not do this to a great religion.

I stand for justice, and I stand for justice for the Islamic faith. I believe that persons who are in harm's way in Syria and in other countries ought to be given an opportunity to escape harm.

I believe that the Good Samaritan was right. The Good Samaritan didn't ask: What will happen to me if I help this person who is in harm's way? The Good Samaritan posed the question: What will happen to him if I don't help him?

That is the question we have to ask ourselves as it relates to our brothers and sisters. They are our brothers and sisters because there is but one race. That is the human race.

One God created all of humanity to live in harmony, to quote Dr. King. But the question we have to ask is: What will happen to them if we don't extend the hand of friendship?

The Good Samaritan went so far as to take the person to a place where there was shelter, where the person could receive some attention, and said to the innkeeper, if you will: Extend me a line of credit. If this person needs more than what I can give you today, I will come back and I will take care of my line of credit.

We owe it to ourselves, as a great leader of the world, the world leader, to make sure that we extend justice to Islam.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a list of the persons who were in attendance at the meeting.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2015.

Topic: Meeting with Community Leaders to Discuss Various Issues of Importance that Impact America, our Community, and Future Generations.

Hosted by: Congressman Al Green.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Tahir Javid, President, Pakistan Association of Golden Triangle
2. M.J. Khan, President, Islamic Society of Greater Houston
3. Mehmet Okumus, President, Turkish Community
4. Muhammad Sheikh, President, Houston-Karachi Sister City Association
5. Mian Nazir, President, Pakistan Association of Greater Houston
6. Mustafa Carrol, Executive Directory, CAIR USA
7. Shahnela Nasim, President, South Asian Chamber of Commerce
8. Shah Haleem, Chairman, Bangladesh Association of Greater Houston
9. Khalid Khan, Vice-Chair, Bangladesh Association of Greater Houston
10. Murad Ajani, President, His Highness The Agha Khan Council
11. Jamal Entlique, Vice President, Houston-Abhu Dabhi Sister City Association
12. Matloob Khan, President, Shah Latif Cultural Institute
13. Syed Akhtar, President, Pakistan Chamber of Commerce-USA
14. Ilyas Choudry, Islamic Circle of North America
15. Shabbir Hussain, ICNA Houston Chapter
16. Representation from Arab American Community Cultural Center
17. Abuzer Tyabjee, Dawoodi Bora Community
18. Latafat Hussain, Indian Muslim Association of Greater Houston
19. Syed Shahid Sunni, President, Muslim Consul USA
20. Akhtar-Abdullah, Al-Noor Society of Greater Houston
21. Mohammad Junggua Community Member
22. John Shike WAA TV
23. Saeed B. Gadi, (P.A.S.T.) and Pakistan Post.
24. Mahmud Dahri, Shah Latif Cultural Institute
25. Abdul Sattar Quereshi, PAGH.

MEDIA

1. Shamim Syed, Pakistan News
2. Tariq Khan, Pakistan Chronicle
3. Kamran Jilani, Pakistan Journal and Pakistan Chronicle
4. Mahmood Ahmed, Urdu Times
5. Tariq Hameed, Geo News
6. Zahid Akhtar Khanzada, Geo News and Jang Group.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALKER) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Bless the Members of the people's House as they work toward the difficult and complicated task of funding our government in a fair and equitable manner. May they negotiate with one another in good faith and trust in a shared love for our Nation.

Bless our Nation and its citizens as we approach the end of 2015. Help us to look to the future with hope, and committed to a renewed effort to work together for a united America.

Help us all to be truly grateful for the blessings of this past year.

And, as always, we pray that all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

THANK YOU, GOVERNOR HALEY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Governor Nikki Haley of South Carolina for her decision to enforce the law and fine the Department of Energy for failing to process weapons-grade plutonium, which the Department was statutorily mandated by 50 U.S. Code, Section 2566.

While the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility is about 70 percent completed, it will not be able to meet the January 1, 2016, deadline establishing a $1 million a day fine up to $100 million annually. This was documented today in the Aiken Standard by SRS beat reporter Derrek Asberry.

While other options have been examined using flawed, biased studies, they are not real alternatives because the MOX process is the only viable, legal option under our nuclear nonproliferation agreement with the Russian Federation. Additionally, it converts weapons-grade plutonium into green fuel, promotes nuclear nonproliferation, and eliminates the need for a repository.

The Department of Energy should commit to complete the MOX project in its entirety, as it promised the people of South Carolina, especially when considering the economic and environmental impact of storing the material.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President by his actions never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 15, 2015.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 15, 2015 at 9:29 a.m.:

That the Senate passed H.R. 2270.

That the Senate passed S. 2044.

Appointment:

United States-China Economic Security Review Commission.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COUNCIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 2302, and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Members on the part of the House to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council:

Mr. ISRAEL, New York

Mr. DEUTCH, Florida

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

COMBAT TERRORIST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACT OF 2015

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3654) to require a report on United States strategy to combat terrorist use of social media, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3654

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 ''Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REPORT ON STRATEGY TO COMBAT TERRORIST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on United States strategy to combat terrorists' and terrorist organizations' use of social media.

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

(1) An evaluation of what role social media plays in radicalization in the United States and elsewhere.

(2) An analysis of how terrorists and terrorist organizations are using social media, including trends.

(3) A summary of the Federal Government's efforts to disrupt and counter the use of social media by terrorists and terrorist organizations, an evaluation of the success of such efforts, and recommendations for improvement.

(4) An analysis of how social media is being used for counter-radicalization and counter-propaganda purposes, irrespective of whether or not such efforts are made by the Federal Government.

(5) An assessment of the value of social media posts by terrorists and terrorist organizations to law enforcement.

(6) An overview of social media training available to law enforcement and intelligence personnel that enables such personnel to understand and combat the use of social media by terrorists and terrorist organizations, as well as recommendations for improving or expanding existing training opportunities.

(c) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) should be submitted in unclassified form, and may include a classified annex in accordance with the protection of intelligence sources and methods.

SEC. 3. POLICY AND COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO COUNTER TERRORISTS' AND TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorists' and terrorist organizations' use of social media, as committed to in the President's 2011 ''Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States''.

(b) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) should be submitted in unclassified form, and may include a classified annex in accordance with the protection of intelligence sources and methods.

SEC. 4. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.

In this Act, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material for the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this legislation, H.R. 3654. It is entitled the Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015.

I want to recognize the leadership of Judge TED POE, a Member of this body, on this critical issue.

The threats posed by Islamist terrorists have evolved, but the administration's policies have not evolved. If we are going to prevent additional attacks, then the President must lay out a broad, overarching strategy needed to win. That strategy must include a plan to counter terrorists' use of social media.

Terrorists are skillfully exploiting social media to recruit supporters, to radicalize, to raise money, to spread fear. Two weeks ago in San Bernardino, California, 14 innocent people were killed, and 21 people were injured by radical Islamist terrorists. We know these extremists—husband and wife—used social media, with one of them making a pledge on Facebook in support of ISIS. This pledge was identified by Facebook and was taken down immediately.

Yesterday, it was revealed that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security actually prohibited immigration officials from reviewing the social media postings of all foreign citizens who were applying for U.S. visas and that they only intermittently began looking at posts from some visa applicants. So imagine a situation in which you have people who are going to Syria, who are posting on social media, and you have a blanket prohibition on reviewing those social media postings. That was the state of the situation as we were trying to defend the homeland.

Frankly, the failure of this administration to incorporate a review of social media posts into the visa approval process is absurd. Ignoring the online statements of terrorists who are trying to enter the United States puts our country at risk. This must fixed.

This bill, frankly, is timely; it is important; and it forces the administration to put forward a strategy to combat terrorists' use of this social media. In 2011, the President promised to create that strategy, but he never delivered anything. We are, simply, not going to defeat ISIS or other terrorist groups without combating their social media recruiting.

Following a bipartisan letter from Representatives POE of Texas, ENGEL, SHERMAN, and myself last March, Twitter strengthened its policies to assert that statements threatening or promoting terrorism were against Twitter's terms of service. Most of the other social media companies have similar user guidelines that prohibit threats of violence and the use of their platforms by terrorists.

We need a strategy that clearly articulates our country's goals, the responsibilities of each Federal agency, what role each one will play, a vision of how our government is going to work with the private sector, and a vision of how we are going to pull civil society into this effort. Without a strategy, the administration's effort to combat terrorists' use of social media appears to be disconnected, and it appears to be ineffective.

Then, of course, after we have that strategy, we are going to need action. It is ironic that extremist groups have turned to Twitter, to Facebook, and to YouTube in order to encourage attacks on a free society when these companies would not have been created without there having been a free society, one which upholds free speech, free thought, and encourages entrepreneurship.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that the administration lays out how we will contend with these terrorists in their hijacking of the social network for their twisted purposes. We truly have, basically, a caliphate today on the Internet—a virtual caliphate, if you will, on the Internet. This bill by Judge TED POE is intended to force a strategy to solve this problem.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,

December 10, 2015.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman,
House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: On December 9, 2015, your committee ordered H.R. 3654, the ''Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015,'' reported.

As you know, H.R. 3654 contains provisions within the jurisdiction of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. On the basis of your consultations with the Committee and in order to expedite the House's consideration of the bill, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence will not assert a jurisdictional claim over the bill by seeking a sequential referral. This courtesy is, however, conditioned on our mutual understanding and agreement that it will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Permanent Select Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill or any similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the committee report for the bill and in the Congressional Record during floor its consideration. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

DEVIN NUNES,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

Washington, DC, December 11, 2015.

Hon. DEVIN NUNES,
Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 3654, the Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015, and for agreeing to forgo seeking a sequential referral of that bill to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your Committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 3564 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your Committee as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,

Washington, DC, December 11, 2015.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman,
Committee on Foreign Affairs.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing with respect to H.R. 3654, the ''Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015,'' which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary. As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 3654 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I agree to discharge our Committee from further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 3654 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 3654, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration of H.R. 3654.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

Washington, DC, December 11, 2015.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman,
House Committee on the Judiciary.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 3654, the Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that bill.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 3564 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your Committee as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this measure that would push back against the use of social media by terrorist groups.

Let me start by thanking Congressman POE of Texas for introducing this legislation. I am very glad to be an original cosponsor. I want to thank Congressman SHERMAN for his hard work, and I want to thank, of course, our chairman, Chairman ROYCE. This is a real bipartisan, important, strong measure.

I think we need to be using every tool at our disposal to meet the challenge posed by ISIS and other terrorist groups, and this bill will help us to meet them on the virtual battlefield, which is where they have been having such great success—on social media. Anyone who has looked at the situation over the past months or years knows that the one major difference is social media. Social media, of course, riles up jihadists and also enables them to surreptitiously communicate in terms of plotting terrorist attacks. We have to be one step ahead of them, and we cannot let them be one step ahead of us.

That is why legislation like this is so important. I cannot think of a conflict in the past in which our enemies have been able to broadcast such horrific depictions of destruction and bloodshed, like we are seeing from ISIS. We all know the images of Mohammed Emwazi, who was known as Jihadi John, as he brutally murdered innocent people. Those videos spread across the Internet with staggering speed, showing everyone in the world the threat that ISIS posed and the tactics ISIS fighters were willing to use. Fortunately, the administration's efforts succeeded in taking him out, but we know there are far too many who are waiting to take his place.

ISIS isn't just using social media to foment fear and panic. ISIS and other groups have taken full advantage of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other platforms to spread their violent ideology, to recruit new fighters, and to radicalize members of vulnerable and marginalized populations. For example, as more and more information comes out about the San Bernardino shooters, it is becoming clear that Tashfeen Malik used Facebook to convey her commitment to violent extremism to overseas contacts.

We need to find a way to deal with this challenge on social media without violating free expression or privacy concerns. It is going to require creative thinking, but I am confident that we can do it. We have to do it. We don't have a choice but to do it. We have already taken some steps. I worked with Chairman ROYCE and with Representatives POE of Texas and SHERMAN to push Twitter to make it easier for users to report recruitment efforts. This is a small step to help with one of the tools that ISIS is using, but they are constantly evolving, and we need to keep looking for ways to push back.

That is where this legislation comes in. This bill would require the administration to devise a strategy to combat terrorists' use of social media and to foster greater collaboration between government and private sector companies to help identify and stop terrorist activities online. Again, we need to look for every advantage possible in taking the fight to ISIS. This bill would help us push back on one of the ways ISIS has achieved such a global reach.

Again, I commend Mr. POE of Texas for his tireless efforts in bringing in legislation to the floor. I commend the chairman as well and Mr. SHERMAN. I support this measure, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), the author of this bill and the chairman of the Foreign Affairs

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative SHERMAN, on the other side, for cosponsoring this legislation; and I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Chairman ENGEL for being original cosponsors of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is another piece of legislation that has come out of the Foreign Affairs Committee—bipartisan, unanimously voted on, and approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee, as much of our legislation is.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank three staffers who have worked on the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade—Luke Murry, Oren Adaki, and Jeff Dressler, who now works with the majority leader's staff. These three individuals know more about terrorism, I think, than any three people on the Hill, and I want to thank them for their work not only on this bill but on legislation in general.

As has been said, Mr. Speaker, terrorists' use of social media has exploded over the last several years. A recent study by The Brookings Institute found that ISIS now uses 40,000 Twitter accounts. Terrorists use social media to do the following: to recruit others, to raise money, to spread propaganda, and to even train future fighters.

This legislation deals with foreign terrorist organizations. We are not talking about a person who claims to be a terrorist or who we think is a terrorist. It is specifically dealing with foreign terrorist organizations that are designated by our government.

The recipes for the bombs used at the Boston Marathon were in al Qaeda's magazine, which was posted on social media before the attack. The al Qaeda affiliate al Shabaab live tweeted the attack on a Kenyan mall that killed 72 people. The al Qaeda branch in Yemen, known as AQAP, which is another terrorist organization, held a press conference on Twitter, allowing users to submit questions that were then answered by AQAP and were posted back on Twitter the following week—a conference call by terrorists. In October, ISIS issued a new instruction manual on how terrorists can use social media. Today, wannabe terrorists don't have to go to the battlefield—to Syria—to get trained. They can get trained online—like receiving college credits—on how to be a terrorist and on how to be a fighter.

Nationwide, the FBI is currently investigating 900 potential lone wolf terrorists in the United States. The Internet and social media serve as their playbook to carry out attacks. Since March of 2014, 71 people in the United States have been charged with crimes related to ISIS.

□ 1615

Their backgrounds are very different, but nearly all of them had spent time online voicing their support for ISIS. Later, they were arrested after their online posts drew some attention by the FBI.

In 2011, as the chairman has said, the administration released a report on countering violent extremists that recognized that online radicalization was a growing problem. The administration promised a strategy of how we can deal with this. Four years later, unfortunately, we don't have a strategy, and we don't have a plan. This is a problem because individual agencies are making their own unilateral decisions.

This week, we learned that the Department of Homeland Security did not review the social media posts of Tashfeen Malik, who was granted a fiancee visa, but posted her radical views on social media prior to obtaining the visa.

The State Department does not know how to effectively counter terrorist messaging because it does not have the expertise of the intelligence community. The intelligence community approaches social media as a ''capture everything'' because it has not been made clear what it can do and what it cannot do. The FBI does not know how far it should push social media companies to prohibit them from allowing terrorist organizations' content on their sites.

So we must have a comprehensive strategy before we can effectively defeat the enemy on the cyber battlefield. Mr. Speaker, all U.S. departments really must be singing the same song on the same page in the hymnal about how to defeat foreign terrorist organizations that use social media—American social media companies.

I will say this: Facebook has done a fairly decent job of bringing down terrorist sites, and Facebook has seen a drop in the number of terrorists that try to use their site, but not all social media companies have been as responsive to terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, we already have technology that is used to make sure that child pornography is not posted online. Thanks to Hany Farid, the chairman of the computer science department at Dartmouth College, who invented a technology that is used with Microsoft. He said that we can use that same protocol that we do to bring down child pornography to bring down social media sites that deal with foreign terrorist organizations' propaganda and their spreading of murder. Here is what he said:

''There's no fundamental technology or engineering limitation. This is a business or policy decision. Unless the companies have decided that they just can't be bothered.''

So that is his opinion on how we can use this same protocol. This can be done. We can use the same protocol, and we can bring down those foreign terrorist organization sites.

This is not a free speech issue—that has been discussed, and some are concerned about that—because we are dealing specifically with foreign terrorist organizations. The Supreme Court has already ruled regarding that issue in 2010 in Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project that a foreign terrorist organization does not have constitutional rights in the United States under the First Amendment. So this is not a problem.

In this 21st century fight against terrorists who are sophisticated and tech savvy, we have to defeat these organizations on all the battlefields: overseas, over here, and online.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chair of the Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member, who lead this committee in such an able, expert manner and in a bipartisan way. I thank especially the author of this important resolution, one of our subcommittee chairmen, TED POE.

I rise in strong support of Judge POE's bill, the Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act. I urge all of my colleagues to support this important measure.

Extremist groups like ISIS are well-known for their extensive use of social media, spreading their hateful ideology, inciting violence, and attempting to recruit susceptible individuals to their hateful and twisted cause.

When we hear reports and statistics that we have heard today—like ISIS having over 40,000 Twitter accounts or that there are an estimated 200,000 pro-ISIS social media posts per day—clearly, more needs to be done. These jihadists have become more and more tech savvy and are more adept at manipulating the tools of social media. Yet we in the United States lack any comprehensive strategy to counter their perverted ideology via social media.

As Judge POE has very ably argued, the administration could be stopping pro-extremists' social media in much the same way that we now stop online child pornography. ISIS and other foreign terrorist organizations do not have free speech rights under American law.

Now, we were all shocked, as you heard today, that our very own Department of Homeland Security maintained a policy that prevented the screening of visa applicants' social media accounts because we worried about bad public relations; we worried about intrusions into their privacy, even though social media posts, by their very definition, are exactly that, reaching out to the public through social manners, meaning through public ways.

Every pro-ISIS post or any post by any other foreign terrorist organization that uses Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter, every one that we are able to take down before action is being taken is one less chance for these extremists

to recruit and spread their vicious propaganda, and the administration needs to start getting serious about stopping it.

This bill will require the administration to provide Congress—and, therefore, the American public—with a strategy to fight Islamic extremists' use of social media, as well as require that the administration give us a policy that enhances the collaboration between the Federal Government and social media companies so that we can counter this troubling and dangerous threat.

I applaud Judge POE for introducing this bill. I thank our esteemed chairman and ranking member for bringing it to the floor in such a speedy manner.

I offer my full support, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, every day ISIS is working to bring new fighters into its ranks, recruiting candidates from South Asia, from France, the U.K., and right here in the United States. ISIS is able to cast such a wide net because they are taking full advantage of social media. We need to take this tool out of their hands, even as we press forward with our partners to fight ISIS on the battlefield.

This legislation will enable us to work more closely with social media companies and put together a strategy to meet this challenge.

Again, I want to commend my friend, Judge POE.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), you are right: ''That is just the way it is.''

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, again, it was revealed yesterday that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security actually prohibited immigration officials from reviewing the social media postings of all foreign citizens applying for U.S. visas and only sporadically began looking at posts from some visa applicants.

The failure to incorporate a review of social media posts into the visa approval process is absurd. Ignoring the online statements of those terrorists trying to enter the United States puts our country at risk. This must be fixed.

Destroying ISIS will require determined leadership. It is going to require Presidential leadership. And the President must use his authority as Commander in Chief to lead this fight to destroy ISIS—not to contain it—to destroy ISIS and other extremist groups.

So it has been said that a virtual caliphate awash in hate and propaganda exists online. Yet U.S. Government efforts in this area are failing. A strategy to combat terrorist use of social media is one of many measures the administration must develop so we can win the fight. Promised in 2011, this strategy is overdue.

With this bill, Congress is demanding that the administration deliver its strategy so that the Federal agencies can effectively prevent terrorists from using social media to spread hate, fear, and violence.

I again want to recognize my colleagues Representative POE of Texas and Representative ENGEL of New York for their leadership on this measure, which I encourage all the Members of this House to support.

I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Congressman TED POE from Texas for his work on H.R. 3654, Combatting Terrorists' Use of Social Media Act of 2015.

The proliferation of terrorism is an existential threat to our homeland greater than ever before because of the viral spread of extremism on the world-wide web.

The challenge before us is balancing civil liberties such as freedom of speech with our national security interests.

Various social media platforms are being utilized by Daesh leaders and their affiliates across the globe to reach, engage and radicalize—instantly and for free.

One only needs to view the gruesome propaganda videos put online by Daesh with evocative music, clearly edited to inspire violence with imagery that conjures an ''us vs. them'' emotion.

The world-wide web was intended as a platform to share productive and creative knowledge and ideas.

The sensory impact of the violent propaganda video is so powerful that a powerful counter-narrative is imperative.

Through its online campaign, Daesh instantly gains access to vulnerable and impressionable minds, whether teenagers going through teenage angst or unemployed educated women and men who have limited economic prospects and feel disenfranchised from society.

So what we have is a mélange of Daesh recruits, copycats and wannabes all inspired vis a vis the worldwide web, ready to carry on and die for an ideology they don't fully grasp its gravity on them and their future.

The evidence of this is tens of thousands of foreign fighters from all over the world who have left their homes and joined Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

But then we also have those who do not even leave the comforts of their homes in carrying out their crimes.

Part of what our government and governments across the globe must do is to fight back by cutting off terrorist bank accounts, Twitter, Facebook, Google and other social media accounts.

Whereas money is the currency for compensating Daesh's recruits, social media is being utilized as a currency and tool for engaging and brainwashing these recruits.

I commend our powerful military's might and professionalism of neutralizing Abu Salah who has been described as one of the most senior and experienced members of Daesh's financial network and in fact has been referred to as the organization's finance minister.

I hope that our friends in Silicon Valley and the tech industry will join us in our fight against Daesh with their genius as we continue our collective efforts of addressing the role that social media will play in defeating enemies of the peace on the traditional battlefield as well as on the contemporary battlefield of the web.

The past few months have been marked by senseless threats or actual violence and tragedy across the globe from the most recent details of the threat triggering the Los Angeles Public School District shut down, to the San Bernardino shootings, to Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, shootings in Bamako, Mali, at the Bartaclan Theatre and other social venues in Paris, to attacks in Beirut, Lebanon and the downing of a plane claiming innocent lives of Egyptians and Russians.

Violent extremism cannot be the ''new-normal'' in our nation and in our world.

To combat the scourge of violent extremism, and make sure this is not our ''new normal'' it is important that we adapt to the capabilities of adversaries of peace through a multipronged approach, which is why I support H.R. 3654.

Specifically, this bill requires the President to transmit to Congress a report on U.S. strategy to combat terrorists' and terrorist organizations' use of social media.

This bill is in tandem with the President's comprehensive strategy to counter terrorists' and terrorist organizations' use of social media, encapsulated in the President's 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States.

Among other things, the President's robust plan seeks to protect our communities from violent extremist recruitment and radicalization.

This is a top national security priority for the Administration and those of us here in Congress.

The President's strategic plan and H.R. 3654 facilitate the creation of a report which will enable our country in our efforts at combatting violent extremism through: evaluation of the role social media plays in radicalization in the United States and across the globe; analysis of how terrorists and terrorist organizations are using social media; recommendations to improve the federal government's efforts to disrupt and counter the use of social media by terrorists and terrorist organizations; a classified assessment of the intelligence value of terrorists' social media posts; and a classified overview of training available to law enforcement and intelligence personnel to combat terrorists' use of social media and recommendations for improving or expanding existing training opportunities.

Part of what the Bill seeks to achieve is information on our nation's policy that enhances the exchange of information and dialogue between the federal government and social media companies as it relates to the use of social media platforms by terrorists.

Finally, among other things, the Bill also calls for our updated comprehensive strategy to counter terrorists' and terrorist organizations' use of social media, as committed to in the President's 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States.

As a nation, we must work together, private and public sector to prevent all types of extremism regardless of who inspires it.

At the same time, countering ISIS, better to be referred to as Daesh, Boko Haram, al-Qa'ida and other extremists' violent ideologues requires our coordinated social media, intelligence sharing, law enforcement and community engagement strategy that will enable us to thwart violent extremism, saving many American lives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3654, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SUPPORTING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 536) supporting freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 536

Whereas despite the strong tradition of independent and critical media in many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, journalists in some countries are becoming increasingly vulnerable to violence and government harassment;

Whereas, on July 29, 2015, the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee convened a hearing titled ''Threats to Press Freedom in the Americas'' and Carlos Lauria, Senior Americas Program Coordinator at the Committee to Protect Journalists stated that ''Scores of journalists have been killed and disappeared. Media outlets have been bombed and forced into censorship. . . . Censorship due to violence in Latin America has reached one of its highest points since most of the region was dominated by military rule more than three decades ago.'';

Whereas in 2014, Cuban authorities detained 1,817 members of civil society, 31 of whom were independent journalists;

Whereas in Cuba, independent journalists face sustained harassment, including detention and physical abuse from the Castro regime;

Whereas in Ecuador, in September 2015, the government took steps to close the sole press freedom monitoring organization, Fundamedios, for exceeding its corporate charter, but the government relented in the face of international criticism and potential economic reprisals;

Whereas in the country, forced corrections by the government have become a means of institutional censorship;

Whereas according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for the press;

Whereas in Mexico, over 50 journalists have been killed or have disappeared since 2007, at least 11 reporters have been killed since 2011, 4 of them in direct reprisal for their work;

Whereas according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 4 journalists have been killed in Brazil in 2015, many times after being tortured and having their bodies mutilated;

Whereas Evany José Metzker, a political blogger in the state of Minas Gerais who had been investigating a child prostitution ring, was found decapitated outside the town of Padre Paraíso;

Whereas according to the Organization of American States (OAS) 2014 Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human rights, journalists covering protests in Venezuela were subject to assaults, obstruction, detention, raids, threats, censorship orders, and confiscation or destruction of equipment;

Whereas, on April 21, 2015, a lawsuit within the 29th District Tribunal of the Metropolitan area of Caracas charged the journal El Nacional and its Chief Editor Miguel Henrique Otero for ''reproducing false information'' and was forced to flee Venezuela;

Whereas the Honduran national human rights commissioner reported that 8 journalists and social communicators were killed as of September, compared with 3 in 2013, and dozens of cases in which journalists reported being victims of threats and persecution;

Whereas according to the OAS 2014 Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Members of the media and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) stated the press ''self-censored'' due to fear of reprisal from organized crime or corrupt government officials;

Whereas in Colombia, there were 98 incidents of violence and harassment against journalists, 30 were physically attacked, and 45 were victims of harassment or intimidation due to their reporting;

Whereas members of illegal armed groups sought to inhibit freedom of expression by intimidating, threatening, kidnapping, and killing journalists;

Whereas national and international NGOs reported that local media representatives regularly practiced self-censorship because of threats of violence from these groups;

Whereas according to the OAS 2014 Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human rights, throughout 2014, Guatemala presented accounts of cases of harassment and the filing of several criminal complaints against a newspaper that criticized the Administration;

Whereas according to the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 in Nicaragua, the government continued to use direct and indirect means to pressure and seek to close independent radio stations, allegedly for political reasons;

Whereas according to the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 in Argentina, a survey released of 830 journalists throughout the country indicated 53 percent of respondents worked for a media outlet that self-censored content; and

Whereas almost half the journalists surveyed said they self-censored in their reporting on the national government: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports a free press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemns violations of press freedom and violence against journalists;

(2) urges countries in the region to implement recommendations from the Organization of American States' Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression to its Member States;

(3) urges countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to be vocal in condemning violations of press freedom, violence against journalists, and the culture of impunity that leads to self-censorship;

(4) urges countries in the Western Hemisphere to uphold the principles outlined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter and urges their neighbors in the region to stand by the charter they are a party to; and

(5) urges the United States Agency for International Development and the Department of State to assist, when appropriate, the media in closed societies to promote an open and free press.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring forward this resolution, introduced by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES), on the important issue of press freedom in the Western Hemisphere.

Freedom of the press is the cornerstone of democracy. It is our obligation to promote and protect this fundamental right, particularly here in our own hemisphere.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a troubling erosion of these rights in several parts of the Western Hemisphere at the hands of authoritarian, populist leaders, as well as violence against journalists by transnational narcotics trafficking organizations.

In Ecuador, President Correa silences discourse and dissent by intimidating and censoring the media. Hefty fines are issued for any reporting unfavorable to him or his policies.

In Mexico, narcotics traffickers intimidate the press and violently target journalists to silence those journalists.

In Cuba, despite the administration's naive rapprochement, a lack of free expression is underscored by the continued political imprisonment of anyone who dares to speak or write against the Castro dictatorship.

This resolution is an important demonstration of our support for the fundamental right to freedom of speech and our belief that regional leaders in the Organization of American States need to do more to condemn what, in some parts of the region, has become the systemic violation of press freedom. The United States must stand with brave journalists who are on the front lines of exposing corruption in government.

Earlier this year, Chairman DUNCAN's Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere held a hearing on threats to

press freedom in the Americas. One witness told the committee that there is now a growing regional trend of government persecution and harassment of journalists, as well as an increase in violent attacks carried out by state and nonstate actors with near complete immunity.

I applaud Mr. SIRES and the chairman emeritus of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for introducing this resolution and all who champion freedom of expression as a fundamental part of a vibrant, democratic tradition.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 536.

I want to congratulate my friend from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES), who is the driving force behind this resolution, and my friend from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who has cosponsored this resolution. The two of them have really worked very, very hard through the years to raise this issue, and it is good that we are taking up this measure now.

□ 1630

Here in the United States we know that a free and open press is the cornerstone of a strong democracy. We count on the press to hold leaders accountable and shine a light on the challenges facing our country. The work of a free press goes hand in hand with the representative government we practice in this Chamber.

As government officials, we have tremendous respect for our friends in the so-called fourth estate. So it is especially troubling when we see governments right here in our hemisphere try to silence this critical institution.

On May 1, World Press Freedom Day, President Obama said ''in too many places around the world, a free press is under attack by governments that want to avoid the truth or mistrust the ability of citizens to make their own decisions.''

Unfortunately, that threat to press freedom is particularly acute right here in our own hemisphere. That is why I am so glad, as I mentioned before, that my friends, Mr. SIRES, ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, the subcommittee's former chair, introduced this measure condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. SIRES and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN are leaders on the Western Hemisphere in our Congress and are never shy to speak up when individuals' rights are in danger. I used to be the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere; so, I have seen this problem firsthand.

Here in the Americas, leaders often speak out when electoral democracy is at risk. That is great. But, unfortunately, those leaders fall silent when it comes to the more subtle challenges to democracy, particularly violations of press freedom.

We saw it earlier this year when the Ecuadorian Government threatened to close down a press freedom monitoring organization known as Fundamedios. Chairman ROYCE and I joined many in the international community in condemning this effort. Fortunately, President Correa relented in the face of international condemnation.

Still, attacks on press freedom in Ecuador are a daily problem, creating a hostile environment for journalists trying to do their jobs. A 2013 communications law put in place fines and sanctions for the press. So it is no surprise that Freedom House rated Ecuador's press as not free this year. The list goes on and on.

In Venezuela, journalists have been targeted by politically motivated lawsuits. That is why it is such a miracle, what we saw this past week or so with the Venezuelan elections.

Despite the harassment, despite the lack of press freedom, despite going after people who would raise the truth, the Venezuelan people weren't fooled and voted overwhelmingly against the current oppressive regime.

That is good. It is good to see. But we need to make sure that free press really exists not only in places like Venezuela, but in Cuba, where the government has rounded up and detained independent journalists just for reporting the reality on the ground. Just for reporting the truth in Cuba, you get rounded up and detained.

In Mexico, drug trafficking organizations have brutally murdered many of those who report on their violent activities. Just last week, the editor of a Mexican newspaper called El Manana explained to The Washington Post that submitting to drug traffickers' demands is the only way to stay alive. He said: ''You do it or you die, and nobody wants to die. Self-censorship—that's our shield.'' And in Colombia and Honduras, journalism remains a dangerous profession.

This resolution underscores these abuses and the scourge of violence against journalists. It reaffirms the important role a free press plays in open societies, and it urges these governments in the region to do much more to provide protection to those journalists under threat.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution. I again compliment Mr. SIRES and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the primary cosponsor of this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of our committee, again, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), and the ranking member, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), for bringing this important resolution to the floor in such a speedy manner.

I want to thank my dear friend, my legislative brother, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES), for bringing forward House Resolution 536, which is a resolution to support freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedoms and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals who are exercising their right to freedom of speech. I am honored to be the Republican lead on Mr. SIRES' resolution.

Basic freedoms are being threatened all over Latin America, Mr. Speaker, by rogue regimes that seek to quash dissenters in any way that they can.

Earlier this year we held a subcommittee hearing, as the chairman pointed out, on this very subject of the threat to press freedom. Carlos Ponce of Freedom House stated that, when it comes to press freedom, only three countries in Latin America were rated free by this organization.

Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? Out of all of the countries in Latin America, only three could be labeled as free when it comes to freedom of the press.

More and more, we see countries like Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Cuba taking steps to muzzle broadcast and print media into submission, leaving journalists and editors no choice but to self-censor their very own content.

Venezuela's 2004 Ley de Responsabilidad Social en Radio y Television, or Law of Social Responsibility in Radio and Television, has provided the legal framework to quash and censor the press, and its provisions have been replicated by Ecuador and other countries in the region.

Due to the provisions in this law, television stations and newspapers have been bullied by the regime or forced to sell their outlets. In the case of RCTV, broadcasts were suspended by the Venezuelan regime.

Owners of Globovision and El Universal, both critical of the regime, were forced to sell their outlets to business interests with close ties to the regime.

Ecuador faces equally daunting challenges to press freedoms. A large number of journalists are being sued. Watchdogs such as Fundamedios are being harassed constantly. Newspapers such as El Universo are being fined for running articles that are not in agreement with the regime.

In Nicaragua, the Ortega regime has also restricted media outlets by making it difficult for journalists to operate. With the recent promulgation by the Law of Sovereign Security, it has nearly ensured a muzzle on all reporters.

Former President Cristina Kirchner of Argentina and her court often demonize journalists and charge popular media outlets, such as El Grupo Clarin

or the daily Ultima Hora, with inciting collective violence and terrorizing the population. These are actual charges.

Mexico, one of our closest allies in the region, is one of the most dangerous countries for journalists. This year alone, six journalists were killed in direct connection to their journalism work.

In my native country of Cuba, despite the misguided normalization effort by the Obama administration, the Castro regime continues to hold total control of information. There is no free press in Cuba. Foreign media outlets usually censor their own information because they don't want to be kicked out of the country.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of meeting a Cuban artist here in Washington, D.C., known as El Sexto, the sixth one. He was jailed for nearly a year for announcing that he would take part in a performance art that criticized the Communist regime leaders.

The mere announcement was enough to be jailed for almost a year. Citizen journalists who defy the Castro brothers on the island are regularly subject to death threats, arbitrary arrests, beatings, and torture by the repression apparatus of the regime.

Mr. Speaker, this is a critical time for basic freedoms in our hemisphere. Free and independent media are instruments to fight against the scornful, tyrannical regimes that plague our hemisphere today.

We in the United States must remain ever vigilant amongst our friends and foes in this key moment in history for press freedom and freedom of expression in our region.

This vote today, Mr. Speaker, overwhelmingly supporting efforts like the one spearheaded by our good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES), is a good place in which to start.

I thank the chairman, ranking member, and Mr. SIRES for their work on this important topic.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES), the author of this resolution, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, a good friend, and a great member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, and all the staff for their support in promoting democratic values around the world and in their efforts to bring this resolution to the floor.

I also want to thank my good friend ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for serving as the Republican lead on this legislation. I also want to recognize the leadership of my colleague, Chairman JEFF DUNCAN, on this issue.

Freedom of expression is the key to a thriving democracy. It is the number one tool to hold people and governments accountable for their actions. In recent years, many organizations dedicated to freedom of speech and advancing civil societies have been trying to bring attention to the deterioration of press freedom in parts of the Western Hemisphere, specifically in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Cuba has consistently been characterized as having one of the most repressive media environments in the world, with the Castro brothers controlling all aspects of the print and electronic media.

Venezuela and Ecuador have harassed and fined the media, shut down press operations, and even physically attacked journalists who were trying to expose the state-sponsored crackdown against peaceful political dissenters.

In other countries, such as Mexico and Honduras, an increase in drug-related violence and worsening security situations have created a culture of impunity, allowing violence against journalists and the press to go unpunished.

As a child in Cuba, I witnessed the deterioration of democracy as the Castro regime took over the island and systematically destroyed all aspects of freedom of speech and expression. There is a strong connection between the country's democratic values and the freedom afforded to their press.

Working to preserve freedom of speech and pushing back against those who seek to quiet dissenters should be a top priority when engaging our neighbors in the region. That is why I introduced H. Res. 536, a resolution condemning violations of press freedom, violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech.

This resolution condemns these violations and urges countries in the region to implement the recommendation of member states made by the Organization of American States, Office of Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.

This resolution also urges our administration to assist the media in closed societies to promote a free press.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 536 to help foster better protections for the press around our hemisphere.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me say that today we are talking about a particular challenge facing the Western Hemisphere. But let me say that we have seen a great deal in the last few weeks that we should be optimistic about.

As I mentioned before, for example, voters in Venezuela recently went to the ballot box to demand change. They did so in Argentina as well. So we see once again that, despite all of the challenges in the hemisphere, electoral democracy remains vibrant, but we have to keep working to keep it vibrant.

But, of course, elections alone are not enough. We need to work in partnership with our friends in the Americas to ensure that every country has a robust democracy that includes a free and independent press. Most importantly, countries must guarantee the safety of journalists, especially as they courageously report in dangerous places.

I, again, thank Mr. SIRES and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN for introducing this important resolution. I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their support of this resolution, as well as the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Mr. DUNCAN, and, of course, the ranking member, Mr. SIRES, the author of this resolution before us today. I thank them for the work they have done on the committee to bring attention to the troubling attacks on a free press that have plagued the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. Speaker, as Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1816: ''Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe.''

This resolution is timely and important. I am proud of the work our committee has done to promote and defend freedom of the press, which is, of course, the cornerstone of democratic principles. The United States should—and must—continue to do more to help defend free expression across the Americas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, as a co-chair of the House Caucus on the Freedom of the Press, I strongly support H. Res. 536 and its condemnation of violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech across Latin America and the Caribbean. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost." Those words ring true not only for our nation, but for all nations and all people dedicated to the ideals of democracy and committed to a democratic system of government.

Whether through act and intimidation by the government or non-state actors, the voices of journalists across Latin American and the Caribbean—voices raised to speak out against corruption, abuses of power, and criminal activity—are being silenced at an alarming rate. This cannot be allowed to continue. I commend the House of Representatives and the sponsors of this legislation for drawing attention to this issue, and call on regional leaders to take all necessary steps to foster, protect, and defend the inherent right of their citizens to express themselves freely, publicly, and without fear of reprisal. Every time this right is violated, the foundations of society are weakened. We must all be vigilant and unrelenting in our support of free expression around the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H.R. 536, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 1155, H.R. 712, and H.R. 1927

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, today, the Rules Committee issued three Dear Colleagues outlining the amendment processes for two packages: the Sunshine for Regulations and Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2016 and the Fairness in Class Action Litigation and Furthering Asbestos Claim Transparency Act of 2015, as well as H.R. 1155, the SCRUB Act of 2015.

These bills are likely to come before the House the first week back in January 2016. Amendment deadlines have been set for next Tuesday, December 22. Bill text and more detailed information can be found on the Rules Committee Web site.

Please feel free to contact me or my staff if we can be of any assistance or if you have any questions.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Suspending the rules and agreeing to House Resolution 536; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Any remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

SUPPORTING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 536) supporting freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 399, nays 2, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 694]

YEAS—399

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
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)
Clarke (NY)
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
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
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
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
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 (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—2

Jones
Massie

NOT VOTING—32

Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)
Cuellar
DeGette
DeSantis
Deutch
Duffy
Granger
Grijalva
Heck (NV)
Herrera Beutler
Issa
Kennedy
Kildee
Labrador
Lamborn
Lipinski
Lummis
Marchant
Moore
Mulvaney
Napolitano
Noem
Olson
Ratcliffe
Rohrabacher
Rush
Simpson
Slaughter
Stivers
Thompson (CA)
Valadao

□ 1902

Ms. ADAMS and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, December 15th, I am not recorded on any votes because I was absent due to family reasons. If I had been present, I would have voted: "Yea", on rollcall 694, passage of H. Res. 536—Supporting freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, December 15th, 2015, I was absent during rollcall vote No. 694. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 536—Supporting freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GROTHMAN). The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

APPOINTING THE DAY FOR THE CONVENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a joint resolution (H.J. Res. 76) appointing the day for the convening of the second session of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 76

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the second regular session of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress shall begin at noon on Monday, January 4, 2016.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged concurrent resolution and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 102

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

UNESCO

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the Obama administration is making a push to get Congress to give the President the authority to waive a legal prohibition on U.S. contributions to UNESCO. If the U.S. waives this prohibition and resumes payments to UNESCO, it will erode our credibility, and it will give the Palestinians and the U.N. the green light to continue the scheme to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state without direct negotiations with the democratic Jewish State of Israel.

If you add what our yearly contribution would be plus arrears, the American taxpayers, our constituents, could be on the hook for over half a billion dollars in just a couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, we know that our law has worked to prevent the Palestinians from joining other specialized agencies at the U.N., but if Congress relents on this issue, the Palestinians will say: Let's continue to bypass Israel and go to the U.N. for recognition.

I will continue to vehemently oppose this waiver, Mr. Speaker, and I ask my colleagues to stand with me.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of two members of my community who lost their lives in the attack on San Bernardino.

Sierra Clayborn was a bright and kind young woman. She was a graduate of the University of California, Riverside, with a degree in biochemistry. Sierra's friends described her as always smiling and always offering an encouraging word. She loved to make people laugh.

Damian Meins will be remembered as a selfless, gentle, and intelligent man. He enjoyed traveling, painting, and serving others, which included dressing up as Santa Claus for school pictures. He leaves behind his high school sweetheart and their two daughters.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we remembered the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School; today we honor the victims at San Bernardino. My question to this body is: Will we do anything to protect our communities from gun violence tomorrow?

REMEMBERING RUDY ESCOBAR, COMMANDER OF THE MACON COUNTY HONOR GUARD

(Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Rudy Escobar, an honored friend and veteran, who passed away on December 8 of this year at the age of 88.

For over two decades, Mr. Escobar served as the commander of the Macon County Honor Guard in the service of central Illinois veterans. His dedication to his brothers and sisters in uniform was truly remarkable, and he will be missed by many in the Macon County community.

Mr. Speaker, for most of his life, Mr. Escobar worked tirelessly on behalf of his fellow veterans. After his service in World War II as a China Marine, he returned home and cofounded the Macon County Honor Guard, which has since performed over 3,000 honor ceremonies at military funerals.

Active in his community, it became customary for him to voluntarily transport fellow veterans to and from the VA medical center in Danville, Illinois. He was also a member of the American Legion and the VFW posts.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Escobar was a loving husband, father, and grandfather; and most of all, he was a devoted veteran. His commitment to the military community will always be remembered.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, Mohawk Valley, New York, March 13, 2013: Michael Ransear, 57 years old; Michael Renshaw, 51.

Santa Barbara, California, May 23, 2014: Katherine Cooper, 22 years old; Christopher Michaels-Martinez, 20; Cheng Yuan Hong, 20; Weihan Wang, 20; Veronika Weiss, 19; George Chen, 19 years old.

Roseburg, Oregon, October 1, 2015: Lawrence Levine, 67 years old; Kim

Saltmarsh Dietz, 59; Sarena Dawn Moore, 44; Jason Johnson, 33; Treven Taylor Anspach, 20 years old; Lucero Alcaraz, 19; Lucas Eibel, 18 years old; Quinn Cooper, 18 years old; Rebecka Carnes, 18.

Albuquerque, New Mexico, January 19, 2013: Greg Griego, 51 years old; Sarah Griego, 40; Zephania Griego, 9.

EPA VIOLATES LAW WITH WOTUS PROMOTION

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week the Government Accountability Office, or GAO, found that the Environmental Protection Agency broke Federal laws by promoting its highly controversial waters of the United States rule.

While I agree that the Clean Water Act needs clarifying, this rule would drastically expand Federal jurisdiction beyond the historical limits of the law and would apply to State and ephemeral waters. The rule would greatly increase the costs of permitting and trigger new environmental reviews and litigation.

Thankfully, this disastrous rule was put on hold nationwide by a Federal Court ruling earlier this year. In its finding, the GAO said that this was an attempt by the EPA to spread ''covert propaganda'' by directing Internet users to the Web sites of environmental groups in support of the WOTUS rule.

This illegal attempt to gain congressional support for the rule—and to sway public opinion—undermines the integrity of the rulemaking process, and it shows just how unprecedented this vast expansion of the EPA's power really is.

SAN BERNARDINO SHOOTING VICTIMS

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to remember the victims of the tragic terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California.

Among these victims was a young woman from my district named Tin Nguyen. She was from Santa Ana, California. Tin was only 31 years old, and she had been working for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health for 4 years as a food inspector, and she was planning her wedding to her longtime boyfriend when she was taken on that day of the shooting.

At the age of 8, Tin and her family fled Vietnam. They fled a war, famine, and all sorts of terrible situations to come and find a new life in California. Despite the challenges of being an immigrant, Tin graduated from Valley High School in Santa Ana, and she received her undergraduate degree from Cal State, Fullerton.

Last Saturday, family and friends gathered at Saint Barbara's Catholic Church in Santa Ana to mourn the death of this young woman who was known for her incredible spirit and a heart bigger than the sun. Let us honor the memory of this extraordinary young woman. She gave so much, but her life was tragically cut short by these shootings.

□ 1915

THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IS NEVER OVER

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, 224 years ago today the States ratified the first 10 amendments to our Constitution.

These most basic rights remain the bedrock of our society; yet, even today we have seen them come under attack:

Freedom of speech has been attacked by some who prefer not to hear dissenting opinions, forgetting that it applies to all.

The right to bear arms is under constant threat from those who would prefer that only criminals are armed and that law-abiding Americans are defenseless.

Freedom from unreasonable search and seizure has come under attack from our own government, which believes we must sacrifice liberty for security.

Freedom of religion, the very right our Founders sought when they fled their homes overseas, is threatened by those who would coerce Americans to violate their faith in their day-to-day lives.

In every instance, the House of Representatives has fought to preserve these rights, but this serves to remind us that the struggle for freedom is never over, that we must always remain vigilant, and that freedom is but one generation from extinction.

But today we mark this anniversary in celebration of the vision the Founders had. God bless them, and God bless America for having done so.

RECOGNIZING FIRST RESPONDERS AFTER THE MASS SHOOTING IN SAN BERNARDINO

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I am heartbroken and outraged over the mass shooting act of terror that took the lives of innocent people and left many others wounded in the neighboring community of San Bernardino.

These cold-blooded acts of violence in our Nation has to stop. I strongly denounce this act of terror and mourn for the 14 victims of this horrific tragedy, including Aurora Godoy, a constituent of mine from San Jacinto, California, whose young life was cut far too short.

December 2, 2015, will remain in all of our memories as a tragic day for San Bernardino, the Inland Empire, California, and our Nation. In the face of this tragedy, however, true heroism shined through when law enforcement officials ran towards the danger, risking their own lives to protect the lives of others and when first responders tended to the injuries of the victims.

Our Nation should be proud of the men and women who risked their lives to save our community that day. Thank you to the men and women who wore the badge and took care of the victims.

TRADE DEFICIT

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on my colleagues and the American people to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the TPP.

This job-outsourcing trade deal, like every one before it, has been sold to the American people with the false promise of jobs in exports. By looking at America's accounts, you can tell they are all in the red if you take a look at the gaping trade deficits out there and job deficits and the lives of people, how they have been impacted by every single trade deal that has been signed.

Once again, our global trade deficit grew by more than $40 billion just in October, and it had grown by $1 billion more than the increase from September. Experts estimate that $1 billion invested in this country creates 5,000 additional jobs.

For every $1 billion of trade deficit we have, we lose 5,000 jobs here. When your trade deficit is half a trillion dollars, it is no wonder we have a job deficit across this country.

Since China joined the WTO, the U.S. goods trade deficit with China has reached $324.4 billion, hundreds of thousands of jobs gone. The same with NAFTA, $9 trillion in deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject the TPP.

KIRK DOUGLAS' BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the 99th birthday of a great American: Kirk Douglas.

I read about Mr. Douglas' birthday in the paper where he didn't receive gifts, but gave gifts. He gave a $15 million contribution to an Alzheimer's home in California. He did this on his birthday.

I found out that he has a long history of charitable giving in philanthropy. In Los Angeles, he created 400 different playgrounds, has given money to children's hospitals, and taken a long effort to help people from all walks of life.

I saw him also in a movie that I saw recently called ''Trumbo.'' I didn't realize that he had stood up against blacklisting in Hollywood and had encouraged the hiring of Dalton Trumbo, a blacklisted writer, who saved his career from what was a scourge on the United States Congress and our history of free speech and democracy.

I first learned all of what Kirk Douglas has done when I heard an apology for slavery and Jim Crow, and I found out he had been for an apology for slavery for years. He had an Internet site encouraging people to join a petition and lobbyists to pass an apology for slavery in this country.

These type of things show that Kirk Douglas is the type of person we should emulate and honor. He has had 99 great years. I thank him for his efforts of charitable giving and for his philosophy of forgiveness and understanding.

COCONSPIRATORS IN SUPPORTING TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, as we consider this week what Congress will fund through September 30 of next year and what we will not fund, the San Bernardino shooting, the radical Islamist terrorist attack there, has awakened a lot of people across the country.

There is an article from December 2, 2015, by Ashley Pratte. The question is: Is ISIS contained or covered up? That is the title.

''With the recent terrorist attacks in Paris carried out by ISIS, Americans are on high alert—and rightfully so. Just hours prior to the attacks Obama said that ISIS was 'contained.' Americans everywhere are baffled by Obama's continued ignorance and lack of strategy when it comes to destroying the Islamic State.

''Yesterday, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, stated on The Lead with Jake Tapper that the White House knowingly ignored a 2012 report about the rise of ISIS because they didn't mesh well with the re-election 'narrative.'

''Now it is all starting to make sense. Of course the President believes ISIS is contained, he has been willingly and knowingly ignoring reports about the serious threats that ISIS poses to America and to the world since it wouldn't help him get re-elected.

''The scary thing is that these aren't the first reports we have heard from former Obama intelligence officials regarding the White House ignoring their reports on ISIS. This September The Daily Beast published an exclusive story by Shane Harris and Nancy A. Youssef, claiming that over 50 spies say ISIS intelligence was cooked. These 50 intelligence analysts formally filed a complaint that their reports on ISIS were being 'inappropriately' altered by senior officials.

''These are very powerful words. If there truly is a 'cancer' at the highest level of command, Americans have a lot to be concerned about when it comes to national defense and security. According to the Daily Beast, the accusations being made suggest that a significant amount of people tracking the inner workings of ISIS think that their reports are being altered to fit a public narrative—echoing the sentiments of Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn.

''It is disturbing to think that our military and intelligence officials aren't being listened to by the Obama administration simply because it doesn't fit their narrative. Just yesterday lawmakers on Capitol Hill heard from the chairman of the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, that ISIS is not contained, contradicting President Obama's statements. We now have to question whether or not intelligence reports are still being ignored because of their inconvenience to the administration and because of the looming election year.

''Sadly, these reports from top military and intelligence officials aren't surprising. Americans have noticed for a while that Obama's statements on ISIS show how little he knows about the threat they pose or that he is deliberately ignoring the facts. A new CBS poll indicates that only 23% of Americans think Obama has a clear strategy for defeating ISIS, which shows just how little confidence Americans have in their commander-in-chief.

''On Monday, just weeks after the Paris attacks, Obama made mind-boggling remarks at a climate change summit in Paris, where he made it a point to mention that he will beat ISIS by fighting climate change.

''Let's be honest, ISIS was never a 'jayvee' team, it was never 'contained,' and it certainly won't be defeated by resolving to end climate change, but it was a good narrative for the Obama administration spin to quell the fear of the American public. However, this narrative stands in stark contrast with the real narrative, the one being told by military and senior intelligence officials—the one being ignored.''

And we have from the Center for Immigration Studies, Mr. Speaker, an ''Analysis of the 'Visa Waiver Program Improvement Act of 2015,' '' this out December 14, 2015.

It reviews the House bill drafted to tighten up the Visa Waiver Program, and it has been reported that this may be included in the omnibus—we will find out tonight—2016 spending bill as a kind of political replacement for the bill passed in November to tighten up the refugee screening.

This article goes on from the Center for Immigration Studies that:

''One key provision makes it out-of-bounds for people who have visited—or who are natives of—Syria or Iraq, or state sponsors of terror to use the VWP. Another major provision tightens up requirements and certifications by countries to live by the conditions of the participation—including use of fraud-resistant passports and strict timeframes for reporting of lost or stolen documents.

''Dan Cadman, a Center fellow and author of the analysis, said, 'Congress has at least decided to tackle many of the gaps and problems with the VWP, which has represented for some time the 'soft underbelly of homeland security'; but there can be no doubt that the U.S. vetting for refugees and asylum seekers still represents a major national security risk, and remains an unaddressed problem.'

''One major problem with the bill is the exception to several requirements that has been carved out for countries in the Schengen visa-free zone, which covers nearly all of northern, western, and central Europe, including hotbeds of terrorist activities in France and Belgium. Cadman writes that 'this exception is the caveat that undoes the intent of the rule.' ''

So, Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we have got a lot more work to do here to prevent this President's administration from continuing to allow people into this country without our ability to actually vet them and check them.

There are indications that members of the Visa Waiver Program may only check one in three documents that are provided to them because they just don't have time.

Well, just when Americans thought we were unsafe, unsecure, that this administration won't face up to the threat that radical Islam is, that most all of the country understands we are up against except the administration—they won't mention the words radical Islam—and just when people think they are starting to maybe make the point and get the point across to this administration, we have the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security who stands up for the terrorists.

□ 1930

He stands up for people who want to come into this country and do us harm.

This is an article from Politico, of all places, and the title reads: ''DHS chief: 'Legal limits' on scrutinizing immigrants' Web postings.''

The article reads:

'' 'We are dealing with private communications and things for which there is an expectation of privacy,' Jeh Johnson says in an interview.''

Mr. Speaker, that is very interesting. I am glad that the Secretary of Homeland Security understands that the Supreme Court says there is a right to privacy somewhere within the shadow of the penumbra of the Constitution—that is, the Bill of Rights. Yet he doesn't understand those constitutional protections are not afforded to people who want to come into the United States. They are in another country. I can't imagine this in anybody's definition of our U.S. Constitution. No Americans in other countries

are entitled to U.S. constitutional protections over there, and they are people who are applying to come in.

There is social media out there, and there are really sharp folks in Homeland Security and in the Justice Department who are not under the direct thumb of the administration who know how to access it; they know how to check things; they can use search engines and can check to see what contacts and what pictures are out there. Are they pictured with a terrorist somewhere? Of course, that might get our friend Senator MCCAIN in trouble; but, nonetheless, there is a lot of social media that can be checked.

Here we have an article today, December 15, by Seung Min Kim:

''Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said Tuesday there are 'certain legal limits' that constrain federal officials from scrutinizing the social media histories of foreigners trying to enter the United States—a new debate that has flared in the aftermath of the San Bernardino, California terrorist attack.

''His comments, in an interview with POLITICO, mark the first time the Homeland Security chief weighed in on the merits of reviewing social media in immigration cases. According to recent news reports, Tashfeen Malik, the female shooter in the California massacre, had posted extremist views yet still obtained a visa to the United States.

'' 'You have to keep in mind—and this is again, not a comment on any particular case—that social media, Facebook, and the like can involve public statements, public postings, it can involve friending, and it can involve private communications,' Johnson said from his office at the Department of Homeland Security headquarters in northwest Washington.

'' 'We are dealing with private communications and things for which there is an expectation of privacy, and you're dealing with U.S. persons,' Johnson continued. 'There are certain legal limits to what we can do.' ''

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that people who are trying to come into this country are not U.S. persons and that social media ought to be used by Homeland Security to find out what kind of lengths people will take who want to come into this country.

If they had not marginalized one of the best people working for Homeland Security and had not gone after him and attacked him, they would have learned—and I am talking about my friend Phil Haney, who was very adept at using social media to see if they had questions about somebody—what kind of contacts are out there on the Internet? What pictures were made with whom? What is posted where about this person? It is also important to have somebody like him who has spent time in the Middle East, who knows the language, who knows and understands moderate Islam, who understands radical Islam, who understands who the players are and who the imams are who are teaching radical Islam, who knows the groups that are teaching radical Islam.

If Phil Haney had been allowed to continue the investigation into Tablighi Jamaat, then he would have seen the ties that these shooters had. He would have found Ms. Malik's social posting. One of the things he says would have tipped him off right away is that ''Tashfeen Malik'' is a boy's name, and he is a bit of a hero in radical Islamic circles. If you know that, which I didn't and he does, then you pull that person aside for additional screening. You pull that application and ask, ''Why do you have a boy's name? You certainly weren't given that.'' His example is it would be like a woman from America who was trying to get into another country with the name ''George Washington.'' Really? That is your real name? It would raise flags and questions and would cause you to do further checking.

People at Homeland Security have seen, if you become a whistleblower and if you blow the whistle on the Obama administration's and Homeland Security's deleting of documents and on their refusing to investigate radical Islam, then they will convene a grand jury to make your life a living hell until you retire, and that is only if they can't find some little ''something'' to indict you of after they have looked everywhere and through everything.

The people at Homeland Security have seen what happens to people who are honest, who are honorable, who are trying to warn of contacts this administration has with people who have ties to radical Islam. I know there are people out there who say, ''I wish you would use names.'' Why doesn't somebody in the mainstream media go get the pleadings from the Holy Land Foundation trial in the Federal court of the Northern District of Texas, and you will see a list of names. If there were somebody who were worthy of a Pulitzer anymore, he would take those names and compare them against the people who have access to the White House and the groups that have access to the White House and to the State Department and to the Justice Department and to intelligence agencies.

They would find that CAIR, just blocks away from here—I can see their building from my window, and they can see mine—is on the list. Yet, it is CAIR that has—I don't know if they have got a red phone or what they have got over to the White House; but when they get bothered or when, maybe, they don't like a Koranic scripture or something that is being quoted in training material, they can just call the White House and tell them to get rid of it, and they do. They can call the Justice Department, for, after all, CAIR and the FBI were outreach partners. Finally, in 2009, after they were implicated as partners, coconspirators in funding terrorism, the FBI finally, in 2009, had to send them a letter, saying, basically, We had better suspend our relationship as partners, because there was all this evidence at the Holy Land Foundation trial that, actually, you are a supporter, and you are a coconspirator; so we are going to have to put that on hold for a bit. But this administration picked right back up. CAIR was certainly heard from out in California immediately after the shootings.

Anyway, this article goes on. It reads:

''Lawmakers on Capitol Hill have seized on reports that Malik passed a trio of background checks during her fiancee visa application process in 2014 despite publishing social media posts that were openly supportive of violent jihadism.''

Anyway, congratulations to the Secretary of Homeland Security. Americans can sleep well because Secretary Johnson is setting us up to have another Tashfeen Malik shoot more people because we are not going to, under this administration, check their social media to see if they have pledged allegiance to ISIS.

This is from Todd Bensman, December 10, PJ Media: ''America is Talking About the Wrong Refugee Problem.''

I would submit it is a legitimate problem we have been talking about, but this article points out a problem that, certainly, I and many of my Republican friends have been pointing to.

The article reads:

''A few weeks ago, the fangs came out when news broke that the Paris attackers were 'refugees' who had entered the European continent among thousands of immigrants. Elected Republicans and conservative pundits challenged the American plan to resettle Syrian refugees, and still are.

''But their bite is off mark.

''As many as six of the Paris attackers and their leader were not resettled refugees of the sort President Obama wants to import into the country (three attackers still have not been publicly identified).

''These terrorists entered Europe with illegal immigrant asylum seekers, of the sort who routinely show up at the U.S.-Mexico border.''

Mr. Speaker, I am still hearing from friends on the U.S.-Mexico border who know and who say we are continuing to have people from countries where radical Islam is a major problem—in the Middle East and in North Africa—show up at the U.S.-Mexico border. Some of them are caught.

The article points out:

''Illegal immigrant asylum seekers don't give the host nation a choice. They show up uninvited, smuggled, and often unknowable. They insist on being taken in anyway, pointing to our generous laws and traditions.

''At least three of the Paris terrorists—including main attack planner Abdelhamid Abaaoud—were what we would call Special Interest Aliens (SIAs). They infiltrated over the common European external . . . border at

Greece, just like Syrians show up at the U.S.-Mexico border, camouflaged among many other illegal immigrants. Europe's SIAs from Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, and many other Islamic nations are moved along their land and sea routes with the ubiquitous aid of human smugglers, just as they are to the U.S.-Mexico border.

''This is perhaps the world's deadliest known case of terrorist border infiltration by SIAs. Abaaoud was a Belgium citizen before he went to Syria and became a notorious Islamic State operative. He knew he was on the radar of intelligence services, and couldn't come home the legal way unnoticed. So he traveled home as an illegal migrant under the cover of thousands of legitimate ones.''

Mr. Speaker, I know I have got people out there who have belittled me in the past when I have quoted from the FBI Director that we have people from radical Islamic areas who have camouflaged themselves. He had said that some of them actually changed their names to have Hispanic-sounding names and that they tried to blend in. That is what the FBI Director says. People can belittle me all day long, but when the FBI Director—in this case, the former FBI Director—said that while he was Director, then, when those points are made, somebody needs to talk about them whether the country is going to make fun of one or not.

□ 1945

In an article, dated December 10, 2015, by Andrew McCarthy, titled, ''After Jihadist Mass Murder, the CAIR's Sharia Agenda Rolls On,'' he points out just how CAIR continues with their agenda and what those who have studied CAIR, its contacts, its relations, what they intend is civilization jihad. That is our civilization they care to take over.

Now, my friend from the Department of Homeland Security, now retired so he can talk about things that aren't classified, discussed some of these things on Megan Kelly's show. He was actually investigating Tablighi Jamaat, which is one of many organizations that are under the overall radical Islamic movement. As he has pointed out, Tablighi Jamaat means ''society for spreading faith.'' It is an Islamic global proselytizing movement with followers in over 200 countries.

Now, not everybody in Tablighi Jamaat is a terrorist. Not everybody in Tablighi Jamaat is a radical Islamist, but it should set off bells and whistles to wake people up when a relationship is seen.

From the Middle East Quarterly in 2005, it states: ''After joining Tablighi Jamaat, groups at a local mosque or Islamic center and doing a few local dawa (proselytism) missions, Tablighi officials invite star recruits to the Tablighi center in Raiwind, Pakistan, for four months of additional missionary training. Representatives of terrorist organizations approach the students at the Raiwind center and invite them to undertake military training.''

Tablighi Jamaat links to terror include: 1995, Benazir Bhutto coup attempt; 2001, John Walker Lindh; 2001, Richard Reid, the shoe bomber; 2002, Jose Padilla; 2002, Portland Seven; 2002, Lackawanna Six; 2005, London Underground Bombing; 2006, airline bombing plot; 2008, Barcelona plot.

Those are just some of the ties that Tablighi Jamaat has had with terrorism.

Now, the al-Huda Institute is a global network of Islamist religious schools, with branches in Pakistan, Canada, and the United States. USA Today reported on December 12, 2015: ''Nosheen Ali Irfan, 54, who lives in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, said she sent both of her daughters to study in Al-Huda during summer 2014 but within five weeks became disgruntled by the teachings and discontinued the lessons.

''Irfan said her family has a religious background but the teachings at Al-Huda were 'too radical' even for them . . . 'If there is an environment Jihadis (Islamic warriors) would come to recruit, it would be these kinds of institutions,' she said.''

Al-Huda links to terror include Ali Asad Chandia, an al-Huda teacher in College Park, Maryland, who provided material support to a Pakistani terror group; 2012, four former students join ISIS in Syria; and in 2015, Tashfeen Malik, who was engaged in the San Bernardino attack.

In San Bernardino, the investigation into groups affiliated with the Deobandi Islamic movement was stopped before it could have connected the dots, and that is where Phil Haney was going in. He was finding all these ties that Tablighi Jamaat individuals had with other known terrorists. In fact, he got a letter of commendation before Homeland Security realized, wow, he is finding people that have ties to this administration so we have got to stop him cold.

Before they realized that, June 8, 2012, he was given a letter that said: ''On behalf of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), I commend your outstanding contributions while assigned to the National Training Center-Passenger (NTC–P). Your display of dedication and effort in the fight against terrorism has been exemplary.

''Your talents and professionalism have contributed to the continued achievements of the NTC–P. You played a key role by providing support to the CBP mission and the NTC–P lead role in defending and protecting our nation's borders.''

On further down, it says: ''Additionally, your expertise and experience has been invaluable while assigned to the Advanced Targeting Team (ATT). Your research on the Tablighi Jamaat Initiative has assisted in the identification of over 300 persons with possible connections to terrorism. The assistance you have provided in the development of this initiative has been key to the future success of the project.''

See, that was before they pulled him off and said no more looking into Tablighi Jamaat. You can't do it because you are messing with people you can't be messing with. Apparently, ties would come back to this administration. It is not hard to figure out. Just look at the Holy Land Foundation pleadings, look at who are listed as co-conspirators in supporting terrorism, and look at whom this administration takes advice from.

Tommy Nelson, a minister back in Denton, Texas, I have never met once, said: Yeah, God is in control, but just because he is in control doesn't mean he wants us to lean on our shovel and pray for a hole.

Well, when this headline came out, Mr. Speaker, God isn't fixing this, despite prayers that God would fix it. I feel sure God is saying: Use what I have given you, and you can stop it yourself.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CUELLAR (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of family reasons.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 2044. An act to prohibit the use of certain clauses in form contracts that restrict the ability of a consumer to communicate regarding the goods or services offered in interstate commerce that were the subject of the contract, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 808. An act to establish the Surface Transportation Board as an independent establishment, and for other purposes.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on December 11, 2015, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills:

H.R. 2250. Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016.

H.R. 2693. To designate the arboretum at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, as the ''Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum''.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 51 minutes

p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

3764. A letter from the Administrator, Risk Management Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Area Risk Protection Insurance (ARPI) Regulations; ARPI Basic Provisions and ARPI Forage Crop Insurance Provisions [Docket No.: FCIC-15-0003] (RIN: 0563-AC49) received December 11, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3765. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Major interim final rule — Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for Military Personnel [Docket ID: DOD-2013-OS-0236] (RIN: 0790-AJ17) received December 10, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3766. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Defining ''Chronically Homeless'' [Docket No.: FR-5809-F-01] (RIN: 2506-AC37) received December 11, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3767. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final determination — Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for High-Intensity Discharge Lamps [Docket No.: EERE-2010-BT-STD-0043] (RIN: 1904-AC36) received December 10, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3768. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Transmission Operations Reliability Standards and Interconnection Reliability Operations and Coordination Reliability Standards [Docket No.: RM15-16-000; Order No.: 817] received December 10, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3769. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Revisions to Emergency Operations Reliability Standards; Revisions to Undervoltage Load Shedding Reliability Standards; Revisions to the Definition of ''Remedial Action Scheme'' and Related Reliability Standards [Docket Nos.: RM15-7-000, RM15-12-000, RM15-13-000; Order No.: 818] received December 10, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3770. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Ultimate Heat Sink for Nuclear Power Plants, Regulatory Guide 1.27 Revision 3, received December 11, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3771. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; U.S. Navy Training and Testing Activities in the Northwest Training and Testing Study Area [Docket No.: 140109018-5999-02] (RIN: 0648-BD89) received December 10, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); 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. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 3878. A bill to enhance cybersecurity information sharing and coordination at ports in the United States, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 114–379, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 2285. A bill to improve enforcement against trafficking in cultural property and prevent stolen or illicit cultural property from financing terrorist and criminal networks, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 114–380, Pt. 1).

Ordered to be printed.

Mr. DENT: Committee on Ethics. In the Matter of Allegations Relating to Representative JARED POLIS (Rept. 114–381). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3878 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. COHEN (for himself, Mr. NADLER, Mr. ROHRABACHER, and Mr. FORBES):

H.R. 4246. A bill to exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces and members of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 4247. A bill to provide that certain Cuban entrants are ineligible to receive refugee assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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.

By Mr. WESTMORELAND (for himself and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia):

H.R. 4248. A bill to amend the Financial Stability Act to revise the reevaluation procedures with respect to determinations by the Financial Stability Oversight Council that a nonbank financial company shall be supervised by the Board of Governors and shall be subject to prudential standards; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia:

H.R. 4249. A bill to provide an increased Federal capability for civil investigations and litigation, regarding alleged police, prosecutorial, or judicial misconduct, under section 210401 the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 4250. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the statute of limitation for credit or refund for taxpayers who receive combat pay; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COFFMAN (for himself, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LATTA, Mr. HONDA, Ms. ESTY, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. COLE, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. COSTA, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. JONES, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. WALKER, Mr. BOST, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Mr. RUIZ):

H.R. 4251. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Defense affords each member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces with the opportunity for a physical examination before the member separates from the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. FINCHER (for himself, Mr. HECK of Washington, and Mr. STIVERS):

H.R. 4252. A bill to extend temporarily the extended period of protection for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HASTINGS (for himself, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

H.R. 4253. A bill to establish a grant program to help State and local law enforcement agencies reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism and other disabilities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 4254. A bill to prohibit employers from requiring grocery store employees to enter into covenants not to compete, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 4255. A bill to amend the Act commonly known as the Indian Long-Term Leasing Act to expand certain exceptions for long-term lease limits for the Pueblo of Santa Clara; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida:

H.R. 4256. A bill to simplify income-based repayment under the Federal student loan program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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.

By Mr. NUNES (for himself, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. STEWART, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. MARCHANT, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. DOLD, and Mr. HOLDING):

H.R. 4257. A bill to protect the American and Iranian peoples as well as the global economy from Iran's systematic abjuration of international legal standards on human and civil rights, its support for international terrorism, and the corrosive economic malfeasance of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Rules, Ways and Means, and Financial Services, 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.

By Mr. ROSKAM (for himself, Mr. NUNES, Mr. POMPEO, and Mr. ZELDIN):

H.R. 4258. A bill to impose sanctions against any entity with respect to which Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps owns, directly or indirectly, a 20 percent or greater interest in the entity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, 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.

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER (for himself, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. GROTHMAN):

H.R. 4259. A bill to prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from establishing, implementing, or enforcing any limit on the aggregate emissions of carbon dioxide from a State or any category or subcategory of sources within a State; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Mr. COFFMAN):

H.R. 4260. A bill to protect servicemembers in higher education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and Armed Services, 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.

By Mr. MCCARTHY:

H.J. Res. 76. A joint resolution appointing the day for convening of the second session of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress; considered and passed. considered and passed.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself and Mr. JONES):

H.J. Res. 77. A joint resolution to amend the War Powers Resolution; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, 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.

By Mr. MCCARTHY:

H. Con. Res. 102. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President; considered and agreed to. considered and agreed to.

By Mr. GALLEGO (for himself, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. FARR, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H. Res. 565. A resolution supporting the peace process in Colombia; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

163. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 132, requesting the Congress of the United States call a convention of the States to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mr. LOEBSACK introduced a bill (H.R. 4261) for the relief of Max Villatoros; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. COHEN:

H.R. 4246.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 4247.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, the Commerce Clause

By Mr. WESTMORELAND:

H.R. 4248.

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

The Commerce Clause, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution states that Congress shall have power to regulate the regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia:

H.R. 4249.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, ''The Congress shall have the Power 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 Govenment of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 4250.

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

US Const., Art. I, Sec. 8 providing Congress the taxing authority.

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 4251.

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

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 14 (relating to the power of Congress to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces), clause 16 (relating to the power of Congress to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia), and clause 18 (relating to the power of Congress to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. FINCHER:

H.R. 4252.

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

Article I, Section VIII

By Mr. HASTINGS:

H.R. 4253.

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

U.S. Const. art. I, § 8

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 4254.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: Congress shall have the power to ''regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several states and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 4255.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida:

H.R. 4256.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. NUNES:

H.R. 4257.

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

Clause 3 of section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution;

Clause 18 of section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROSKAM:

H.R. 4258.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: ''The Congress shall have Power To . . . provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''The Congress shall have the Power . . . To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: ''The Congress shall have the Power . . . 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.''

Tenth Amendment: ''The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.''

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER:

H.R. 4259.

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

Article 1

Section 8

Clause 18

By Ms. SINEMA:

H.R. 4260.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. LOEBSACK

H.R. 4261

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

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 4 of the US Constitution

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.J. Res. 77.

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

Clause 11, of Section 8, of Article I of the U.S. Constitution

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 224: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 239: Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. Velázquez, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CLAY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, and Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.

H.R. 320: Mr. CARTER of Texas.

H.R. 347: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 379: Mr. COFFMAN and Mr. VISCLOSKY.

H.R. 448: Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 465: Mr. PEARCE and Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 539: Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 556: Mr. BERA

H.R. 592: Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 619: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 667: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 699: Mr. KIND and Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.R. 703: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.

H.R. 721: Ms. BASS.

H.R. 746: Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.

H.R. 842: Mr. YOHO, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. MEEKS, and Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 870: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 885: Mr. BERA.

H.R. 911: Mr. FATTAH and Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 921: Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 953: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 969: Mr. FATTAH and Ms. TITUS.

H.R. 986: Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 990: Ms. TSONGAS.

H.R. 1076: Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. CARNEY, and Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 1093: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 1116: Mr. JOYCE, Mr. DENT, and Mr. ROSKAM.

H.R. 1142: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. BERA and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 1153: Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 1157: Mr. RUIZ.

H.R. 1220: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. BOST.

H.R. 1258: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. YODER.

H.R. 1312: Mr. WALDEN.

H.R. 1399: Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 1427: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 1453: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 1457: Ms. MENG and Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 1475: Mr. KING of Iowa and Mr. GALLEGO.

H.R. 1559: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.

H.R. 1608: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 1692: Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 1726: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 1728: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 1733: Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 1747: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 1751: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 1818: Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 1854: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 1877: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 1942: Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1964: Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 2016: Mr. KILMER and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2017: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama.

H.R. 2023: Mr. TAKAI.

H.R. 2096: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 2123: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 2138: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 2191: Mr. TED LIEU of California.

H.R. 2217: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 2257: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 2278: Mr. JONES and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

H.R. 2293: Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. YODER, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. COLE, and Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 2302: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 2315: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.

H.R. 2411: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. TONKO, and Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 2430: Mr. TAKANO, Mr. GRAYSON, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 2513: Mr. GALLEGO.

H.R. 2515: Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2519: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 2540: Mr. BERA.

H.R. 2635: Ms. MENG.

H.R. 2646: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

H.R. 2680: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 2689: Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 2694: Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 2713: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 2716: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 2726: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 2737: Mr. TROTT, Mrs. WAGNER, and Ms. HAHN.

H.R. 2739: Mr. FORTENBERRY and Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 2759: Mr. GRIJALVA and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 2763: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 2775: Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 2849: Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. COFFMAN, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2858: Mr. LOWENTHAL and Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 2871: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 2896: Mr. CONAWAY.

H.R. 2903: Mr. NEWHOUSE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 3040: Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 3051: Ms. FUDGE, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. MOORE, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. ISRAEL.

H.R. 3179: Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina.

H.R. 3187: Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 3284: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DOLD, and Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 3309: Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 3314: Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 3326: Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 3339: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. BEYER, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mr. COLLINS of New York.

H.R. 3355: Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 3356: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 3366: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 3381: Mr. SENSENBRENNER and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 3384: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 3406: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 3411: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 3437: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 3441: Mrs. BLACK.

H.R. 3497: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 3514: Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 3520: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 3565: Mr. BERA and Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H.R. 3606: Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 3646: Mr. POMPEO.

H.R. 3654: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 3666: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 3691: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.

H.R. 3694: Mr. ROYCE.

H.R. 3706: Mr. PITTENGER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. BEYER, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, and Mr. BERA.

H.R. 3719: Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 3722: Mr. HURD of Texas.

H.R. 3742: Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 3786: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 3790: Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 3793: Ms. LEE.

H.R. 3808: Mr. TIBERI and Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan.

H.R. 3832: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida and Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 3861: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 3870: Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 3880: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 3886: Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. KILMER, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 3914: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.

H.R. 3926: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. POLIS, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. YARMUTH, and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 3927: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 3940: Mr. BERA, Mr. HARPER, Mr. BUCK, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. POSEY, and Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 3947: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 3948: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 3957: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 3963: Mr. JONES and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 3965: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 3970: Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 3990: Ms. LEE, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. GABBARD and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 4016: Mr. BOUSTANY.

H.R. 4018: Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, and Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 4055: Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 4058: Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 4080: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 4087: Mr. DEUTCH.

H.R. 4108: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 4117: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4138: Mr. DOLD and Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 4144: Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 4153: Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 4162: Mr. POCAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. TONKO, Ms. LEE, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 4177: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 4179: Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 4180: Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 4183: Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 4184: Mr. FARR, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 4185: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MARINO, and Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 4186: Mr. ZINKE.

H.R. 4197: Mrs. BLACK and Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 4209: Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 4211: Mr. HIMES and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 4229: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 4233: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.

H.R. 4238: Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. MEEKS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. RANGEL, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. CONYERS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, and Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 4240: Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. Pierluisi, Mr. COHEN, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. RANGEL.

H. J. Res. 74: Mr. HENSARLING.

H. Con. Res. 56: Mr. HOLDING.

H. Res. 14: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.

H. Res. 54: Mr. DENHAM.

H. Res. 112: Ms. PINGREE.

H. Res. 265: Mr. GALLEGO.

H. Res. 289: Mr. COHEN.

H. Res. 290: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H. Res. 394: Mr. COHEN.

H. Res. 417: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri and Mr. BOUSTANY.

H. Res. 432: Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. BERA, and Mr. CRAMER.

H. Res. 469: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H. Res. 527: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H. Res. 548: Ms. LOFGREN and Mr. COHEN.

H. Res. 552: Ms. MENG.

H. Res. 554: Mr. TAKANO, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. MEEKS.

H. Res. 558: Mr. HIGGINS.

H. Res. 562: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015 No. 182

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.

Eternal God, thank You for listening to our prayers. May our lawmakers use fervent prayer to solve problems and to experience Your wonderful peace. Help the citizens of this land to join our Senators in using intercession to bring healing to our Nation and world.

Lord, thank You for Your promise that if we call You when facing trouble, You will deliver us. Lift the light of Your countenance upon our Nation and world, O Lord, and let Your will be done. Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin in each of our hearts. Give us minds that are wise with wisdom, hearts that are warm with faith, and lips that are eloquent with truth.

We pray in Your sacred 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RELIEF NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as of this morning we know that committees and Members from both sides are continuing to make important progress in the ongoing fiscal negotiations. That is true on the appropriations side, and it is also true on the tax relief side.

NOTICE

If the 114th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 24, 2015, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 114th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Thursday, December 31, 2015, to permit Members to insert statements.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT–59 or S–123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Wednesday, December 30. The final issue will be dated Thursday, December 31, 2015, and will be delivered on Monday, January 4, 2016.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event, that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be formatted according to the instructions at http://webster.senate.gov/secretary/Departments/Reporters__Debates/resources/cong__record.pdf, and submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at https://housenet.house.gov/legislative/research-and-reference/transcripts-and-records/electronic-congressional-record-inserts. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT–59.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

GREGG HARPER, *Chairman.*

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

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This doesn't mean negotiators have surmounted every obstacle, but it does offer an unmistakable sign of forward momentum. Negotiators are working toward filing legislation today and expect to do so. Many will find that encouraging. For my part, I will continue engaging and consulting colleagues as events move forward.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS AND TAX EXTENDERS NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as my friend, the Republican leader, stated, we are continuing to work toward a bipartisan compromise on the omnibus and tax extenders legislation. I have worked hard—we have all worked hard—to get to yes on this massive undertaking, this huge appropriations bill and this big tax bill. I have been involved on a personal basis in every twist and turn of the way.

I want to say a word about the status. We all know that this agreement is not completed, but I have been so impressed with the endurance and the massive amount of experience that these men and women have—both Democrats and Republicans. Senator MCCONNELL and I had an event last week. We sat next to one another. I sent him a note about how impressed I was with one of his staff people who is working intimately with one of mine.

So I want to tell all the staff in all these buildings here on Capitol Hill who have been working on this night and day how much I appreciate their hard work and how the American people are so fortunate to have these good men and women working on their behalf. We find that most everyone engaged and working here on Capitol Hill are not involved for the money. They are involved because they want to do something to help change policy and to try to do what they can to be involved in what goes on in this great country. So I appreciate all they have done to this point.

I think we have done a good job as responsible legislators, working to find common ground and strike a balance that can pass Congress and be signed into law by the President. But it is time for a reality check on where we stand on things.

An agreement could be filed right now that covers most everything that we have discussed and would keep the government funded fully for a year. At this point, the only major outstanding issue is Republicans' insistence on raising the export ban on crude oil.

We have made very clear to Republicans that if they insist on including the oil export ban, there must be included in this robust policies to reduce our carbon emissions and encourage the use of renewable energy. So for the past many days I have worked hard—as a number of others have—to strike the right balance. We have made multiple offers to Republicans that were certainly doable, reasonable, and all Republicans had to do was say yes. Saying yes to any of the offers we put on the table dealing with renewables over the past few days—especially the last 3 days—the ink would be dry, the entire package would be filed, and we would be moving ahead on the floor. I made it very clear to my Republican colleagues that there are offers out there that have been unanswered, and I hope they are answered very quickly.

I have appreciated getting to know the Speaker better than I did before. I found him to be available and someone who understands the policy, and I am encouraged that last night he said when he had his teleconference with all of his Members that he thought we were going to have a deal completed. I hope that in fact is the case.

Republicans can take yes for an answer. That is all they have to do. But Congress is now faced with two clear paths forward. The first is very simple: Pair the oil export ban with much needed policies to reduce our carbon emissions and build more renewable energy. The second path is that we move ahead on the government funding bill and tax package without the package of oil and renewable policies. That would not be my first preference, but we would have to live with it.

We don't have the legislative language yet on the tax package. This isn't pointing fingers at anyone adversely. It is simply the fact that we need to get this done. We don't have the legislative language done yet. At this pace, we are going to be here through Christmas. We need to get that done now.

So these are the two choices. Either path forward will keep the government open and funded. I certainly hope so. Republicans must decide which they prefer.

If Republicans think reducing our carbon emissions and encouraging the use of renewable energy is an unacceptable price to pay, we can move the rest of the package without the oil export ban, but we need not delay anymore. There is no reason to delay any further.

So I say to everyone who is listening here this morning: It is decision time.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MARKETPLACE FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 2 years ago Members of the Senate did something that doesn't happen very often. We broke through the gridlock and came together to pass meaningful bipartisan legislation that was called the Marketplace Fairness Act. Senator MIKE ENZI, a Republican from Wyoming, has been the leader on this issue from the start. Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, a Republican from Tennessee, has been an invaluable ally. Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP, a relatively new Member of the Senate but a person with extraordinary knowledge of this field, joined me and 65 others to pass legislation that would level the playing field for Main Street businesses all across America and allow States and localities to collect sales and use taxes that are already owed under the law.

Since that time—that glorious time 2 years ago—what has happened? Nothing—the bill passed the Senate, went to the House, and disappeared.

In the face of this obstruction, a bipartisan group of Senators have said we will oppose any long-term extension of legislation that would take away a State's right to collect taxes on accessing the Internet unless we give States the ability to collect taxes on Internet sales that are already owed.

The Internet Tax Freedom Act is a law which is going to expire with the continuing resolution—which I would support—and it says that States and localities cannot impose a tax on access to the Internet. I think that is sound policy. But what we are asking in return is to allow those who use the Internet to make retail purchases to pay the sales taxes they already owe for their purchases. It is that simple. It is not fair to tie the hands of States and localities to collect the revenue they need to fund law enforcement, public schools, infrastructure, and other vital services without providing a path for States and localities to replace the revenue if they choose.

The Marketplace Fairness Act levels the playing field for retailers by allowing States to treat all retailers—whether it is a brick-and-mortar store or online—the same when it comes to collecting sales and use taxes. It is not a new tax. We are talking about existing taxes and their collection. In Illinois we have a quaint way of dealing with this. I recall a few years ago, when I was doing my State income tax returns, the bookkeeper called and said: Do you want to declare your

Internet purchases and pay the sales taxes you owe? I said: Of course I want to pay the taxes I owe. How do you do that?

Well, you declare them on your State income tax return in Illinois. There is no proof. It is your word, and the fact that you sign is what the State goes by. I estimated my Internet purchases that had not been subject to sales tax and paid the appropriate tax in Illinois. It turns out that very few people in my State who actually do make retail purchases over the Internet pay this tax. We are trying to change that. The change is very simple: If you are an Internet retailer, such as Amazon—the largest in the United States—and I make a purchase for the holidays and I declare my ZIP Code at the end of my address, Amazon then knows by my ZIP Code how much to be collected in sales tax. They assess me that with the purchase, take that amount and send it back to the Illinois Department of Revenue for distribution. It is so simple that there is basic software available, at a very modest cost, that any retailer can use to make that same calculation. There is nothing exotic or difficult in the process, but that is what is missing.

Amazon—I use them as an example—actually collects sales tax, and they support our marketplace fairness bill, as do many other Internet retailers. The difficulty we have run into, though, is there is a resistance to giving fairer treatment to stores across America that are collecting sales taxes every day against retailers on the Internet that may or may not collect those taxes themselves.

What difference does it make? I have talked to some of the people who run big chain stores, and they say it has reached a point that something has to be done. Consumers come into a store, a major store, and they ask to see certain products—running shoes, bicycles, flat-screen TVs. They pick the one they like the best, write down all the information about it, and they are never seen again. Some of them do have the nerve to return at a later date when they make their purchase over the Internet to the bricks-and-mortar store when they are dissatisfied with the product. Of course the bricks and mortar store had nothing to do with the sale of the product. They are being asked to provide some consumer relations on a product they didn't even sell.

What is happening? Take a look at the last Thanksgiving holiday weekend—one of the biggest retail weekends of the year. Early reports suggest that the stores on Main Street and shopping malls across America had flat sales compared to last year. How about Internet retail sales for that weekend? They were up significantly across America.

What we are looking for is parity and some equality. It is not fair to say to the store down the block that is paying the rent, paying the property taxes, and collecting the sales taxes that we are going to put them at a disadvantage to their Internet competitors. Internet retailers benefit under our current system, sadly, because they don't charge for sales tax—many of them don't. They have a 5-percent or 10-percent advantage over Main Street competitors. When you ask many of these Internet retailers whether they want to continue the current system, they say: Of course, it gives us a break.

It is not fair, it is not right, and it should be changed. Products sold online seem cheaper when sales and use taxes are not collected at the point of sale, but we all know that tax is still owed by the customers. Thousands of Main Street businesses have worked hard to grow their businesses. They employ local people. Now they have become nothing but show rooms because of this unfairness. Examples: Steve Sahli from Play It Again Sports in Naperville, IL, knows this issue of showrooming all too well. For more than 20 years, Play It Again Sports has been serving the Naperville, IL, community. People come into the store, they try out big-ticket items, use their phones sometimes to take a picture, walk out the door, and buy the item online.

Soccer Plus in Palatine, IL, is an example of what happens when it becomes too difficult to compete with online retailers because of their price advantage. Two years ago, Soccer Plus went out of business. We lost good-paying jobs in Palatine, and Palatine lost a business that was paying its property taxes, employing all the people, and sustaining the services of that good city. There is nothing we can do for Soccer Plus now, but we can still help other retailers avoid that same fate.

Even with countless stories like these, the House of Representatives has refused to address this issue. Numerous requests to the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee to mark up e-fairness legislation from ranking members and other members have not resulted in any action whatsoever. The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee is calling for regular order when it comes to e-fairness legislation but has refused to even hold a legislative hearing on the only e-fairness legislation to be introduced in the House. That was by Representative JASON CHAFFETZ, a Republican from Utah. He introduced the bipartisan Remote Transactions Parity Act. We have worked on a bipartisan basis in the Senate with Congressman CHAFFETZ, Congressman WOMACK, and others to come up with a bill that we think is fair that can pass. All we are asking for is a day in court—a legislative hearing, a markup, and bring the matter to the floor of the House. The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee has refused to work with us on this legislation. He has his own approach. I disagree with it, but let's have the debate. Let's have the vote. Isn't that what Congress is supposed to be all about? These calls for regular order are nothing more than veiled attempts to delay and obstruct in the House. Let's have regular order. Let's bring up the Chaffetz measure. If the chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the House has his own alternative, let him offer that as well.

While House leadership calls for regular order on legislation to level the playing field for Main Street retailers, they bypassed regular order by airdropping a permanent extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act into a totally unrelated bill. It was a bill in Customs relating to trade agreements. At the very last minute, they dropped in this provision for the permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act.

The same Members of Congress calling for regular order on e-fairness legislation skipped regular order when it came to the Internet Tax Freedom Act. Last week, the Customs reauthorization conference report, which reformed some of our Customs and trade law, was released. Many were surprised to find deep in the bill on page 381 a brand new provision that had nothing to do with Customs, nothing to do with trade, has not had a recent hearing in the Senate and was dropped in at the last minute in this bill—the permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act.

This provision wasn't in the bill that passed either the House or the Senate. It is what happens toward the end of the legislative session when things go bump in the dark. Internet Tax Freedom Act hasn't even been considered by this body. Yet there it was in a conference report meant to resolve differences that had been debated for months.

I do not support the permanent extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act in the conference report. I am going to oppose any other attempt to move anything longer than the remaining 9-month extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act until September 30, 2016. I support the merits of the legislation, but it is grossly unfair to speed this through with an airdrop in a conference report without any hearing and to do it at the disadvantage of retailers and businesses across America.

A long-term extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act should be paired with the Marketplace Fairness Act. We can make them both permanent law. Let's do it and do it together. Let me explain why. We should not cut off States and localities at the knees by preventing them from collecting tax revenues, by reducing Federal funding, and without also providing State and local governments the authority to collect the taxes already owed. The Federal Government has cut funding for States and local governments over the last several years in an attempt to put the Federal Government on the right fiscal path. Tough decisions have had to be made. Many States and local governments are struggling, even in my State. In a one-two punch, some in Congress want to increase this burden by permanently

preventing States and localities from imposing certain types of taxes while denying them the authority to collect sales and tax revenue that is already owed to them.

In 2015 alone, my State of Illinois will lose at least $390 million under the Internet Tax Freedom Act. Chicago will lose $197 million. Springfield will lose $6 million. How do we expect States and localities to fund first responders, firefighters, emergency services, 911 dispatch, health care services, local road maintenance, and all the other services that support our community? Unlike the Federal Government, States and localities can't run deficits to continue these services. The only option they have is to raise other taxes, such as property taxes, or to cut vital services.

There is a reasonable path forward. Congress should pass both a long-term extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act—which says we will not impose State and local taxes on access to the Internet—and pass the Marketplace Fairness Act, which allows States to opt in so Internet retailers selling in their State will collect the sales tax due and remit to the States and localities.

I hope my colleagues in the House will work with me to do that. I welcome the opportunity to have a serious dialogue about how to move both pieces of legislation forward in an expeditious manner.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, will the Senator yield to me for just a moment?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield to my friend and colleague from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I hope both Senators and Members of the other body listened to what the distinguished senior Senator from Illinois just said. We all extol the virtues of Main Street America—small towns, big towns. I think of the businesses I go into every time I am home in Vermont. These are hard-working people. They are people who support the Little League, the Boy Scout troops, help with all the various charitable drives. And they're being treated unfairly.

What the Senator from Illinois said is absolutely right. There are two different issues. Let's start leveling the playing field. Let's start worrying as much about the citizens of our own community, the people who make our communities work, as we do about some conglomerate that none of us ever see, and our communities never see. So I am proud to say I strongly support what the Senator from Illinois has done.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Vermont for his comments.

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

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today our Nation is distracted by grave concerns, by threats abroad and at home, by concerns about our economy and our people. I stand here today to call on us to continue to be focused on something that is not currently at the top of the news but on something that is a pressing and ongoing national concern. We need to be strictly and aggressively enforcing the terms of our nuclear deal with Iran that we reached with a variety of our other international partners and that is currently moving forward. We need to push back on Iran's bad and disruptive behavior, not just in its region but globally, and give our administration and international agencies the resources and the nominees confirmed that will allow them to be successful in enforcing our actions against Iran.

A few short months ago, if you asked anyone what topics would be at the top of the list of America's foreign policy conversation or the upcoming Presidential campaign, you would have been hard-pressed to find anyone who didn't mention the Iran nuclear agreement front and center. It completely centered the debate in this Chamber and around the country last summer and fall. What a difference a few months can make.

This morning many of us are deeply concerned about an alleged bomb threat in Los Angeles that is causing hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren to be sent home mid-schoolday. And in response to the recent and horrific attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, we are focused on identifying weaknesses in our border security and in finding ways to protect the American people without compromising our fundamental values.

We are rightly focused on expanding the U.S.-led coalition to defeat ISIS and on finding a way to assist our allies in providing safe haven to some of the millions of refugees fleeing terror and chaos abroad. Sadly, we are also distracted by a Republican Presidential primary in which a leading candidate has cast aside the Constitution in favor of incendiary rhetoric. That is why I rise today to make sure we remain focused on one of America's most important challenges to the United States and our key allies, including, centrally, Israel, which is enforcing the terms of the nuclear deal with Iran.

On September 1, after a long study and real reflection and significant debate, I ultimately announced my support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the JCPOA, also known as the Iran nuclear agreement. Just over a week later, the review period ended and Congress failed to reject the deal, so it moved forward. The agreement took effect a month and a half later on October 18, known as adoption day, when Iran agreed to give the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, dramatically expanded inspection and verification powers. We are now 3 months into the JCPOA, and I want to take this opportunity today to assess areas where the Obama administration and our international partners have done well over the past 3 months and to highlight areas where we must do more.

Since adoption day, we have seen some progress and some real setbacks on implementing the terms of the deal.

First the positives, and there are some. Iran has begun to reconfigure its plutonium nuclear reactor at Arak so it can no longer produce materials necessary for a nuclear weapon. The government has also started to dismantle its enrichment centrifuges and its infrastructure that would have enabled it to use uranium as a nuclear weapon in the short term. The IAEA has also continued to make preparations to monitor and verify the deal and to increase its number of inspectors on the ground, to deploy modern technologies to monitor Iran's declared nuclear facilities, and to set up a comprehensive oversight program of Iran's centrifuge manufacturing facilities and its entire nuclear fuel cycle, from uranium mines, to mills, to enrichment facilities.

These steps are promising, but by no means do they tell the complete story of Iran's bad behavior since this deal was reached, nor do these few positive steps indicate that implementing the terms of this deal going forward will be anything less than exceptionally difficult. In fact, not only will enforcement of this deal be incredibly tricky, but I believe how effectively and aggressively we enforce the JCPOA in these early months and years will set the table for how we respond when Iran commits violations later. Whether we respond now when Iran commits minor violations around the boundaries of the nuclear deal will send a critical message to our allies and adversaries alike.

I am confident that the actions taken by the United States and our allies to counter and restrain Iran and the Middle East, especially in these early months of the deal, will profoundly impact Iran's behavior going forward.

That brings me to less positive news. When I announced my support for the JCPOA last September, I made it clear that it was based on a deep suspicion of Iran, an inherent distrust of their intentions, and a clear-eyed commitment to aggressively oversee and enforce the terms of the deal.

My concerns proved justified on October 22 when Iran concluded a ballistic missile test in clear violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929. Those unlawful tests came just days after adoption day under the JCPOA. Last week, before the U.N. Security Council could finish their investigations and take any concrete actions, we heard reports of a second Iranian ballistic missile test on November 21.

I fear the Iranians are taking action after action in this area and others to

demonstrate that they are willing to flout international rules, regulations, and restrictions. And in the absence of our decisive action, these misdeeds by the Iranians will simply continue and escalate.

Today, a new report from the IAEA gives further justification to the distrust shared by supporters and opponents of the nuclear deal. The IAEA report on the so-called possible military dimensions—or PMD—of Iran's nuclear program found ''that a range of activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device were conducted in Iran prior to the end of 2003 as a coordinated effort, and some activities took place after 2003.'' These activities included computer modeling that took place as recently as 2009.

The PMD report details just how determined Iran has been to develop nuclear weapons capability. Iran developed detonators. Iran experimented with explosives technology. Iran engaged in computer modeling of a nuclear explosive. Iran even set up organizations specifically dedicated to nuclear weapons activity. It is not hard to connect those dots, and the IAEA did. That agency found that Iran engaged in efforts to demolish, remove, and refurbish facilities related to testing nuclear weapons components. Its government also offered misleading explanations of its past nuclear behavior.

It is equally important to note what the IAEA did not find. Iran's weapons program didn't advance beyond an exploratory stage. The IAEA found no indication there was a whole undeclared nuclear fuel cycle in Iran or that Iran held significant amounts of undeclared uranium.

Despite the ambiguous nature of this report, I think the take-away is clear: Iran's nuclear weapons-related activities and its sustained determination to hide and obfuscate its behavior reinforce our justifications for ongoing distrust of the Iranian Government and for the strict monitoring and verification of the components of the nuclear deal.

My colleagues and I have access to classified material, meaning we know more than is publicly known about the extent and direction of the nuclear weapons program in Iran. But the IAEA report is important because it establishes a baseline for Iran's program, for our assessment of their breakout time, and for our knowledge of how far they have gotten in weaponization. Knowledge of these efforts is critical to our future enforcement of this deal.

The IAEA report also reaffirms that as implementation of the deal moves forward, the international community must continue to seek and consider information about Iran's past nuclear activity. In my view, the IAEA must maintain its ability to continue reviewing any new information related to Iran's past nuclear weapons program, and we have to continue to assertively investigate any new accusations of Iranian covert activity or malfeasance.

We have to continue to counter Iran's rogue actions—which only serve to isolate Iran on the world stage—by continuing to enforce sanctions without exception and be prepared to impose new sanctions if and when Iran's behavior warrants it. For example, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, was right to immediately shine a spotlight on the recent ballistic missile test I recently cited and to call for a U.N. Security Council investigation promptly. When that investigation is completed, the Security Council should act, but if it doesn't, I hope and expect that the administration is ready to enforce a series of unilateral American actions, including direct sanctions against those Iranians responsible for this violation. While these ballistic missile tests are outside the parameters of the JCPOA, our response has to be strategic, and we have to make sure Iran knows it can't continue to simply and blatantly disregard the international community and the U.N. Security Council.

Since the announcement of the JCPOA, the Treasury Department has taken steps to target Iran's malign activity in the region. In November, the Treasury Department designated three Hezbollah procurement agents and four companies in Lebanon, China, and Hong Kong for purchasing dual-use technology on behalf of Hezbollah. These sanctions followed actions in July against three senior Hezbollah military officials in Syria and Lebanon who were providing military support to the Syrian regime and an additional Hezbollah procurement agent who served as the point person for the procurement and transshipment of weapons and materials for the group and its Syrian partners for at least 15 years.

These designations also follow Treasury's actions during negotiations over the JCPOA when the Department utilized multiple authorities and sanctioned more than 100 Iranians and Iran-linked persons and entities, including more than 40 under its ongoing terrorism sanction authorities.

In November, Treasury also participated in the U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council Working Group on Iran, through which participants discussed our joint efforts to counter Iran's support for Hezbollah, for the Assad regime, and for other militant proxies in the region. That working group continues to improve information sharing and cooperation to take joint actions targeting Iran's support for terrorism and its other destabilizing activities in the region and around the world.

In early December, Saudi Arabia agreed to designate 12 Hezbollah officials for terrorism, further disrupting their ability to raise and move funds around the gulf.

Implementing this agreement successfully will demand that we continue to develop discrete, clear, and public responses to minor Iranian violations of the agreement. My view on this was shaped in no small part by advice I got from a dear, long-term friend in New York, Maurice, who told me about his experience decades ago negotiating a complex commercial deal with Iran. After 2 years of excruciating and detailed back-and-forth negotiations, he told me they sat at the table to sign their agreement and begin their commercial partnership. After shaking hands across the table, the lead Iranian negotiator said: Now, my friend, the negotiations begin in earnest.

All of us who have studied Iran's behavior and know the history of their work to conceal their nuclear weapons program and their work to destabilize the region know that Iran will cheat on this agreement. They will litigate the boundaries. They will find ways large and small to test us.

For example, the nuclear agreement bars Iran from enriching beyond 3.67 percent. How will we respond if, for example, for a month Iran claims it accidentally enriched to 4 percent? We are unlikely to snap back the full multilateral sanctions regime because such a move would have little support in the international community for such a small and transient infraction and could be perceived as an overreaction. But inaction is not an option either. In coordination with our allies, we must develop a menu of responses that allow us to respond quickly and precisely to minor violations of the deal because there are no real minor violations of the deal. Otherwise Iran will little by little eat away at the constraints of this agreement, and our deterrence and credibility will collapse.

In addition to deploying sanctions more effectively and ratcheting them up as necessary, the international community must also increase our efforts to push back against Iran's malign activity in the Middle East. More specifically, we have to enhance our campaign of interdicting Iranian weapons shipments and support to its proxies in Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. Iran sends illicit arms shipments to terrorist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis who pass through international waters, and under both domestic and international law, the United States maintains its authority to disrupt these shipments. We must use that authority to act and to demonstrate our will. We must use that authority to work with our partners in the region and our allies around the world to increase the tempo and scope of our interdiction efforts. Successful interdiction efforts not only get deadly weapons out of the hands of terrorists but also deter Iran and undermine its proxies throughout the Middle East.

We know we can be successful in this aspect of our enforcement because the administration has already successfully disrupted Iranian weapons shipments in recent months. Although many of us have been briefed in a classified setting about encouraging developments in this area, I think it is important that we have at least one example that we can share with our colleagues and the world.

Please take a look at this picture to my left. In September, a raid off the coast of Yemen seized a large cache of Iranian arms destined for the Houthi rebels who seek to undermine the legitimate Yemeni Government. This massive weapons shipment included a whole series of the component parts of sophisticated TOW missiles, including 56 tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided TOW missiles and the associated sights, mounts, tubes, battery sets, launcher assemblies, guidance systems, battery assemblies, and nearly 20 other sophisticated anti-tank weapons. I commend the administration for these efforts and for this successful interdiction in international waters, but we cannot stop there.

Every month while Iran negotiates with the international community with one hand, with the other hand it has been sending millions of dollars' worth of weapons to the murderous Assad regime in Syria, to Hezbollah in Lebanon, and to the Houthis in Yemen. We must not stand by while Iran continues to spread its terror and destabilize this region. Nor is it sufficient simply to increase our interdiction efforts. We must publicize these efforts when successful.

When an American smalltown sheriff pulls off a successful drug bust, we better believe that sheriff is going to hold a press conference and put on the table the drugs and guns taken off the streets. Actions like that send a simple signal to those who engage in the drug trade that there is a sheriff in town who is actually going after bad actors and who isn't going to tolerate this destabilizing and illegal activity.

I think the American people and the international community need to know about Iran's bad behavior and our willingness to take effective actions to push back. Just as importantly, Iran needs to know that the international community remains serious about cracking down on its illegal arms shipments and its promotion of terror.

I am committed and I am willing and ready to help the administration increase its interdiction efforts in any way I can. A shared commitment to this from my colleagues—a shared focus on this from my colleagues—is especially important today when many members of the administration and the American people are understandably focused elsewhere: on our Presidential election next year, on the global refugee crisis, and on recent terrorist attacks and the conflict with ISIS.

These are busy times. As the holidays approach and as Congress nears a massive budget deal, I see my colleagues and my constituents focusing less and less on Iran, but we must maintain our focus for the months and years to come. Given the 24/7 news cycle and the media's incessant focus on the crisis of the moment, we will be tempted to turn our attention elsewhere.

Adoption day was not the end of the agreement with Iran. In fact, it signified just the beginning. And we must think strategically about the Middle East, which critically includes Iran as the central promoter of terrorism and source of destabilizing action in the region.

We must redouble our efforts to follow through on the most rigorous enforcement of the JCPOA or face terrible consequences. We have to scrutinize Iranian actions ever more closely for signs it is reneging on its commitments. This JCPOA is set to last in principle for 15 years but in some terms indefinitely. Congress must not waiver—not for 1 day—in our oversight of the implementation of this agreement.

Whether my colleagues supported or opposed the deal, we should put our differences about that aside and focus on enforcement. The deal is designed to deter Iran from evading or cheating on the deal while also countering Iranian bad activity in the region. That is why I worked with a group of my colleagues to introduce the Iran Policy Oversight Act in September. This bill, cosponsored by supporters and opponents of the JCPOA, helps ensure the United States aggressively enforces the terms of the nuclear deal. The Iran Policy Oversight Act also provides support for our friends in the Middle East, most centrally our vital and steadfast ally, Israel.

I am pleased to hear the administration is working on negotiating a new 10-year memorandum of understanding for Israel's security, and I am pleased to hear that its assistance will continue to grow to ensure Israel maintains its qualitative military edge.

In recent weeks, I have also had the chance to discuss the Iranian deal and our intention to continue to enforce the sanctions that remain on the books and to interdict and to push back against Iran's destabilizing regional activities. When I was in Paris at the global climate conference, I had the chance to discuss this issue with French Government officials and business leaders. I will continue these efforts in early January when I will travel with seven other Senators to the Middle East and to Europe to discuss our progress implementing this nuclear deal and the challenges that remain.

I commend President Obama and his administration for engaging with Congress during the debate over the Iran agreement and in the months since it took effect, but I urge the administration not to lose focus and to work with this Congress in the months ahead to ensure strict enforcement of the agreement.

But we in Congress have our part to do here as well, not the least of which is making sure the executive branch has capable and effective officials, which is a crucial part of effective implementation. In recent months, not only has the Senate not done its job, but this Chamber's inaction and our apparent focus instead on Presidential politics means we are increasingly making this Chamber less relevant in American foreign policy.

The United States has a very qualified and capable leader in the enforcement of sanctions in Adam Szubin, who oversees the current imposition and enforcement of sanctions at the Department of Treasury. Mr. Szubin worked under the Bush administration and under the Obama administration. He is a dedicated, capable, seasoned career professional who has been widely complimented on a bipartisan basis by members of the Banking Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee on which I serve. He has been nominated to be the new Under Secretary of Treasury for Terrorism Financing—a position critical to the successful enforcement of the JCPOA—but his nomination has been on hold for months for no clear and publicly stated reason.

Adam Szubin's nomination is one of more than two dozen national security-related nominations, including Tom Shannon, nominated to be the Under Secretary of Political Affairs at the State Department. Tom Shannon is a career Foreign Service officer and a determined, dedicated, nonpartisan professional who also would play a critical role in working with our allies and ensuring successful enforcement of this agreement.

Adam Szubin, Tom Shannon, and nearly two dozen other nominees have been blocked, seemingly for purely partisan reasons in this Senate. I call on my colleagues to release their holds and to give the administration the resources and the personnel it needs to do its job in enforcing this difficult deal.

The Senate's commitment to overseeing and enforcing the terms of this deal must go beyond simply doing our job and giving the President's nominees an up-or-down vote. We have to do more. I stand ready to work with this President and the next one to fully oversee the JCPOA. The length of this agreement will transcend Presidential terms, and implementing it should transcend politics as well.

We know Iran will seek every opportunity to push the limits of this deal in an attempt to test our resolve. We must not let Iran relitigate the terms of the deal and escape the boundaries of this deal and lay the groundwork for its future development of a nuclear weapon. We must deter them by holding them accountable.

When this President or a future President, Republican or Democrat, successfully enforces this deal, I will be the first one to compliment them for countering Iran's destabilizing activity in the region. And when the administration, current or future, isn't actively and vigorously enforcing this deal and pushing back on Iran, I will be the first to ask—to demand—that it do more.

The Iranian Government is paying close attention to everything we do, and I, for one, am determined to make sure that Congress, the administration, and the American people are doing the same, to demonstrate to Iran our determination and our will to deter them

and to closely and vigorously enforce this difficult deal.

Thank you, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO BOYD MATHESON

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute, bid farewell, and, coincidentally, to wish a 1-day belated birthday to a truly extraordinary gentleman from Cedar Hills, UT, who is a dear friend, a trusted partner, and one of the finest human beings I have ever known. For nearly 4 years, Boyd Matheson has served my Senate staff ably and honorably, first as State director and then for the last 3 years as chief of staff. He has served with special distinction on Team Lee, so much so that as far as my staff and I are concerned, we are all on Team Boyd. I can say with confidence and a great deal of gratitude that without Boyd Matheson I would not be here today.

I first met Boyd about 12 years ago when he and his wife Debbie and their five children moved into my neighborhood. They had just returned to Utah after spending more than a decade outside the State and in places as far away as Australia while Boyd was building his successful consulting business. I could tell right away that Boyd felt at home in Utah, as well he should. After all, the State was settled by Boyd's ancestors, who came to Utah in the 1850s in search of a place where they could worship, believe, and live as they saw fit without fear of persecution.

While Boyd's ancestors helped settle the State in the 19th century, his parents, who raised an impressive 11 children, helped populate our State in the 20th century. I soon got to know Boyd, who was active in many of the same ecclesiastical and political causes in which I was involved, and I was immediately struck by his masterful command of the English language. Boyd wasn't given to excessive speech, but when he spoke people listened. I noticed that everything Boyd said was at once profound, disarming, inviting, persuasive, and informative—a rare combination. Not much has changed since then. To this day, listening to Boyd speak is an uplifting experience for all who are fortunate enough to be present.

Although it would be several more years before I got to know Boyd very well, I quickly identified him as someone whose opinion mattered to me and to others and whose skills as a communicator I deeply admired. Whenever anyone I knew was in need of advice on how to communicate an important message, I referred them to Boyd, assuring them with great confidence that this was a man who had an uncanny ability not only to say the right things but also to say them in just the right way.

For that very reason, when I began considering running for the Senate, Boyd was one of the very first people I called. As one who had never previously sought or held public office, I knew that the odds were highly stacked against me, to put it mildly. With an instinctive trust in his judgment, I understood that I would need Boyd's help in order to have any plausible chance of winning.

I still remember the first of what would be countless conversations that would take place over the next few months. I was on my way home from work late one evening when I placed the call. I wasn't sure whether he would tell me I was out of my mind or whether he would provide encouragement, nor was I even sure which answer I would prefer. Nevertheless, I knew, regardless of his response, that I should listen carefully to his assessment of my ideas.

To his credit, and consistent with his thoughtful, careful approach, he didn't give me a definitive answer immediately. Instead, he asked for time to think about it, suggesting that we continue to visit periodically over the next few months, and this we did. In due time, we both came to the same conclusion.

When I entered my Senate race in 2010, I asked Boyd to serve as my communications director. I knew that his distinctive vision for the future, his commitment to positive reform, and his unparalleled gifts for communication would provide my campaign with the direction, clarity of purpose, and optimism it would need to have any chance of success.

I was right. Boyd was the perfect man for the job. He proved to be indispensable to the campaign, quickly earning an appropriate and very descriptive nickname. We often referred to him not simply as Boyd but by his longer and appropriate nickname, which was ''Boyd to the rescue.''

You see, just weeks into the campaign my wife Sharon christened him ''Boyd to the rescue'' because she noticed that he could solve just about any problem, that his calming reassurance had a positive effect on everyone around him, and that somehow things just went more smoothly when he was around.

With Boyd's help I was elected in November 2010. Then, when it was all over and I made plans to transition to Washington, I invited him to join my Senate staff. While disappointed, I was not surprised that he opted to remain in Utah, returning to his career as a businessman and a consultant, a career which I had rather rudely interrupted a year earlier.

You see, Boyd is not your typical chief of staff. Indeed, he is very unlike most of the people you will find in this town—or in any town, for that matter—in the best and most admirable ways imaginable, Boyd didn't ascend to his post by working his way up Washington's political pecking order, biding his time until it was his turn. No, he spent the bulk of his career—which, I would add, is just still getting started—outside of politics, starting and running his own businesses to serve others and to create true value in society, and he began doing this at a very early age. In high school, Boyd ran sports camps where he taught kids in his community the fundamentals of how to succeed on the field, on the court, and in life. This has been the Boyd Matheson business model ever since he was in high school and started his first business—inspiring, teaching, and helping those around him to succeed, though his target audience has changed over time from youth athletes to business executives, foreign dignitaries, long-shot political candidates, and eventually, thankfully, this Senator from Utah.

Boyd agreed to join my campaign not because he had any political aspirations or ambitions of his own; he just wanted to make a difference. He knew that our country was headed down the wrong track and that his fellow Utahns and Americans in every State were facing challenging times ahead. He wanted to help however he could, but it wasn't until he had spent a year crisscrossing the State and the country with my campaign that Boyd realized the magnitude of the economic and social challenges facing the United States. He met countless families and hardworking Americans anxious about their country's future and struggling just to keep up. He visited far too many isolated, forgotten communities that were stuck in poverty with few opportunities and even fewer reasons for hope. And he got a glimpse into the political dysfunction plaguing and, at the same time, perversely enriching Washington, DC.

By the end of the campaign, I could tell that Boyd knew the road to economic recovery and social revival in America would be long and arduous, but I also knew he cared enough about his family, his community, his State, and his country that he would do just about anything to be part of the solution. So when Boyd decided not to pursue a job on Capitol Hill after the campaign, deep down I knew that, God willing, he would be back.

Thankfully, God was willing and so was Boyd. If my first year in the Senate taught me anything, it was that I needed Boyd Matheson's help to survive in Washington. So on December 5, 2011, as my first year in office was coming to a close, I decided to call him and ask him to take a job as my State director. Here again, I wasn't sure what his answer would be, but I knew I needed to ask. It was an offer I hoped he might accept. Not only had I given him ample time to forget about all the late

nights and early mornings of the campaign, but the job I was offering him would allow him to stay in Utah most of the time, at least for the time being.

In the end, it was providence that sealed the deal. When I called Boyd to offer him the job, I was at the airport in Salt Lake City traveling back to Washington after a weekend at home with my family. After a few minutes of small talk and catching up on the phone, Boyd asked me where I was at the moment. I told him I was at the airport.

''Me too,'' he said, adding that he was on his way to Bangkok. ''Which airport?''

''Salt Lake City,'' I replied.

''Me too,'' said Boyd. ''Which concourse,'' he asked.

''D,'' I said.

''Me too,'' Boyd repeated again. ''Which gate,'' Boyd asked, as we both started looking around the crowded terminal.

Before I could respond, we had both spotted each other sitting with only a few chairs between us in the waiting area adjacent to gate 6.

We continued the conversation in gate D–6 in person and then via text message once we boarded our respective flights—mine to Washington and Boyd's to Thailand. Eventually he accepted the offer, convinced that our chance encounter in the airport that day was, as his wife Debbie would later put it, an ''inspired connection.''

It was inspired, indeed, but the connection was not just between Boyd and me; it was a connection between a man and his moment, between Boyd and the countless people whose lives have been forever changed because of his faithful service over the last 4 years. And no one has been more blessed than I have.

Boyd has been my constant ally, spiritual coach, advocate, speaking surrogate, and friend. In addition to his many skills and attributes, so many of which are well-known to anyone who has interacted with my office, Boyd possesses a deep and genuine concern for others. Coupled with his freakishly intuitive sixth sense, this makes Boyd the consummate friend and indispensable teammate.

For reasons I don't entirely understand but appreciate more than he can possibly know, Boyd has the extraordinary ability to know when, where, and how he is most needed long before anyone else does, long before the person who needs him knows.

Years ago I lost track of how many times Boyd had sensed that I was worried about something and then he immediately called or texted—invariably with exactly the right words that addressed my concerns.

This, of course, is not part of the chief of staff job description in my office; it is just what Boyd does, not only for me but for everyone he knows. I can't count the number of times he has stepped in to help me, my family, and my staff in moments of need without having been asked and often at great personal sacrifice.

Considering how hard he works to help others, many of us who know and work with him often ask: Does this man ever sleep?

This, in turn, has sparked a number of half-joking suggestions among my staff that Boyd Matheson is actually a vampire, one who survives on Diet Coke rather than blood and rarely, if ever, sleeps. When we ask him whether he will ever take the rest that he needs and most certainly deserves, he relies on a well-worn response, saying, ''I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep.'' The literary world recognizes these as the words of Robert Frost, but my family, my staff, and I will always attribute them to Boyd. By word and by deed, he made these words his anthem.

Needless to say, Boyd has kept his promises and has more than earned his right to sleep. Yet, somehow, knowing Boyd as I do, I doubt he will hold still for long. Boyd Matheson at his core is a passionate reformer. He is exactly the kind of reformer with exactly the kind of courage and convictions that are so badly needed but too often in short supply here in Washington.

Boyd is, in the words of essayist William George Jordan, one of the reformers of the world:

> . . . its men of mighty purpose. They are men with courage of individual convictions, men who dare run counter to the criticism of inferiors, men who voluntarily bear crosses for what they accept as right, even without the guarantee of a crown. They are men who gladly go down into the depths of silence, darkness, and oblivion, but only to emerge finally like divers—with pearls in their hands.

Ask Boyd what pearls he has found in Washington and he will tell you, without pause or hesitation, ''the people.'' It is the people he will miss the most, which is exactly the kind of answer you would expect from Boyd—a man who genuinely cares about people. No matter who you are or how your path happened to cross with his, Boyd listens to and learns from you, he inspires and teaches you, and he always sees the best in everyone, challenging each of us to do the same.

I am most fortunate to know Boyd Matheson and to call him my friend. I am most thankful for his sacrifice and that of his wife Debbie and their five children, who have seen on so many occasions the sacrifice of this great man in the service to me, to my staff, and to others. The people of Washington, DC, are going to miss Boyd Matheson, and the people of the great State of Utah will be lucky to have him back.

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

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

COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM, RACISM, AND OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I have had the honor of being the ranking Democrat for the U.S. Senate on the Helsinki Commission. I work with Senator WICKER, who is the Senate chairman of the Helsinki Commission. The two of us have worked very hard on many issues.

As I am sure everyone here knows, the Helsinki Commission is the implementing arm for U.S. participation in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—the OSCE. It is probably best known for its human rights basket. It does deal with security, military security. It does deal with economic and environmental security. But I think it is best known for its human rights and the impact human rights have on the security of the OSCE region.

In March of this year, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Ilkka Kanerva, appointed me to serve as the assembly's first special representative on anti-Semitism, racism, and intolerance. Since that time, I have focused my work on the urgent issue of anti-Semitism and community security, anti-Muslim bigotry, and discriminatory policing. So let me share with my colleagues the work I have done this year on behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and on behalf of all Members of the Senate.

My appointment came after horrific back-to-back terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen in January and February. In both instances, Jewish institutions were targeted—a kosher supermarket in Paris and a synagogue in Copenhagen. In both instances, some symbol associated with free speech was also attacked. In Paris, a murderous rampage was unleashed against the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. In Copenhagen, a conference on free speech, where a Danish cartoonist was among the speakers, was attacked.

I subsequently visited both cities, along with Senator WICKER and Representative ADERHOLT, fellow members of the Helsinki Commission. Following our trip, I authored Senate provisions to increase State Department funding to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination in Europe and cosponsored Senator MENENDEZ's resolution on anti-Semitism. That resolution supports national strategies to combat and monitor anti-Semitism and hate crimes, including training law enforcement and collecting relevant data. I am pleased that our State Department has advanced many of the efforts outlined in these legislative provisions through OSCE and civil society initiatives.

I have also focused on the problem of discriminatory policing. This summer, Hungary's Commissioner for Fundamental Rights issued an important report on community policing in Hungary's second largest city, Miskolc. He

concluded that police had participated in mass, raid-like joint controls, executed with local government authorities, public utility providers, and other public institutions, without explicit legal authorization and predominantly in segregated areas inhabited mostly by Roma. In short, police targeted Roma for harassment, fines, and daily indignities.

For those of us who listened to Attorney General Holder present the Department of Justice's report on Ferguson last March, the Hungarian Commissioner's report has the feeling of deja vu—many differences, to be sure, but similar in that critical community confidence in law enforcement has been abused and damaged.

I have sought to address these issues with several pieces of legislation, including S. 1056, the End Racial Profiling Act; S. 1610, officially named the BALTIMORE Act, Building and Lifting Trust in Order to Multiply Opportunities in Racial Equality, and S. 2168, the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act. Among other provisions, these laws would ban racial profiling by State and local law enforcement, establish mandatory data collection and reporting, and address the issues of police accountability and building trust between police departments and communities by providing incentives for local police organizations to voluntarily adopt performance-based standards to reduce misconduct.

In the OSCE, where discriminatory policing issues have been documented from the United Kingdom and France to Russia, I have urged the chair-in-office to hold a high-level meeting on racism and xenophobia focused on concrete action.

Following the most recent tragedies in Paris and San Bernardino, there has been a backlash of hatred directed against the asylum seekers, immigrants, and Muslims in many OSCE countries, often fueled by populist or extremist parties, such as Le Pen in France, UKIP in Great Britain, the True Finns in Finland, Swedish Democrats, Austrian Freedom Party, or Golden Dawn in Greece. Worse still, this kind of xenophobia bleeds into the discourse of mainstream parties. As such, I will add an increased focus on prejudice and discrimination linked with the migration and refugee crisis to my priorities.

In addition to focusing on anti-Semitism and discriminatory policing and the anti-Muslim backlash, I will also look at the protection of migrants and refugees, as that is becoming an area of discrimination that is troubling in the OSCE region—including in our own country of the United States. I am particularly troubled by the spike in violence in our own country directed at houses of worship and community centers—fueled by escalating anti-Muslim discourse. In Palm Beach, FL, vandals broke all the windows at the Islamic Center, ransacked the prayer room, and left bloody stains throughout the center. That cannot be tolerated in our country. A number of mosques have reported receiving death threats or messages of hate. A pig's head was thrown at a Philadelphia mosque, shots were fired at a mosque in Connecticut, and a fake bomb was left at a Virginia mosque not far from where we are here today in the U.S. Capitol.

I disagree in the most emphatic way possible with those who would have us call for excluding people from this country based on their faith, and limiting political participation based on religion. That is not who we are. Those are not our values.

The images of Jewish refugees on SS *St. Louis* turned away, port after port, many of whom ultimately perished in death camps, and the image of American citizens, including children, imprisoned in internment camps solely because of their race, are dark corners of our own history. We must be careful not to retread that path. It is one reason I question those who describe terrorism as a Muslim problem. Such statements prevent our communities from working together against a common threat. The slaughter of schoolchildren in Columbine, the massacre of churchgoers in Charleston, and the Oklahoma City bombings were not White problems just because the perpetrators were White; neither should the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino be distilled as Muslim problems.

Radicalization is a very real problem that currently tries to exploit the Muslim community, but it is our problem—Muslims Jews, Christians, Whites, Latinos, Blacks, all Americans—to all come together to solve this problem.

When I see the young people who engaged in these horrible acts, I question why they were susceptible to such great untruths that would allow them to harm themselves and others. No family should have to lose their mother, son, or cousin to mass shootings. No family should have to live with the fear that their loved ones were the perpetrators of mass violence. We must work together to guard against such ideologies that would steal our young people from us.

Given that the United States is historically a nation built upon immigration and the tenets of religious freedom, Americans have long lived alongside others and have seen people of different faiths live together in peace. Muslims have lived in America since the colonial days and served under the command of George Washington. There are an estimated 5,900 Muslims who currently serve in our armed services defending our country and our way of life. When the Supreme Court ruled this summer in favor of a young Muslim woman who allegedly suffered employment discrimination because of her head scarf, Justice Scalia announced the 8-to-1 decision, noting, ''This is really easy.'' Neither immigrants nor Muslims are new to our shores.

Islam is also not new to Europe. Europe's own historic relationship with the rest of the globe has set the stage for ties that have long served as the backbone of prosperity for the Western world. Europeans have created a presence throughout the world—and that is a two-way street. Many countries in the OSCE region, including our own, therefore have a learned history of integration that can be useful in addressing the increasing diversity stemming from the refugee crisis and changing demographics.

Given the conflicts that have forced mass displacement and migration, we should support long-term inclusion and integration efforts at the national, regional, and local level throughout the OSCE region—especially with the leaders of humanitarian efforts for Syrian and other refugees—such as what is being done today in Turkey, Germany, Sweden, Austria, and OSCE partner states such as Jordan and Lebanon. They are taking on tremendous burdens for the refugees because they know it is the right thing to do. They need partners, including the United States.

The successful integration of immigrants and refugees—including access to quality housing, education, employment, and public services—facilitates meaningful intellectual, economic, and other contributions of migrants and refugees that are especially critical for children. These are areas in which our nations should exchange experts and information.

Earlier this year, I introduced provisions in the Senate for a Joint Action Plan between the United States and the European Union to formulize and coordinate public and private sector anti-discrimination and inclusion efforts. We need diverse coalitions working together to address the momentous threats we face today. This includes leading by example by providing factual information about refugees and immigrants and publicly addressing narratives of hate. It is in that spirit that I will continue to work with other parliamentarians and with the administration to combat anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance in the United States and elsewhere in the OSCE region. I will do that as the special representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and I will do that as a U.S. Senator.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT AND SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, over the weekend, countries meeting in Paris signed a broad new climate agreement. President Obama called the agreement a success. He said it was a ''strong agreement.''

Despite the fanfare, let's keep some things in perspective. There are important parts of this agreement that can

do a great deal of damage to American jobs and the American economy. That should be and is a big concern to the American people. Parts of the agreement can do damage to our jobs and our economy. At the same time, important parts are not binding on other countries. The American people are right to wonder if the White House has signed yet another terrible deal just to try to shore up the President's legacy.

Earlier this year, President Obama was so anxious, so desperate to get a deal with Iran over its nuclear program that the President signed a terrible deal. Since then, the International Atomic Energy Agency said that Iran has ''seriously undermined'' the agency's ability to verify what Iran has done. Here we are again. It is another bad deal, and other countries that signed it are already ignoring it.

India is the world's third largest emitter of carbon. The agreement was on Saturday. This agreement tied plans to meet their emissions targets to getting U.S. taxpayer dollars. Then on Monday—just yesterday—India said it has plans to double its coal output by 2020. Is that what President Obama calls, in his mind, a success?

A Gallup poll came out yesterday that showed that the American people's biggest concern is not climate change; it is terrorism. Only 3 percent of all Americans said that pollution or the environment was the most important problem facing America today.

President Obama says climate change is our biggest threat. President Obama continues to put a priority on things that he expects to help his legacy, not on the issues the American public actually are concerned about. As elected representatives, we should not allow the President to buy a legacy for himself using American taxpayer dollars. I am willing to sit down with any Democrat who wants to work on a realistic, responsible, and achievable plan to make American energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising costs on American families. That should be our goal: coming together to find a real solution, real-world solutions, things that work, not just signing a symbolic agreement that does not solve anything, something that may make the President feel good but doesn't actually do good.

Democrats and Republicans in the Senate can do it. Just look at all we have accomplished this year working together. It has been a very productive year in the Senate. I am not the only one saying it. Last Wednesday, U.S. News & World Report said: ''There's reason for optimism on Capitol Hill ahead of a looming deadline to pass a trillion-dollar omnibus funding measure.'' The magazine asked: ''What is behind it?'' Well, they said: ''After years of partisan gridlock, Congress has seemingly regained its ability to get things done.''

After years of partisan gridlock, Congress has seemingly regained its ability to get things done. The bipartisan policy committee said the same thing recently. They pointed out that the House and Senate have both made important progress this year. They said: ''Both chambers have reinvigorated a robust committee process.''

Getting committees back to work is essential to getting Congress back to work, and that is what Republicans have done this year. So far this year, the total number of days worked is up from last year by almost an additional 3 weeks of work on the Senate floor. This is in comparison to when HARRY REID was in charge. We have been considering a lot more amendments this year as well. For all of last year, there were only 15 up-and-down votes on amendments—15 for the entire year. So far this year, we have voted on over 200 amendments. These are amendments both by Democrats and Republicans. These are opportunities for individual Senators to stand up, offer their ideas, and be heard—ideas that they think will make America better, make legislation better, not just what the leader of the party wants, Senator REID, who blocked so many amendments—not just what Senator REID might think is best for the President, no; what the American people think is important.

So when you look into the substance of what we have done, the news is even better for the American people. So far this year we passed major legislation that has been helping Americans all across the country. We passed an important law on Medicare to make much needed reforms and to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program. We passed the first multiyear highway bill since 2005. We passed the longest reauthorization of the highway trust fund in almost a decade.

These aren't just short-term patches for a few months or a year. That is what happened when the Democrats were in charge. These are long-term fixes that create the certainty and the stability our economy needs. This year the Senate passed the most significant education reform since 2002. We passed an important human trafficking law. We passed a budget. Can you imagine that? There hasn't been a budget passed in both Houses of Congress since 2009. We passed one this year.

As chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee, I can tell you that we have made a lot of progress this year on legislation to improve the lives of people across Indian Country. We passed a measure that will help make crucial and long overdue improvements on roads on tribal lands. Last week we passed legislation that helps give tribes more economic opportunities. It gives them more control over developing their natural resources.

Republicans are eager to work with Democrats and to produce legislation the President will sign. We are proud of the accomplishments of this year. At the same time, we are not afraid to challenge President Obama's most misguided and dangerous policies. That is why the Senate passed legislation repealing ObamaCare to ease Americans' pain under this law. We passed a measure on the Keystone XL Pipeline to create jobs, energy security, and economic growth, and we put that bill on the President's desk to force him to finally make a decision.

We challenged President Obama's job-crushing energy regulations by voting to block his power plan and his devastating rules on waters of the United States. I wish to point out, looking at a headline from yesterday's New York Times, that EPA broke the law with regard to pushing their water rule. The EPA broke the law, which is this issue of this whole waters of the United States. The EPA must be held accountable—accountable for breaking the law, accountable for misuse of government funds. We will hold this administration accountable.

Of course we also oppose the President's nuclear deal with Iran. We have shown the American people we can get things done, and there is a viable alternative to the reckless policies coming out of the White House.

Looking back on what we have been able to do this year, I think there is real reason for optimism. The Senate doesn't need to be the place of gridlock that it had become under HARRY REID. In 2016 the Senate will be taking more votes on important legislation and on amendments. There will be more debates, more consideration of ideas from both sides of the aisle. That is what the American people have sent us to do. That is what they expect from us. The American people have seen it is possible to govern and that not everything in Washington is broken. It takes leaders who are committed to getting things done and committed to looking out for the best interests of the American people.

This is the end of the year, but it is not the end of this Congress. It is not the end of what the Senate can do to make the lives of the American people better. We have done a lot. There is still a lot of work to be done over the next month and the next year. We will continue to work to relieve the burden and the expense of excess government regulations, to reduce the power of unelected, unaccountable Washington bureaucrats, and to return to the States and to the people more of the control that belongs to them. The goal is to give people at home the power to make their own decisions about what is best for them, their communities, and their families.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from New Mexico.

NOMINATION OF ROBERTA JACOBSON

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise to urge consideration of the President's nominee for Ambassador to Mexico. I do so for two simple reasons: One, this is a critical position, vacant since

July, and, two, Roberta Jacobson is highly qualified for this position. Her nomination deserves our attention. I do so as a Senator from a border State and as a Senator who believes we have a constitutional duty to advise and consent.

We have a distinguished candidate ready to serve. We have strong support for her on both sides of the aisle. What we need is an up-or-down vote. The L.A. Times has called Roberta Jacobson ''among the most qualified people ever to be tapped to represent the U.S. in Mexico.''

She has impressive experience, including important work on the Merida Initiative, fighting drug trafficking and organized crime in Mexico. She has served ably as State Department Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, working to improve relations in our hemisphere and to engage Cuba—opening opportunities for Americans after over 50 years of a failed U.S. policy.

She was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with bipartisan support. Yet the weeks go by and still we wait.

Our relations with Mexico are critical—affecting our economy, affecting our security. Mexico is working with us to stop those who cross our southern border illegally. Mexico is our third largest trading partner. One million American citizens live in Mexico. It is our top tourist destination, with millions of U.S. visitors every year. My State shares a border with our neighbor to the south. We also share a cultural heritage. The trade that grows every year—hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services—move between our Nations. Over 36,000 jobs in my State depend on United States-Mexico trade. This increased trade is an engine of economic growth. Exports from New Mexico to Mexico have soared from over $70 million a year to now $1.5 billion 15 years later.

In New Mexico we know how important this partnership is. We need a strong ambassador in Mexico City—working on trade, on border security, and on cultural ties between our Nations. We need an ambassador to work with Mexico and other Central American countries to address immigration issues, to help resolve the migrant crisis, to crack down on border violence and drug trafficking. This is clear to both sides of the aisle, especially to those of us from border States. As someone who has worked with Roberta on multiple issues, I know she is the right person for this job.

I especially want to thank my Republican colleague, Senator JEFF FLAKE, for his efforts. He is concerned, as I am, that this cannot wait. As Senator FLAKE said recently:

> It's crunch time now. Once you get into next year, it's easier to just put them on hold until the next president assumes office in 2017.

I hope that will not happen. I hope we will listen to Senator FLAKE because it is crunch time and because we do need to get this done.

What is holding up her nomination? It isn't her qualifications. It isn't concerns about how she would be able to carry out her duties as Ambassador. The problem is rooted in something else—something that should have no bearing on whether she is confirmed: Presidential politics and policy differences with the administration over her work on Cuba.

This year, the world celebrated the reopening of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. As the Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, Roberta helped negotiate this shift. We have begun a 21st century relationship with Cuba—one I am convinced will bring freedom and openness. I congratulate the President for leading this historic change.

A few Senators disagree with his Cuba policy, and so they are blocking Roberta Jacobson's confirmation to serve as Ambassador to Mexico.

Unfortunately, this is just one example of how the rules are being twisted and misused. She is one of the many qualified nominees whose confirmations are on hold. Many of them wait because one or two Senators want to make a political point or extract political pain. Not happy with the President? Block his nominee. Not OK with a policy? Keep the seat vacant.

The real aim is the administration. No matter how qualified, the nominee is just an easy target.

Meanwhile, the backlog grows: 19 judges, half a dozen ambassadors, even a top official at the Treasury Department whose job is to go after the finances of terrorists. That position is vacant as well.

We are on track for the lowest number of confirmations in three decades. We now have 30 judicial districts with emergency levels of backlogs. At the beginning of the year, we had 12. Thousands of people are waiting for their day in court because there is no judge to hear the case. Important work for the American people is left undone.

When we fail to do our job, when we fail to give these nominees a vote up or down, our government fails too.

This is not just the President's team. It is our team. It is America's team—working on trade and security, moving our economy forward, seeing that justice is done.

These vital posts should not go unfilled.

I urge my colleagues to allow us to move these nominations forward now.

I do not believe the Constitution gives me the right to block a qualified nominee, no matter who is in the White House. I say that today, and I have said it many times before.

A Republican President may have nominees I disagree with. That is most likely so. But the people elect a President. They give him or her the right to select a team to govern.

Today—right now—the majority leader can call a vote to confirm these nominees, yet he chooses not to. We changed the Senate rules to allow a majority vote, but that does no good if they remain blocked. That is what is happening in this Congress. The line gets longer and longer of perfectly qualified nominees who are denied a vote and are unable to serve.

So I am not sure who wins here, but I know who loses. The losers are the American people. The losers are the men and women who cannot get a day in court, because there is no judge to hear their case.

The losers are American citizens, businesses, and workers who rely on our embassies and other public servants. The room is empty, and the work is not done—all because one Senator says no, and the majority leader says OK.

Nominees should be judged on their merits, not on feelings about a President someone may not like or a policy someone may not approve. They are public servants in the executive branch, on our courts. They serve the people of this country.

Too often now that service goes begging because one Senator wants to make a point and will gum up the works to do it. That is not governing; it is a temper tantrum.

So I say to my colleagues: Let's get serious. Let's stop these games. Give nominees the consideration they deserve. Give the American people a government that works.

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

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

RECESS

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:19 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, last year we made a promise to the American people. If we were elected to the majority, we would get Washington working again for American families. Republicans in the Senate have been focused on putting our country on not just another course but a better course. This will allow us to begin rebuilding the trust of hard-working taxpayers who have seen their government become less effective and less accountable.

Over the course of this year, as the Senate got back to work, the American

people got to see something that had been missing from this side of the Capitol over the past 8 years; that is, an open and transparent legislative process. This included Members from both sides of the aisle offering, debating, and ultimately voting on amendments to not just our balanced budget resolution and reconciliation proposal but to a whole host of legislative measures. Leader MCCONNELL promised this, it is happening, and bills are passing because people on both sides of the aisle are having an opportunity to represent their constituents, to get votes on amendments.

The previous year we had 15 total votes on amendments. This year we have already had 192 votes on amendments, and the year is not over. So instead of allowing political points and partisan gridlock to take precedence over responsible governing, we are once again doing the people's business, and the Senate Budget Committee played an important role.

We had the first balanced budget in 14 years. Yes, Congress this year approved its first balanced 10-year budget since 2001. Americans who work every day to provide for their families and pay their taxes understand that it is time for the Federal Government to live within its means, just as they do. Hard-working taxpayers know they can't live on borrowed money, and neither can our Federal Government. This balanced budget approved by Congress shows these families that if they can do it, so can we. Our goal is to make our government more efficient, effective, and accountable. If government programs are not delivering results, they should be improved, and if they are not needed they should be eliminated.

A balanced budget would also help America tame its exploding debt, which today totals almost $19 trillion. Every dollar spent on interest on our debt is another dollar we won't be able to use for government services, for individuals in need or another dollar that won't be available for taxpayers for their own needs. Washington must live within its means, just as every hard-working family does every day, and we have to deliver a more effective and accountable government to the American people that supports them when it must and gets out of the way when it should.

To get our country and economy back on track, Americans must be allowed to spend more time working to grow their businesses or to advance in their jobs instead of worrying about taxes and inefficient and ineffective regulations. We want to empower our job creators to find new opportunities to expand our economy and, most importantly, assure that each and every American has the opportunity to find a good-paying job and a fulfilling career.

This is why the balanced budget also provided for repeal of the President's unprecedented expansion of government intrusion into health care decisions for hard-working families and small businesses. Our goal is to lift the burdens and higher costs ObamaCare has placed on all Americans.

ObamaCare is saddling American households with more than $1 trillion in new taxes over the next 10 years, and according to the Congressional Budget Office, ObamaCare will cost taxpayers more than $116 billion a year. For every American, ObamaCare has meant more government, more bureaucracy, and more rules and regulations, along with soaring health costs and less access to care.

The budget reconciliation legislation passed by the Senate will eliminate more than $1 trillion in tax increases placed on the American people, while saving more than $400 billion in spending. Most importantly, this bill begins to build a bridge from the President's broken promises to a better health care system for hard-working families across the country.

The Senate Budget Committee is an important resource for facts and information about the congressional budget process and the economy. That is why my committee recently began publishing its budget bulletin again, to provide regular expert articles by committee analysts on the issues before Congress relating to the budget, deficits, debt, and the economy. This year the bulletin has addressed the highway trust fund debate; defense spending, BCA caps, and OCO special funding; reconciliation and the Byrd Rule; budget enforcement and points of order; the appropriations process, which is the spending bills; the debt limit debate; and the 2016 continuing resolution.

Another important part of the committee's work is to increase oversight and transparency surrounding congressional spending. This is why I directed the Congressional Budget Office to release regular reports tracking the budgetary impact of enacted legislation against the fiscal year 2016 balanced budget resolution the Republican Congress approved. I have provided these reports after each recess work period in order to provide a status update on Congress's progress achieving the budget resolution plan.

Regularly providing information such as this will help foster fiscal transparency in the Federal spending process, and over time it will encourage a heightened awareness in the importance of complying with the budget. It will also help ensure that Congress remains focused on fiscal responsibility.

The recent omnibus spending and debt deal clearly illustrates that the Federal budget process is in serious need of reform, which is why the Senate Budget Committee this year has also focused on fixing our broken budget process.

Instilling the Federal budget process with regular action and predictability, active legislative oversight and spending transparency are critical to strengthening our democracy and reducing our Nation's unsustainable spending and debt.

We often talk about the threat America's growing debt poses to our economy and our future, but the growth in Federal regulations also poses a threat to long-term economic growth and job creation. The committee this year has been working to shine a light on these regulations and the burden they have on each and every American. It is critical for lawmakers and hard-working Americans to understand the true cost of regulations that are being issued by the administration. Taming our ''regulation nation'' will help ensure that the Federal Government works for the people, instead of people working for the government.

These aren't the only things that the Senate accomplished. I was proud to be a part of the Finance Committee's efforts to replace the doc fix so that doctors could be paid properly and Medicare recipients would be able to see doctors, also to enact trade promotion authority legislation, to increase trade that increases dollars to the United States, and also to finance the highway trust fund. I was proud to be a part of the effort of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and I commend my chairman for his work on those bills.

Today I also want to acknowledge Senator COCHRAN's work to lead the Appropriations Committee in reporting all 12 appropriations bills for the first time since 2012. Incidentally, they stayed within the budget on those, and most were bipartisan. It is the first time all 12 appropriations bills have been voted out of committee since 2012. I want to thank Senator MURKOWSKI for her work on energy issues, including the Keystone Pipeline bill, and Senator CORNYN, for his efforts to protect victims of trafficking.

I was also proud to work this year on some issues important to my own State of Wyoming by pushing back on the administration's Clean Power Plan and waters of the United States rule, primarily designed to eliminate the use of coal and drive up the price of electricity in this country, which in essence will cost the average American a lot more for their electricity. Just as importantly, it will send jobs overseas where the energy costs less.

This year Congress also corrected a problem that the 2012 highway bill created for Wyoming, and I commend Senator BARRASSO for his efforts on that. I also want to thank Senators MCCAIN and ISAKSON for their work to support our troops and our veterans. I appreciate Senator MCCAIN working with me to ensure small businesses have the help they need to compete for Federal contracts.

This isn't an exhaustive list. There are several more things. We passed over 80 bills this year. But these are some of the things we can be proud of. The Senate is under new management,

and these accomplishments and others still to come show hard-working taxpayers that Republicans in the Senate are working to deliver a more effective and accountable government, a government for the people and by the people that supports them when it must and gets out of the way when it should. We have made great progress this year, but there is still more to be done. By working together, we are proving that we can deliver real solutions and real progress that the American people want and deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

TAX BREAK PARITY

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, here is where we are. The Republicans are holding the government spending bill and tax breaks for businesses hostage unless they can attach a rider to these bills to allow Big Oil to export American oil overseas to the highest foreign bidder. Ten days before Christmas, Republicans want to give Big Oil the biggest of all Christmas presents by lifting the crude oil export ban, and they keep saying no to long-term extensions of the wind and solar tax breaks and protections for consumers as part of the deal. Lifting the oil export ban would be a disaster for our economy, our climate, and for our national security. We should have tax break parity.

Let me tell you where we are right now. In America the oil industry gets approximately $7 to $8 billion a year in tax breaks. It is interesting because $7 to $8 billion is what the wind and solar industry receives each year—pretty even: wind and solar; oil—$7 to $8 billion every year in tax breaks.

We keep hearing from the other side: Let's have a level playing field; let's have all of the above. Well, what are they asking for right now?

Here is what they are asking for. The oil tax breaks will continue forever, and the wind and solar tax breaks will phase out over the next 3 to 5 years. This is on top of the windfall which the oil industry receives from the exportation of the oil that otherwise would stay here in the United States. Under that scenario, the losers are going to be U.S. consumers because we will be exporting the oil that is already here in our own ground, so that the oil industry can get a higher price overseas. It will hurt our national security because we still import 5 million barrels per day. Can I say that again? We still import 5 million barrels of oil a day. We still import 25 percent of all our oil. Some of the countries we import that oil from you may have heard of—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Algeria, Nigeria. We are still importing oil, and we are still exporting men and women over to the Middle East to protect those cargo ships of oil, bringing it to the United States. We don't have a surplus of oil in the United States. We have a deficit of 5 million barrels of oil per day. So that is a dangerous policy. On top of that, I will just say that the whole ethanol subsidy program in the United States is premised upon the fact that we do not have energy independence and we need ethanol to get $1.3 billion dollars' worth of tax breaks a year—biodiesel.

Well, that whole program starts to get called into question if we are already going to declare energy independence here, even as we still import 5 million barrels a day. Our domestic refiners will be hurt by this unless there are proper protections built in in the Tax Code for those refiners. Otherwise, as that crude oil goes overseas, it is going to call into jeopardy the viability of the oil refineries across the East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast of the United States of America.

On the environment, if Brookings Institution is correct and upwards of 3 million barrels of oil will be exported by the year 2025, that is the equivalent of 150 coal-burning plants of additional pollution going up from our own soil.

Some people question: Well, will that really happen? Let me give you some other numbers. The Energy Information Administration says that the developing world and its expanding economy are going to require 10 million additional barrels of oil by the year 2025. The expanding economy is going to require 20 million barrels of new oil by the year 2035.

What Big Oil in America wants is a piece of that action. They want to be able to export into that market, and they will do so by drilling on American soil, not to reduce our own dependence upon imported oil but to sell it because the price on the global market is higher—much higher than the price they could get in America.

Is that truly a good policy, given what we are seeing about the stability of the Saudi government? Well, just look at the governments all across the Middle East from which we import oil. Is this really a good idea? I don't think so. I think it goes to the heart of our national security.

What happens to the Big Oil industry over the next 20 years is that they pick up about $500 billion in new tax revenues; that is with a ''b,'' $500 billion. They keep their $7 billion in tax breaks every year over a 20-year period. That is $140 billion more.

Meanwhile, the solar and wind tax breaks expire; they run out. The rumors are they run out over the wind in 3 years. Well, the young generation is the green generation. They think wind and solar are the future. They don't think fossil fuels are the future.

The whole world, 195 countries, just gathered and signed an agreement to move away from a fossil era to a low-carbon, clean-energy future. So if there was going to be a deal out here, then there should be some equality. If you don't take away the tax breaks from oil and gas, then don't take away the tax breaks for wind and solar—a level playing field, all of the above. Have a competition so that we can know at the end of the day—which is what I think is going to happen—that renewables are actually the future. It is a tale of two tax breaks: one for Big Oil and one for the renewable industry.

As I stand on the floor, this is still an unanswered question, but I do know this: The Republicans are pledging that if their Presidential candidate wins in 2016, then in 2017 that Presidential candidate is going to take off the books the clean power rules that President Obama has promulgated. They are going to review the fuel economy standards that push us to 54.5 miles per gallon by the year 2025, which is still the largest single reduction of greenhouse gases in one stroke that any country in the world has ever actually announced. They are also saying, obviously this week, that they are going to allow the wind and solar tax breaks to expire. So just as the world meets, we have the announcements about what their goals are on this issue.

I think the world expects more from us, but I actually think the young people of our country expect more from us. They truly think this is the future; this is the revolution: more efficient vehicles, powerplants that have fewer emissions, tax breaks for wind, and solar for fuel cells—the future. It is not having 150 new powerplants of coal equivalents of oil being drilled for in our country without some corresponding, permanent, long-term tax breaks that would offset it. No, it is just the opposite. They are saying: We are coming after the Presidential election for the reductions in greenhouse gases from powerplants. We will take those rules off the books. We are going to review the fuel economy standards. We will take those off the books, and we will make sure there is never again a permanent tax break for wind and solar. That is where we are in the same week that the world just met in Paris to announce the global solution to a global warming problem.

So I say equality; I say keep it the same. If you want to keep oil, if you want to keep natural gas tax breaks, keep them. But don't take away ours; that is, not mine but those who believe in a low-carbon, clean-energy future for our planet. The United States must be the leader. We are the innovation giant. We are the country that the world is looking for in order to find these solutions.

We passed laws that created this cell phone in 1996. Until then it was the size of a brick, and people didn't have one in their pocket. Then, 8 years later, a new cell phone came along. By the way, 600 million people in Africa have them because we innovated; we went first.

We can do the same thing in the energy sector, but there has to be some fair treatment that is put in place, especially when the oil industry receives such an incredible bonanza of those breaks here—$500 billion in new revenues. From my perspective, it is undermining our national security because

we shouldn't be exporting oil when we are still importing it from dangerous places on the planet, and they keep all their tax breaks.

From my perspective, I look at the Republican mantra from 6 to 7 years ago. It was ''Drill Here, Drill Now, Pay Less.'' They were saying: The more we drill here, the more energy independence we are going to have. They are replacing it this week with ''drill here, export there, pay more'' here at home. That is their new slogan. Everything they had said about why we should be drilling here is now made obsolete by their commitment to now ensure that oil gets exported. There are two prices: There is an OPEC price for global oil, and there is a Texas price for American oil. It is always cheaper here. They want to get it off into ships to get the OPEC price on the global market. I understand that.

What I don't understand is how we can leave behind—with tax breaks that are phasing out and the rumors that the wind tax break expires over the next 3 years—those new technologies that are branded ''Made in America,'' such as these cell phone technologies, these smartphone technologies that have revolutionized countries and continents all across the planet.

I come to the floor to say I understand why Big Oil wants this. It is about as great a Christmas gift as any industry would ever have received.

In return, I hope before we adjourn that we can find a way of being more generous—much more generous—to those other companies, those other technologies that are the future. I hope the promises Republican Presidential candidates are making that they are going to come back and take the clean powerplant rules off the books—that they are protected because we have the tax breaks. It still signals to industries that they are our future and the past is just a memory, that there is a new 21st century vision that America is going to lead, that the promises President Obama made in Paris on behalf of the American people are, in fact, going to be met, and that our policies are going to reflect the words the President spoke.

I thank the Presiding Officer for this time.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, from voting to repeal ObamaCare to passing the first long-term Transportation bill in a decade and the first joint balanced budget in 14 years, Senate Republicans have worked hard this year to fulfill our promise to get Washington working again for American families.

While some of our efforts have been blocked by Senate Democrats or by the President, we have still managed to get a lot done. I am particularly proud of some of the legislation we passed this year that will benefit South Dakota families and businesses as well as families and businesses across the country. One bill that I have been working on for a long time—a bill that will mean a lot to South Dakota's farmers and ranchers—is the legislation the House passed last week, the Surface Transportation Board reauthorization bill.

The Surface Transportation Board is responsible for helping to ensure the efficiency of our rail system by addressing problems and adjudicating disputes between railroads and shippers. Unfortunately, it has been clear for several years now that the Surface Transportation Board needs to work better. This became particularly apparent in 2013 and 2014 when a sharp increase in shipping demand and harsh winter weather conditions combined to create massive backlogs in the availability of railcars for grain shipping which, in turn, caused storage issues for farmers across the Midwest.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture found that the rail backlog lowered the price of corn, wheat, and soybeans in the upper Midwest. It forced shippers to pay record-high railroad-car premiums—in the neighborhood of 28 percent to 150 percent above the previous average levels—for roughly 65 consecutive weeks.

The Surface Transportation Board legislation that Congress sent to the President last week will help prevent another situation such as this in the future. The bill, which I spearheaded, makes a number of significant reforms to the Board. For starters, it establishes the number of Board members and establishes a more collaborative process that will allow members to work together to identify and solve problems as they emerge. The bill also provides the Board with the investigative authority to address rail service issues even if an official complaint has not been made. This will allow and encourage the Board to be more proactive when it comes to addressing problems in our Nation's rail system.

The bill also increases transparency by requiring the Surface Transportation Board to establish a data base of complaints and to provide quarterly reports with key information to facilitate the effective monitoring of service issues. Finally, the bill improves the current process for resolving disputes between railroads and shippers.

Right now, disputes can take multiple years and literally millions of dollars to resolve, putting a tremendous burden on shippers and on railroads as well. The legislation we developed improves this process by setting timelines for rate reviews, expanding voluntary arbitrary procedures, and requiring the Surface Transportation Board to study alternative rate review methodologies to streamline and to expedite cases. It requires the Surface Transportation Board to maintain at least one simplified, expedited rate review methodology. These changes will increase efficiency throughout the rate review process.

South Dakota farmers and ranchers depend on our Nation's railroads to bring their goods to market. They also depend on our Nation's highways. This year I was proud to work with my colleagues in the Senate on the first long-term Transportation bill in a decade.

Over the past several years, Congress made a habit of passing numerous short-term funding extensions for Federal transportation programs. Over the past several years of short-term extensions, the latest, I think, was No. 38. That was an incredibly inefficient way to manage our Nation's infrastructure needs, and it wasted an incredible amount of money. It also put a lot of transportation jobs in jeopardy.

When Congress fails to make clear how transportation funding will be allocated, States and local governments are left without the certainty they need to authorize projects or to make long-term plans for addressing various transportation infrastructure needs. That means essential projects, construction projects, get deferred. Necessary repairs may not get made, and the jobs that depend on these projects and repairs are put at risk.

The Transportation bill we passed this month changes all that. It reauthorizes transportation programs for the long term, and it provides 5 years of guaranteed funding. It means States and local governments will have the certainty they need to invest in big transportation projects and the jobs that they create. That, in turn, means a stronger economy and a more reliable, safer, and effective transportation system.

As chairman of the commerce committee, I spend a lot of time working with committee members on both sides of the aisle to develop the Transportation bill's safety provisions. Our portion of the bill includes a host of important safety improvements, including enhancements to the notification process to ensure that consumers are informed of auto-related recalls, and also important reforms at the government agency responsible for overseeing safety in our Nation's cars and trucks.

Another important success for South Dakota this year was the final approval of the expansion of the Powder River Training Complex—the military training airspace over South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. The expanded airspace approved by the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration will allow our air men and women to carry out critical training in conditions that more closely resemble combat missions. After working with the Air Force on this project for nearly 9 years, I was proud to see this expansion finally completed and even more delighted to see the first large-force training exercise take place at the expanded Powder River Training Complex just this month. Forty-one aircraft took part in the exercise, including the B–1 bombers from Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota.

The expanded training complex will save Ellsworth $23 million per year in training costs by reducing the need for the B–1 bombers to commute to other places, such as Nevada and Utah, for training.

Supporting our men and women in uniform—like our airmen at Ellsworth—is one of the most important jobs we have as Members of Congress.

This year I am proud to report that the Senate passed a national defense authorization bill that incorporates a number of critical reforms that will expand the resources available to our servicemembers and strengthen our national security. The National Defense Authorization Act for 2016 tackles waste and inefficiency at the Department of Defense and focuses funding on our warfighters rather than on the Pentagon bureaucracy.

The bill also overhauls our military retirement system. Before this bill, the system limited retirement benefits to servicemembers who had served for 20 years or more, which means huge numbers of military personnel, including many veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, retired after years of service without having accrued any retirement benefits. The National Defense Authorization Act replaces this system with a new retirement system that will ensure that the majority of our Nation's servicemembers receive retirement benefits for their years of service to our country even if they have not reached the 20-year mark.

The bills I have discussed today are just a few of the accomplishments of the Republican-led Senate. Over the course of this year, we have passed a number of significant pieces of legislation that will benefit Americans for years to come.

We have worked hard to help our Nation's veterans by expanding access to mental health resources, reducing wait times for medical care, and increasing the number of providers who can serve veterans. We voted to repeal ObamaCare and start the process of moving toward the real health care reform Americans are looking for: an affordable, accountable, patient-focused system that puts individuals in control of their health care decisions. We passed legislation to contain the out-of-control bureaucracy at the EPA and legislation to begin the process of safeguarding Medicare and Social Security by putting them on a more sustainable financial footing going forward. We passed cyber security legislation to protect Americans' privacy and a major education reform bill that puts States, parents, teachers, and local school boards—not Washington bureaucrats—in charge of our children's education.

While we may have accomplished a lot this year, we know there is still a lot more that needs to be done. Americans are still suffering in the Obama economy, and our Nation continues to face terrorist threats at home and abroad.

Whether it is enacting pro-economic growth policies at home or ensuring that our military has the resources it needs to protect us from threats abroad, Republicans will redouble our efforts to make sure Washington is meeting the needs of American families and addressing the American people's priorities. We plan to spend the second year of the 114th Congress next year the way we have spent the first: fighting to make our economy stronger, our government more efficient and more accountable, and our Nation and our world safer and more secure.

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. 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. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, one of the brightest bright spots at the Paris climate talks last week was the robust corporate presence. Leading businesses and executives from around the world were there in Paris to voice their support for a strong international climate agreement. That brings me here today for the now 122nd time to say that it is time for America's leading corporations and their lobbyists to bring that same message here to Washington to help Congress wake up.

Let me use an example of two of the good guys. The two biggest drinks companies in America are Coca-Cola and PepsiCo. Coke and Pepsi both signed this public letter urging strong climate action in Paris:

> Dear U.S. and global leaders:
>
> Now is the time to meaningfully address the reality of climate change. We are asking you to embrace the opportunity presented to you in Paris. . . . We are ready to meet the climate challenges that face our businesses. Please join us in meeting the climate challenges that face the world.

And it is not just that public letter; Coca-Cola's Web site says it will reduce CO_2 emissions by 25 percent and that to do so, ''Coca-Cola will work to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions across its value chain, making comprehensive carbon footprint reductions across its manufacturing processes, packaging formats, delivery fleet, refrigeration equipment and ingredient sourcing.''

Coca-Cola also says: ''We continue to partner with peer companies, bottling partners, NGOs, governments and others in addressing our greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging progress in response to climate change.''

Pepsi's Web site heralds what it calls ''its commitment to action on climate change'' and announces that it has signed both the Ceres BICEP Climate Declaration in the United States and the Prince of Wales's Corporate Leaders Group Trillion Tonne Communique in the UK. These commitments, they say, ''are part of PepsiCo's overall strategy to address climate change by working across its business and with global leaders.''

Here is Indra Nooyi, chairman and CEO of PepsiCo:

> Combating climate change is absolutely critical to the future of our company, customers, consumers—and our world. I believe all of us need to take action now.

I have corresponded with these companies about climate change, and here is what they have said in their letters to me.

In March 2013, Coke said:

> We recognize that climate change is a critical challenge facing our planet, with potential impacts on biodiversity, water resources, public health, and agriculture. Beyond the effects on the communities we serve, we view climate change as a potential business risk, understanding that it could likely have direct and indirect effects on our business.
>
> As a responsible global company, with operations in more than 200 countries, we have a role to play in climate protection. . . .

Then in May 2014:

> The Coca-Cola Company has strongly stated that climate change is happening and the implications of climate change for our planet are profound and wide-ranging. It is our belief that climate change may have long-term direct and indirect implications for our business and supply chain and we recognize that sustainability is core to our long-term value. . . . Climate protection is a key component of our business strategy.

In August of this year:

> Coca-Cola joined twelve other corporations at the White House pledging our support for the American Business Act on Climate [Pledge]. Climate protection has been a key focus of Coca-Cola for decades.

In a letter of February 2013, Pepsi said:

> PepsiCo applauds your efforts to address climate change by focusing Congressional attention on the issue. . . . At PepsiCo, we recognize the adverse impacts that greenhouse gas emissions have on global temperatures, weather patterns, and the frequency and severity of extreme weather and natural disasters. These impacts may have significant implications for our company. . . . Accordingly, responding to climate change is integrated into PepsiCo's business strategy.

In September of this year, Pepsi wrote:

> We look forward to providing further support on the ''Road to Paris''—demonstrating that actions by business in climate are not only good for the environment, but good for business.

That is all great stuff. Here is where it gets a little strange. Coke and Pepsi have a trade association, the American Beverage Association, that lobbies for the soft drink industry, and they also support the business lobbying group, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Indeed, the American Beverage Association sits on the board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and contributes to it a lot of money.

Here is the official position of the American Beverage Association on climate change from its Web site:

Each of America's beverage companies has set goals to lower our emissions over time while continually improving efficiency. And our companies have pledged to work with government leaders, environmental organizations, and other businesses to ensure these emission reductions are happening throughout the United States.

They even have the Beverage Industry Environmental Roundtable. But do they lobby us about this in Congress? I have never seen any sign of it. When the American Beverage Association thought Congress might impose a soda tax to fund health care, then they lobbied like crazy—nearly $30 million worth of lobbying expenditure. They know how to lobby when they want to. But on climate, I have never seen it.

As for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, everyone in Congress knows that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is dead set against Congress doing anything serious about climate change. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is a very powerful lobby group, and its power in Congress is fully dedicated to stopping any serious climate legislation. They are implacable adversaries of climate action, and we see their hostility everywhere.

At one point, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce wrote to me to say I mischaracterized its position on climate change. ''Even a cursory review of our stated views on climate change,'' wrote Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Tom Donahue, ''shows that the Chamber is not debating the existence of climate change or that human activity plays a role.''

Well and good, but here is what I wrote back.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD my full letter at the end of my remarks.

I wrote back:

I am in politics in Washington, and I see the behavior of your organization firsthand. There is no way to reconcile what I see in real life around me with the assurances in your letter that you treat the climate problem in any way seriously.

I then offered a list of the many ways the U.S. Chamber of Commerce actively opposes climate legislation and concluded:

In every practical way in which your organization brings pressure to bear on the American political process, I see you bringing it to bear in line with the big carbon polluters and the climate denial industry. And given the powerful and relentless way in which you bring that pressure to bear on our system in the service of your own First Amendment rights, I hope you will accept that I have the right to express my own views under that same First Amendment.

In sum, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has a terrible record on climate change. It is Coke and Pepsi's adversary on getting anything done. So why is Coke and Pepsi's American Beverage Association on the board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce?

The result is that Coke and Pepsi take one position on climate change in their public materials and in Paris and throughout their internal corporate effort, but here in Congress, where the rubber meets the road on legislating and where the lobbying meets our legislative efforts, their lobbying agencies don't support their position. I actually wonder how well they know in the executive suites of Coke and Pepsi that their position is not supported by the lobbying effort they support.

Let me be clear. I am not here to ask that companies such as Coke and Pepsi take a different position on climate change than what they believe. I am here to ask companies to line up their advocacy in Congress with what they believe. My ask is simple: Match your advocacy in Congress with your policy. Don't outsource your advocacy to entities that take the opposite position from you—not on an issue of this magnitude. This is too important an issue for great American companies to say one thing when they are talking to the public and have their lobbying agencies say something completely different when they come to Congress.

I have asked Coke and Pepsi about this discrepancy between their policy and these organizations' advocacy, and here is what they say. From Pepsi:

The Chamber is an important partner for PepsiCo on critical tax and trade matters. However, our positions on climate change have diverged.

From Coke:

The Coca-Cola Company belongs to a wide range of organizations through which we gain different perspectives on global and national issues; however these groups do not speak on our behalf.

Well, if their positions have diverged and these organizations don't speak for them on this issue, why keep supporting one of the leading political opponents of meaningful climate action? If you insist on supporting the entities that lobby against you on climate change, then the question becomes this: What are you doing in Congress to lobby back? What are your countermeasures to dispel the voice of these agencies that you are supporting?

Climate change is not just any other issue. It is so big an issue that the world's leaders just gathered in Paris to address it in the largest gathering of world leaders in history. It is so big an issue that it has its own page on Coke's and Pepsi's Web sites and, indeed, on the Web sites of most major American corporations. It is so big an issue that our former Pacific commander, Admiral Locklear, said it was the biggest national security threat we face in the Pacific theater. To use Admiral Locklear's exact words, climate change ''is probably the most likely thing that is going to happen . . . that will cripple the security environment, probably more likely than the other scenarios we all often talk about.''

Around here in Congress, the bullying menace of the fossil fuel industry is everywhere. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is their vocal advocate. If companies such as Coke and Pepsi don't push back against this group that they fund, that choice has real consequences here. That choice says to Congress: ''This issue isn't really serious to us.'' That choice says to the individual Members over here: ''If you cross the fossil fuel boys, don't count on us to have your back.''

I recently received a letter from ExxonMobil. It says:

ExxonMobil has for a number of years held the view that a ''revenue-neutral carbon tax'' is the best option. . . . [A] carbon tax could help create the conditions to reduce greenhouse emissions in a way that spurs new efficiencies and new technologies.

This is ExxonMobil.

The revenue-neutral carbon tax could be a workable policy framework for countries around the world—and the policy most likely to preserve the ability of every sector of society to seek out new efficiencies and new technologies.

ExxonMobil may say that in their letter, but let me say as the author of the Senate's revenue-neutral carbon-fee bill, I can assure you that bill is getting zero support from ExxonMobil. ExxonMobil is playing a double game, with statements such as they made in the letter to me on the one hand, but on the other hand all of its massive lobbying clout directed against doing anything serious on climate.

I suggest that it is the same with the other companies. They may have enough happy talk about climate change being serious to get them through a cocktail party at Davos, but the full weight of their industry lobbying leverage, through the Chamber and the American Petroleum Institute and a slew of other front groups, is leaned in hard against climate legislation, including revenue-neutral carbon fees. We should perhaps expect better of them. But we should certainly expect better of other companies that don't have ExxonMobil's massive conflict of interest.

To be fair to Coke and Pepsi, they are not alone. Congress is heavily influenced by corporations. That is no news flash. What my colleagues here all know is that virtually zero of that corporate influence is brought to bear in support of climate action. Even companies with good internal climate policies, even companies that are leaders in what they are doing within their companies and within their supply chains on climate change shy away from this issue in Congress.

The result is that, on one side, the fossil fuel industry maintains a desperate grip on Congress to stop any climate action. They lean on Congress hard to get their way. On the other side, the rest of corporate America has virtually nothing to say in Congress on climate change. Maybe they do on their Web sites, maybe in their public relations, certainly through their sustainability departments, and in some cases from their CEOs. But from their lobbyists and from the trade associations and the lobbying organizations that represent them here in Congress, the silence is deafening.

The corporate effort in Congress to get something done on climate change rounds to zero. I am in Congress, and I am here to say we need you guys to show up. I get that it is never convenient to stand up to bullies. It is always easier if they just go away, but the fossil fuel bullies are not going away. So it is either stand up to them or keep letting them roll Congress.

If what Coke and Pepsi and other corporations say publicly are the things they really believe, then it should be important to them that Congress not get rolled by the guys who are working against what they believe. This should not be too big an ask for the corporations that stood up in Paris: Do the same thing in Congress. Do the same thing in Congress. Do the simplest and truest of things: Stand up for what you believe.

It is time to wake up, but it is also time to stand up, and what a difference you will make.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

EXXONMOBIL CORPORATION,
Washington, DC, December 2, 2015.

Hon. EDWARD J. MARKEY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. ELIZABETH WARREN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS: As to your question about Donors Trust and Donors Capital, we had never heard of these organizations until you brought them to our attention. We do not provide funding to them.

At ExxonMobil we too have been following the deliberately misleading stories regarding our company published by the climate activist organization InsideClimate News and by various media outlets. If you are interested in our response, please visit our corporate blog: http://www.exxonmobilperspectives.com.

From the very beginning of concern about climate change, ExxonMobil scientists and engineers have been involved in discussions and analysis of climate change. These efforts started internally as early as the 1970s. They led to work with the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and collaboration with academic institutions and to reaching out to policymakers and others, who sought to advance scientific understanding and policy dialogue.

We believe the risks of climate change are serious and warrant thoughtful action. We also believe that by taking sound and wise actions now we can better mitigate and manage those risks. But as policymakers work to reduce emissions, it is critical to recognize the importance of reliable and affordable energy in supporting human progress across society and the economy.

Sound tax, legal, and regulatory frameworks are essential. With sound policies enacted, investment, innovation, and cooperation can flourish. In our view, policy works best when it maintains a level playing field; opens the doors for competition; and refrains from picking winners and losers.

When considering policy options to address the risks of climate change, we urge you to draw from the best insights from economics, science, and engineering. The U.S. has achieved remarkable reductions in not just greenhouse gas intensity measures, but in absolute levels of carbon dioxide emissions as a result of large-scale fuel switching from coal to natural gas for electricity generation. Thoughtful regulatory initiatives directed to both energy and building efficiency standards, as well as continued improvements in emissions levels related to industrial processes, have also contributed to the reduction in the nation's greenhouse gas emissions.

As you consider additional policy options, such as putting a more direct cost on carbon to incentivize different choices, we suggest that these policies ensure a uniform and predictable carbon cost across the economy and allow competitive market forces to drive solutions. We believe this approach will maximize transparency, reduce complexity, and promote global participation.

You are probably aware that ExxonMobil has for a number of years held the view that a ''revenue-neutral carbon tax'' is the best option to fulfill these key principles. Instead of subsidies and mandates that distort markets, stifle innovation, and raise energy costs, such a carbon tax could help create the conditions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that spurs new efficiencies and new technologies. The revenue-neutral carbon tax could be a workable policy framework for countries around the world—and the policy most likely to preserve the ability of every sector of society to seek out new efficiencies and new technologies.

Sincerely,

THERESA M. FARIELLO,
Vice President, Washington Office.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRESIDENT'S STRATEGY TO DEFEAT ISIS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, just yesterday President Obama went to the Pentagon for a long overdue meeting with his national security advisers. During that meeting or shortly thereafter, he made this statement: ''We are hitting ISIL harder than ever.'' Unfortunately, the President failed to acknowledge the simple fact that his strategy against ISIL—or ISIS, as it is more frequently called—is simply not working.

This is pretty hard to get right, but at least our leaders should have the humility to recognize reality, and when things aren't working out so well, reconsider and make some midcourse changes so they do work—not this President. I have said repeatedly that the President needs to tell Congress and the American people about his comprehensive strategy to defeat this terrorist enemy, and he has to do more to give our military the flexibility and resources they need to accomplish the mission. It is simply wrong to ask our military to accomplish something and not give them the freedom, flexibility, and resources they need in order to accomplish it.

That is why when the President talks about airstrikes—I know of no military leader who believes that you can defeat this terrorist army in Syria and Iraq by airstrikes alone. Nobody. Yet that seems to be the only tactic this President is using. So the President needs to tell the American people the truth about the realities on the ground in Iraq and Syria. He needs to listen and take advice from the military leadership he has at the Pentagon and on his own staff. Above all, he needs to learn not to be ashamed of American leadership.

It is absolutely true that America doesn't necessarily need to fight the wars for other countries in the region that ought to be engaged in the fight themselves, but the fact is there is no one else on the planet who can lead like the United States of America. We have to organize it, we have to lead it, and we have to support it if we expect other people to be the boots on the ground to fight those wars, but the action we are seeing currently from this administration does not match the very serious threat we face, and it is a threat that has gotten worse, not better, under the President.

CIA Director John Brennan recently estimated that before President Obama prematurely pulled all U.S. troops out of Iraq, without any sort of transition at all, the predecessor of ISIS, known as Al Qaeda in Iraq, had ''maybe 700-or-so adherents left.'' This is the CIA Director, nominated by President Obama and confirmed by the Senate. He said, before the President pulled the plug in Iraq, there were about 700 or so adherents left in Al Qaeda in Iraq, the predecessor of ISIS. If we fast forward that to today, according to the New York Times, just a few months ago, he said: ''Nearly 30,000 foreign recruits have now poured in to Syria, many to join the Islamic State, a doubling of volunteers in the last 12 months. . . .''

Nearly 30,000 foreign recruits, a doubling of volunteers in just the last 12 months, these are pretty amazing and concerning numbers but more often they demonstrate how out of touch the President's remarks are when he says ISIS has been contained or we are hitting them harder than we ever have before. It is simply not working. Clearly, we need the President to execute an effective military strategy that results in both the physical destruction of ISIS and the complete rejection of their bankrupt ideology—not just in the Middle East but around the world, including here at home.

Frequently, when various pundits react when they hear people like me saying the President doesn't have an effective strategy, they say: OK. What is your strategy? First of all, I am not the Commander in Chief, but we did make some constructive suggestions to

the President. Nine other Republican Senators joined me in a letter, where we recommended six specific military options that if brought to bear on ISIS, would go a long way toward achieving his stated goal of destroying this terrorist army. First, it would take the handcuffs off the U.S. military and let our troops do what they have trained to do and what they have volunteered to do. Increasingly, we need a strategy that doesn't just handle the fight over there. We need a strategy to handle the fight here at home because of the danger of foreign fighters, of fighters going from the United States to the fight in the Middle East and then returning or people going to Europe. In particular, one concern has been raised by many of our Democratic colleagues is the use of the visa waiver, where you don't actually need—the 38 countries where you can travel to the United States without actually getting a specific visa or having to be interviewed by a consular officer at one of our embassies. This is a potential vulnerability for the United States.

The third area beyond the fight over there, beyond the danger of people exploiting the flaws in our screening system within immigration, whether it is fiance visas, whether it is a visa waiver or whether it is refugees—there is a third area the FBI Director talked about last week when he testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee. He talked about homegrown terrorists—people like the ones in San Bernardino who did actually travel to the Middle East and come back—but he also included people in the United States, American citizens. I must admit I appreciated the FBI Director's understanding of the threat that ISIS poses, including their attempts to inspire people in this country to become terrorists and commit acts of violence.

This Senator was astonished that the Department of Homeland Security would have a policy preventing the United States from screening the social media use by foreign nationals who are attempting to use our immigration system to come to the United States. In the instance of the female shooter in San Bernardino, it was revealed that using social media, she had posted things that should have been an alert—if our immigration officers were doing their job—to the fact that she was likely to be a jihadist and be a threat here at home.

Another threat we are going to have to deal with that Director Comey and the Deputy Attorney General raised is the use of encryption as a challenge that hinders the FBI's counterintelligence efforts against these ISIS-inspired extremists. Encryption applications are available on your cell phone, and some of the companies—Apple, for example—market them because people want to keep their communications private. We all understand that, but an encrypted message—one that is incapable of being unlocked—is one that can't be used to respond to a court order when somebody in law enforcement goes to court and says: We have probable cause to believe a crime was committed, so we want to execute this search warrant. As Director Comey confirmed, increasingly using encryption is part of terrorist trade craft.

I was shocked—because I hadn't heard it before—to hear Director Comey talk about how encryption impacted an investigation in my home State of Texas. He said many will remember that back in May, two men attempted to attack people at an event northeast of Dallas in Garland, TX. He said that fortunately the quick and effective response of law enforcement officials in the area stopped the men from making their way into the conference center, keeping them from inflicting more harm. We now know the attack was at least inspired by ISIS. In fact, according to media reports, ISIS quickly claimed responsibility for the attack.

Shockingly, Director Comey said last week before the Senate Judiciary Committee that the FBI had 109 encrypted messages with a terrorist overseas as part of this investigation of the Garland incident. According to the FBI Director, that is 109 messages the FBI still doesn't have access to because they are encrypted and they can't even crack it given a court order showing probable cause that it might lead to further evidence in this investigation. He pointed out that these sorts of encrypted communications are part of terrorist trade craft. In fact, there is reason to believe that within terror circles, they understand which of these devices and which of these apps are encrypted and thus make it less likely that they will be discovered when they are conspiring against Americans either here or abroad.

It troubles me that the men and women charged with keeping us safe don't have all the information they need. I think that is a subject on which we need to have a more serious conversation. I think that is why Director Comey mentioned that last week, and that is why the Deputy Attorney General came to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee to raise the concern, so we can have the kind of debate we always have in America when it is a balancing of privacy and security.

I commend the Director for engaging Congress on this critical issue, but what it points out is that the President and this administration need to have a three-pronged strategy when dealing against a terrorist threat: As I mentioned, over in Syria and Iraq, unhandcuff our military and make sure they have a strategy that will actually work over and above just airstrikes; second, try to make sure we enhance our screening system for immigration for people who come into the United States so we don't inadvertently allow someone into our country who has the intention of doing us harm; and third, do more to come up with a plan to deal with people being radicalized right here in the United States, not the least of which, I would hope the Department of Homeland Security voluntarily reverses their policy of not screening social media communications which are in the public domain. I mean, there is no expectation of privacy on the part of people posting things in a public domain such as Twitter or Facebook, particularly things like Twitter. I know you can restrict access, but most people communicate with their friends, family, and anybody else who happens to want to have a conversation with them on social media.

We can all agree that the threat of ISIS to the United States is broad and real. Sadly, we were reminded in San Bernardino and in Garland last May of this fact.

Last week, both in a letter I sent to the President and here on the floor, we sought to make some constructive suggestions to begin to have that conversation, which was long overdue, about what an effective strategy to carry out the President's stated goal of degrading and destroying ISIS would actually look like. I hope the President listens. Unfortunately, so far experience has taught us he is not necessarily primed that way. But I hope he will reconsider in light of the increased public concern about terrorist activity in the United States. Certainly, public opinion polls have shown that is the No. 1 issue of concern to the American people, and as the leader of the U.S. Government and as Commander in Chief, I hope he will have the humility and the common sense to say that what we are doing now is not working the way it should. We can do better. We can do more.

Certainly, if the President would work with us in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion, I know we would support a strategy that I think Members of Congress felt had a reasonably decent chance of working. But right now the President seems stuck on this same inadequate strategy of just bombing missions. These airstrikes are necessary but not sufficient to get the job done over there. It certainly is incomplete when you look at the threat in terms of exploiting our immigration system and in terms of homegrown radicalism. We haven't heard the kind of plan that we need to hear from the President of the United States that we are willing to work with him on. We need to hear from him what he is willing to do to help keep the American people safe and to fight and win this war against Islamic radicalism.

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

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, according to press reports, this administration may be just weeks away from lifting sanctions on Iran. This is despite Iran's recent actions that indicate they have little intention to comply with the terms of the agreement called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran nuclear deal. Most recently, the International Atomic Energy Agency released the final report on the possible military dimensions of the Iranian nuclear program. It is quite clear Iran was less than cooperative with the International Atomic Energy Agency. For some reason, despite Iran's stonewalling, the President seems intent and confident that they know the extent of Iran's past nuclear weaponization work.

It is important to remember the evolution of the importance of this information. In April 2015, Secretary Kerry stated in an interview that Iran must disclose its past military-related nuclear activities as part of any final deal. His words on this matter were unequivocal.

He stated:

> They have to do it. It will be done. If there's going to be a deal it will be done. It will be part of the final agreement. It has to be.

Just a few weeks later, when it was clear President Obama's administration was ready to surrender to Iran's demands on this issue, Secretary Kerry said that we didn't need a full accounting of Iran's past activities. He said the U.S. intelligence agencies already had ''perfect knowledge'' of Iran's activities.

Just a few days ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency released their report, which was supposed to be a comprehensive overview of Iran's nuclear program and their past military dimensions of that program. Because of Iran's obstruction, the report is far from comprehensive—as we were promised.

The International Atomic Energy Agency report essentially concludes what many of us have known for a very long time. Iran was working toward developing nuclear weapons capability and they have continually lied and continually misled the international community regarding that program. The International Atomic Energy Agency also concluded that Iran's nuclear weapons program was in operation until 2009, several years later than many believed.

President Obama repeatedly stated that the nuclear agreement was based on unprecedented verification. Yet it is very clear from the International Atomic Energy Agency report that Iran had no intention of cooperating with the requirement that they come clean on their nuclear program. In many areas, the International Atomic Energy Agency indicated that Iran provided little information, misleading responses, and even worked to conceal portions of that program.

Many of the questions around the Parchin military facility remain unanswered. This report from the International Atomic Energy Agency states:

> The information available to the Agency, including the results of the sampling analysis and the satellite imagery, does not support Iran's statement on the purpose of the building. The Agency assesses that the extensive activities undertaken by Iran since February 2012 at the particular location of interest to the Agency seriously undermined the Agency's ability to conduct effective verification.

An effective verification was what we were promised. The Iranians were actively working to cover up and destroy any evidence of their weaponization efforts at Parchin. On many occasions, Iran refused to provide any information or simply reiterated previous denials. Iran refused to cooperate and instead continues to deceive the international community on the military dimensions of its nuclear program. Some may wonder why we should even care about this. It matters because a complete and accurate declaration of all nuclear weapons activity is a critical first step in the verification regime and the safeguard process that the International Atomic Energy Agency will be asked to enforce and something we put our confidence in. I shouldn't say ''we'' because I didn't vote for it—but something this country puts its confidence in this Agency's ability to enforce. There must be a baseline declaration to ensure effective international monitoring going forward.

It also matters because President Obama entered into an agreement, along with our allies, to provide sanctions relief in exchange for Iran giving up its efforts to develop nuclear weapons. It matters because it is clear we do not have ''perfect knowledge''—which we were promised—of what Iran is up to, as Secretary Kerry has claimed. It also matters because since the agreement was finalized, Iranian leadership has not changed their behavior. If anything, they have increased their hostility. Here are some examples of hostility: On October 10, Iran launched a long-range ballistic missile. This is clearly in violation of Security Council Resolution 1929. Then, on November 21, Iran launched another ballistic missile.

It is clear that Iran has no intention to comply with the ballistic missile restrictions of this deal. These are blatant violations. How are we supposed to have any faith in this agreement or Iran's intent to comply? Iran did not comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency. They have continued to test ballistic missiles. They continue to hold Americans hostage. A Washington Post reporter has been imprisoned for more than 500 days and was recently convicted of unspecified charges in a sham trial. Iran has no intention to honor any of their obligations under this deal. It is naive to think otherwise. As a recent Wall Street Journal editorial put it, ''The larger point is that the nuclear deal has already become a case of Iran pretending not to cheat while the West pretends not to notice.''

I hope President Obama and his administration finally wake up and quickly recognize Iran's track record of noncompliance. Iran cannot and should not be rewarded with sanctions relief. The international community should not reward Iran with sanctions relief while Iran doubles down on its confrontational and uncooperative behavior. They should not be given hundreds of billions of dollars while continuing to defy and deceive the international community.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. 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—S. 579

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I am on the floor this afternoon to talk about S. 579, which is called the Inspector General Empowerment Act, but it really ought to be called ''Let the inspectors general do their jobs.''

As I look back on my time as a State auditor and I think of all I learned about how government works well and how government behaves badly, I have a special point of respect for inspectors general because of the work I did as an auditor. I believe they are our first line of defense against waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars. We should be helping them every way we can to do their jobs.

I want to thank Senator JOHNSON, the chairman of the committee I serve on that has primary jurisdiction on government oversight, and I want to thank Senator GRASSLEY for his long championing the cause of inspectors general and the GAO and all of the noble public servants who are out there every day trying to uncover government behaving badly.

This bill serves three main purposes. It provides additional authority to inspectors general to enhance their ability to conduct oversight investigations. It reforms the process by which the Council of the Inspectors General integrity committee investigates accusations against IGs, which is very important. IGs need to be above reproach. Any whiff of politics, any whiff of unethical conduct, any whiff of self-dealing—we have to empower the Council of the Inspectors General to deal with that in a way that is effective.

It restores the intent of the 1978 Inspectors General Act to ensure that IGs have timely access to documents they need to conduct good, comprehensive oversight audits and investigations.

Many of the provisions are authorities that the IGs have been seeking for a long time, and most of them are beyond noncontroversial.

I wish to focus on one section of the bill for a minute and explain how critical its provision is to congressional overseers and for the taxpayers. The main issue I wish to talk about today is the section of the bill that ensures IGs have access to all agency documents. The Inspector General Act, which was passed in 1978, explicitly grants access to ''all records, reports, audits, reviews, documents, papers, recommendations, or other material.''

For the last 37 years, we lived in a world where ''all'' meant all. But this summer, the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel issued an opinion that allows agencies to withhold documents from the inspectors general. Other than national security concerns, intelligence concerns, and statutes that explicitly restrict disclosure of documents to IGs, all of which are addressed by this bill, there is absolutely no reason that IGs should have their access to documents restricted. There is no universe in which the Inspector General Act should be interpreted to mean anything less than what it says. They have to have access to the documents or they can't do their work. It really isn't any more complicated than that.

The convoluted legal reasoning that is being implemented by the counsel at the Department of Justice is a big step backwards for effective oversight of our government. We can't expect them to do their jobs well without fear or favor if they can't get access to the information that is vital to their work.

When the auditors in my office came back with an access issue, my instruction to them was this: Well, get on your ''dog with a bone act,'' because if they are trying to withhold documents from you, there is something in those documents we need to see.

I think if every agency knows that the inspector general has access to documents, it will have a deterrent effect on people behaving badly with taxpayer money or engaging in self-dealing or other activities that frustrate taxpayers and heighten the level of cynicism that, frankly, right now is breaking my heart in this country about our government.

I join with my Republican colleagues today in asking unanimous consent for this bill to be brought up. We have worked on it for years. It is time. I appreciate the hard work of both on this, and I stand shoulder to shoulder with them trying to get this one across the finish line.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass S. 579, the Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015. I want to thank Senator MCCASKILL for her hard work on this and her support and Senator GRASSLEY for his many years as a real champion of this cause, as well as the other bipartisan cosponsors of this legislation and for the work their staff have done on this very important issue.

In 1978 Congress created a crucial oversight partner for all of us—inspectors general. They are independent watchdogs embedded in each agency, accountable only to Congress and the American people. That is crucial. They are the American people's eyes and ears, and they are our best partner in rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse. As an example, in fiscal year 2014 alone, inspectors general identified $45 billion in potential savings to the taxpayer.

What this bill aims to do is to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse by increasing accountability and ensuring transparency. The bill exempts inspectors general from time-consuming and independence-threatening requirements such as the computer matching and paperwork reduction statutes. It allows inspectors general to compel the testimony of former agency employees or Federal contractors and grant recipients in some administrative misconduct or civil fraud cases.

Too often we lose crucial information or have to end an investigation because the bad actor either leaves Federal employment or is a contractor or grantee and under current law cannot be subpoenaed. For example, the State Department inspector general oversees the $10.5 billion the agency obligates in grants every year yet cannot compel testimony of the grant recipients even in the event of suspected fraud or misconduct. He can only require current agency employees to speak to his team, which can result in an incomplete or one-sided investigation. If we care about oversight and accountability, inspectors general must be able to compel relevant testimony. In addition to these authorities, the bill requires inspectors general to publish reports within 3 days to ensure transparency and accountability.

I want to spend a little bit of time on the transparency aspect of this. Like many places around the country, we have seen some real problems with the VA health care system. There was a scandal in the Tomah facility in Tomah, WI. The result of that tragedy was that people died. I will never forget a call that I made to the surviving daughter of Mr. Thomas Baer, a veteran who went to the Tomah facility seeking care with stroke-like symptoms. Thomas Baer sat in the waiting room for 2 or 3 hours. He suffered a couple of strokes and died. I talked to his surviving daughter, Candace Baer, and I will never forget the fact that she said to me: Senator, had I only known, had I only known there were problems with the Tomah VA health facility, I never would have taken my father there, and my father would be alive today. That is how important transparency and accountability is. That is what this bill restores to the inspectors general.

Finally, the bill reiterates that inspectors general should have access to all agency documents necessary to do their job, unless Congress expressly denies that access by statute. The bill not only maintains current authorities for certain agency heads to keep inspector general work if it is necessary to preserve the country's national security interests, it actually enhances those authorities.

In sum, this is a bipartisan commonsense cause. We all want inspectors general to be able to do their jobs well. That is why this bill was unanimously approved by my committee—the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. It is why it has 14 bipartisan cosponsors representing Committees of the Judiciary, Appropriations, Armed Services, Energy and Natural Resources, and the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Even retired Senator John Glenn has asked my committee to take action to ensure inspectors general have access to documents. In the letter he wrote to my committee and to the House oversight committee, Senator Glenn says: ''The success of the IG Act is rooted in the principles on which the Act is grounded—independence, direct reporting to Congress, dedicated staff and resources, unrestricted access to agency records, subpoena power, special protections for agency employees who cooperate with the IG, and the ability to refer criminal matters to the Department of Justice without clearing such referrals through the agency.''

This is the heart of what the Inspector General Act asked for. This is what this bill restores. I cannot imagine anything controversial about wanting inspectors general to have access to the people and the documents they need to do their jobs. Americans deserve an accountable, transparent, and effective government. This is one tangible thing that we can do to help achieve that common goal.

I urge my colleagues to pass S. 579 today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an excellent article that appeared in the New York Times, as well as the letter we received from Senator John Glenn.

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

[From the New York Times, Nov. 27, 2015]

TIGHTER LID ON RECORDS THREATENS TO WEAKEN GOVERNMENT WATCHDOGS

(By Eric Lichtblau)

WASHINGTON.—Justice Department watchdogs ran into an unexpected roadblock last year when they began examining the role of federal drug agents in the fatal shootings of unarmed civilians during raids in Honduras.

The Drug Enforcement Administration balked at turning over emails from senior officials tied to the raids, according to the department's inspector general. It took nearly a year of wrangling before the D.E.A. was willing to turn over all its records in a case that the inspector general said raised ''serious questions'' about agents' use of deadly force.

The continuing Honduran inquiry is one of at least 20 investigations across the government that have been slowed, stymied or

sometimes closed because of a long-simmering dispute between the Obama administration and its own watchdogs over the shrinking access of inspectors general to confidential records, according to records and interviews.

The impasse has hampered investigations into an array of programs and abuse reports—from allegations of sexual assaults in the Peace Corps to the F.B.I.'s terrorism powers, officials said. And it has threatened to roll back more than three decades of policy giving the watchdogs unfettered access to ''all records'' in their investigations.

''The bottom line is that we're no longer independent,'' Michael E. Horowitz, the Justice Department inspector general, said in an interview.

The restrictions reflect a broader effort by the Obama administration to prevent unauthorized disclosures of sensitive information—at the expense, some watchdogs insist, of government oversight.

Justice Department lawyers concluded in a legal opinion this summer that some protected records, like grand jury transcripts, wiretap intercepts and financial credit reports, could be kept off limits to government investigators. The administration insists there is no intention of curtailing investigations, but both Democrats and Republicans in Congress have expressed alarm and are promising to restore full access to the watchdogs.

The new restrictions grew out of a five-year-old dispute within the Justice Department. After a series of scathing reports by Glenn Fine, then the Justice Department inspector general, on F.B.I. abuses in counterterrorism programs, F.B.I. lawyers began asserting in 2010 that he could no longer have access to certain confidential records because they were legally protected.

That led to a series of high-level Justice Department reviews, a new procedure for reviewing records requests and, ultimately, a formal opinion in July from the department's Office of Legal Counsel. That opinion, which applies to federal agencies across the government, concluded that the 1978 law giving an inspector general access to ''all records'' in investigations did not necessarily mean all records when it came to material like wiretap intercepts and grand jury reports.

The inspector-general system was created in 1978 in the wake of Watergate as an independent check on government abuse, and it has grown to include watchdogs at 72 federal agencies. Their investigations have produced thousands of often searing public reports on everything from secret terrorism programs and disaster responses to boondoggles like a lavish government conference in Las Vegas in 2010 that featured a clown and a mind reader.

Not surprisingly, tensions are common between the watchdogs and the officials they investigate. President Ronald Reagan, in fact, fired 15 inspectors general in 1981. But a number of scholars and investigators said the restrictions imposed by the Obama administration reflect a new level of acrimony.

''This is by far the most aggressive assault on the inspector general concept since the beginning,'' said Paul Light, a New York University professor who has studied the system. ''It's the complete evisceration of the concept. You might as well fold them down. They've become defanged.''

While President Obama has boasted of running ''the most transparent administration in history,'' some watchdogs say the clampdown has scaled back scrutiny of government programs.

''This runs against transparency,'' said the Peace Corps inspector general, Kathy Buller.

At the Peace Corps, her office began running into problems two years ago in an investigation into the agency's handling of allegations of sexual assaults against overseas volunteers. Congress mandated a review after a volunteer in Benin was murdered in 2009; several dozen volunteers reported that the Peace Corps ignored or mishandled sexual abuse claims.

But Peace Corps lawyers initially refused to turn over abuse reports, citing privacy restrictions. Even after reaching an agreement opening up some material, Ms. Buller said investigators have been able to get records that are heavily redacted.

''It's been incredibly frustrating,'' she said. ''We have spent so much time and energy arguing with the agency over this issue.''

The Peace Corps said in a statement, however, that it was committed to ''rigorous oversight'' and has cooperated fully with the inspector general.

Agencies facing investigations are now sometimes relying on the Justice Department's opinion as justification for denying records—even records that are not specifically covered in the opinion, officials said.

At the Commerce Department, the inspector general this year shut down an internal audit of enforcement of international trade agreements because the department's lawyers, citing the Justice Department's guidance, refused to turn over business records that they said were ''proprietary'' and protected.

The Environmental Protection Agency's inspector general has reported a series of struggles with the organization over its access to documents, including records the agency said were classified or covered by attorney-client privilege. And investigators at the Postal Service, a special Afghanistan reconstruction board, and other federal agencies have complained of tightened restrictions on investigative records as well.

Hopes of a quick end to the impasse have dimmed in recent days after the Obama administration volunteered to restore full access for the Justice Department's inspector general—but not the other 71 watchdogs.

Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, asked about the issue at a House hearing last week, said the proposal was intended to ensure, at least at the Justice Department, ''that the inspector general would receive all the information he needed.''

But watchdogs outside the Justice Department said they would be left dependent on the whims of agency officials in their investigations.

''It's no fix at all,'' said Senator Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa, who leads the Judiciary Committee.

In a rare show of bipartisanship, the administration has drawn scorn from Democrats and Republicans. The Obama administration's stance has ''blocked what was once a free flow of information'' to the watchdogs, Senator Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont, the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, said at a hearing.

A Justice Department spokeswoman, Emily Pierce, said in a statement on Friday: ''Justice Department leadership has issued policy guidance to ensure that our inspector general gets the documents he requests as quickly as possible, even when those documents are protected by other statutes protecting sensitive information. The department is unaware of any instance in which the inspector general has sought access to documents or information protected from disclosure by statute and did not receive them.''

Nowhere has the fallout over the dispute been felt more acutely than at the Justice Department, where the inspector general's office said 14 investigations had been hindered by the restricted access.

These include investigations into the F.B.I.'s use of phone records collected by the National Security Agency, the government's sharing of intelligence information before the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, a notorious gun-tracing operation known as ''Fast and Furious'' and the deadly Honduran drug raids.

In the case of the Honduran raids, the inspector general has been trying to piece together the exact role of D.E.A. agents in participating in, or even leading, a series of controversial drug raids there beginning in 2011.

Details of what happened remain sketchy even today, but drug agents in a helicopter in 2012 reportedly killed four unarmed villagers in a boat, including a pregnant woman and a 14-year-old boy, during a raid on suspected drug smugglers in northeastern Honduras. They also shot down several private planes—suspected of carrying drugs—in possible violation of international law.

An investigation by the Honduran government cleared American agents of responsibility. But when the inspector general began examining the case last year, D.E.A. officials refused to turn over emails on the episodes from senior executives, the inspector general's office said. Only after more than 11 months of back-and-forth negotiations were all the records turned over.

The D.E.A. refused to comment on the case, citing the investigation. A senior Justice Department official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the continuing review, said the refusal to turn over the records was the flawed result of ''a culture within the D.E.A.'' at the time—and not the result of the Justice Department's new legal restrictions.

Mr. Horowitz, the inspector general, said the long delay was a significant setback to his investigation. He now hopes to complete the Honduran review early next year.

In the meantime, the watchdogs say they are looking to Congress to intervene in a dispute with the administration that has become increasingly messy.

''It's essential to enshrine in the law that the inspector general has access to all agency records,'' said Mr. Fine, who is now the Pentagon's principal deputy inspector general. ''The underlying principle is key: To be an effective inspector general, you need the right to receive timely access to all agency records.''

JULY 23, 2015.

Hon. RON JOHNSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Hon. JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

DEAR SENATOR JOHNSON AND REPRESENTATIVE CHAFFETZ: Since the enactment of the Inspector General Act in 1978, the Inspectors General have provided independent oversight of government programs and operations and pursued prosecution of criminal activity against the government's interests. Recommendations from IG audits have led to improvements in the economy and efficiency of government programs that have resulted in better delivery of needed services to countless citizens. Investigations of those who violate the public trust to enrich themselves at the expense of honest taxpayers, of contractors who skirt the rules to illegally inflate their profits, and of others who devise criminal schemes to defraud the government have led to billions of dollars being returned to the U.S. Treasury.

The success of the IG Act is rooted in the principles on which the Act is grounded—independence, direct reporting to Congress, dedicated staff and resources, unrestricted access to agency records, subpoena power, special protections for agency employees who cooperate with the IG, and the ability

to refer criminal matters to the Department of Justice without clearing such referrals through the agency. We considered these safeguards to be vital when we developed the Act and they remain essential today. No other entity within government has the unique role and responsibility of Inspectors General, and their ability to accomplish their critical mission depends on the preservation of the principles underlying the Inspector General Act.

In recent years, IGs have experienced challenges to their ability to have independent access to records and information in their host agencies. Broad independent access to such records is a fundamental tenet in the IG Act and to compromise or in any way erode such access would strike at the heart of important law. In short, full and unfettered access is vital to an IG's ability to effectively prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in agency programs and activities.

The Inspector General Act has stood the test of time. The billions of dollars recovered for the government and the increased efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and operations are a testament to the Act's continued success. Any action that would impair the IG's ability to achieve their mission—particularly the denial of full and independent access to agency records and information—would have an immeasurable adverse impact and severely damage their critical oversight function. For this reason, I urge you to take action to protect the independent access rights of Inspectors General.

Sincerely,

JOHN GLENN,
United States Senator (Ret.).

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to compliment Senator MCCASKILL and Senator JOHNSON for their leadership in bringing this bill out of their committee—a committee I don't serve on but a bill that is very important to the oversight work of this Senator, and I hope every Senator considers it to be very important. I would say that I agree with everything they have said. I want to emphasize what they said, and I want to take a few minutes to do that because I feel strongly about this piece of legislation.

There is an important principle here—a very important principle—that we ought to keep in mind, because it is an insult to 100 Senators and 435 Members of the House of Representatives when legislation is written and it is explained very clearly what that legislation is supposed to accomplish: that an inspector general would have access to all records. Then we have a lawyer in the Office of Legal Counsel in the Department of Justice—one person making an interpretation of a law that is contrary to congressional intent—that one person out of 2 million people in the executive branch of government can override the will of 535 Members of Congress. That will was expressed way back in 1978.

This is just a little different quote from a letter Senator JOHNSON has already talked about from a respected Member of this Senate for 24 or maybe 30 years, Senator John Glenn of Ohio, who was very much interested in making sure that we had strong oversight by Congress and that within the executive branch, they had strong oversight that the IG would do within a specific department.

Senator John Glenn of Ohio was one of the chief architects of this legislation. He said: ''Full and unfettered access is vital to an IG's ability to effectively prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse in an agency's programs and activities.''

Here we are with what Senator John Glenn said when he was a Member of this body and this legislation passed. Then we have one lawyer out of 2 million executive branch employees interpreting a statute contrary to congressional intent and then overriding it—in other words, giving Cabinet heads opportunities to avoid doing what the inspector general law says and what an inspector general needs to do to do their job: have access to all records.

Senator MCCASKILL made that clear. Senator JOHNSON made that clear. This is a bipartisan effort coming unanimously out of this committee, that this is an egregious attack on the powers of Congress and we can't let one person out of 2 million people in the executive branch of the government get away with it. Yet we seem to have some problems getting it passed. I don't understand it. You try to explain that to the people of this country, whether it is in New York City or whether it is in Des Moines, IA. There is no way this can be justified, that one lawyer out of 2 million people in the executive branch of government can issue an opinion and override the Congress of the United States.

I intend to go into some detail about how I feel about this legislation, if my colleagues haven't come to that conclusion already. To ensure accountability and transparency in government, Congress created inspectors general, or IGs, as our eyes and ears within the executive branch. That is the foresight of one famous Senator and astronaut by the name of John Glenn. But IGs cannot do their job without timely and independent access to all agency records. That is why this bill is called ''all means all.'' Agencies cannot be trusted not to restrict the flow of potentially embarrassing documents to the IGs who oversee them. If the agencies can keep IGs in the dark, then this Congress will be kept in the dark as well.

When Congress passed the Inspectors General Act of 1978, the Congress explicitly said that IGs should have access to all agency records. Inspectors general are designed to be independent but to also be part of an agency. Inspectors general are there to help agency leadership identify and correct waste, fraud, and abuse. What Cabinet head wouldn't want somebody in their department to have access to all records that show that maybe that department isn't spending money according to congressional intent or maybe not following the law the way Congress intended? It ought to be welcome by any administration head.

Fights between an agency and its own inspector general over access to documents are a waste of taxpayers' money and personnel time. The law requires that inspectors general have access to all agency records—precisely, by the way, to avoid these costly and time-consuming disputes. However, since 2010, a handful of agencies, led by the FBI—and I respect the FBI, but in this case I don't—has refused to comply with this legal obligation.

The Justice Department claimed that the inspector general could not access certain records until—guess what—department leadership gave them permission to do it, even though the law says they are entitled to all documents. Requiring private approval from agency leadership for access to agency information undermines inspectors general independence. That is bad enough, but it also causes wasteful delays.

After this access problem came to light, Congress took action. So we have the 2015 Department of Justice Appropriations Act declaring—this is Congress again declaring—that no funds should be used to deny the inspector general timely access to all records. In other words, just this year—or last year when the appropriations bill was passed for 2015—we had Members of Congress saying that this lawyer, out of 2 million executive branch employees, who is frustrating the will of Congress is wrong.

This new law directed the inspector general to report to Congress within 5 days whenever there was a failure to comply with this requirement. In February alone, the Justice Department's IG notified Congress of three separate occasions in which the FBI failed to provide access to records requested for oversight investigations. IGs for the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Commerce, and the Peace Corps have experienced similar stonewalling.

Then, in July, the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel—that is this one lawyer out of 2 million employees—the Office of Legal Counsel released a memo arguing that we did not really mean ''all records'' when we put those words in the statute. Here we have somebody in the Justice Department—one person out of 2 million employees—trying to tell 535 Members of Congress what they meant when they said ''all'' means all. So let me be clear. We meant what we said in the IG act: ''All records'' really means all records.

I told my colleagues about the Department of Justice Appropriations Act responding to this a year ago. Well, 1 week after this report was issued, that the Office of Legal Counsel issued its awful legal opinion, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY—both outstanding members of the Committee on Appropriations—sent a letter to the Justice Department correcting the Office of Legal Counsel's misreading of

the appropriations rider, also known as section 218. I would like to read from the Mikulski and Shelby letter:

We write to inform you that the OLC's interpretation of section 218 is wrong and the subsequent conclusion of our committee's intention is wrong. We expect the department and all of its agencies to fully comply with section 218 and to provide the Office of Inspector General with full and immediate access to all records, documents, and other materials in accordance with section 6(a) of the Inspectors General Act.

So we wrote a statute in 1978. We have no problems with it until this person—one lawyer out of 2 million executive branch employees—writes an opinion saying ''all'' doesn't mean all. Then we have Members of the body who are insulted by that interpretation, and these Members write: No money in this appropriations bill can be used to carry out that Office of Legal Counsel opinion. And, if they would have listened to the members of the Appropriations Committee, Senator JOHNSON and Senator MCCASKILL would not have to work so hard to correct a bad opinion, contrary to congressional intent, that was written by the Office of Legal Counsel.

I applaud my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, particularly Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY, for standing up for the inspectors general.

In early August I chaired a Judiciary Committee hearing on the Office of Legal Counsel opinion and the devastating impact it is already having on the work of inspectors general across the country. Remember, the Office of Legal Counsel is in the Justice Department. Well, we had a Justice Department witness before our committee disagree with the results of the Office of Legal Counsel opinion and actually support legislative action to solve the problem.

So following the hearing, 11 of my colleagues and I sent a bipartisan—I want to emphasize bipartisan—as well as bicameral letter to the Department of Justice and the entire inspectors general community. In this letter, the chairs and ranking members of the committee of jurisdiction in both the House and the Senate asked for specific legislative language to reaffirm that ''all'' means all. As the witness from the Justice Department said, there ought to be legislative language to correct this awful interpretation by one lawyer out of 2 million employees in the executive branch, overriding 535 Members of Congress.

It took the Justice Department 3 months to respond to this letter, and its proposed language was far too narrow to actually override this Office of Legal Counsel opinion. However, the inspectors general community responded to our letter within 2 weeks. In September, a bipartisan group of Senators and I incorporated the core of this language into the bill we are talking about today, S. 579. It is entitled the ''Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015.'' In total, 13 colleagues have joined me on this bill: Senators JOHNSON, MCCASKILL, ERNST, BALDWIN, CARPER, CORNYN, LANKFORD, COLLINS, AYOTTE, KIRK, MIKULSKI, FISCHER, and WYDEN. It is bipartisan.

I am grateful to each of them for standing up with me for inspectors general. I especially want to thank Senators JOHNSON and MCCASKILL, as I have already done, but do it again for working closely with me on this legislation from the very beginning and for their work in getting this bill through their committee.

Let me tell you what this bill does. The Inspector General Empowerment Act includes further clarification that Congress intended IGs to have access to all agency records, notwithstanding any other provision of law, unless other laws specifically state that IGs are not to receive such access.

Let me be clear. The purpose of this provision is to nullify and overturn this awful decision that this one lawyer in the Department of Justice out of 2 million-plus Federal employees in the executive branch issued this opinion. These words, notwithstanding any other provision of law, are key to accomplishing that goal, but the bill does much more than overturning the OLC opinion, which has been roundly criticized by both sides of the aisle. It bolsters IG independence by preventing agency heads from placing them on arbitrary and indefinite administrative leave. It promotes transparency by requiring IGs to post more of their reports online, including those involving misconduct by senior officials that the Justice Department chose not to prosecute.

Also, the bill equips IGs with tools they need to conduct effective investigation, such as the ability to subpoena testimony from former Federal employees. When employees of the U.S. Government are accused of wrongdoing or misconduct, IGs should be able to conduct a full and thorough investigation of those allegations. Getting to the bottom of these allegations is necessary to restore public trust. God only knows how much restoration of public trust in the government in Washington we have to restore. Unfortunately, employees who may have violated that trust are often allowed to evade the IGs inquiry by simply retiring from the government. So the bill empowers IGs to obtain testimony from employees like that.

(Ms. AYOTTE assumed the Chair.)

Similarly, the bill helps IGs better expose waste, fraud, and abuse by those who receive Federal funds. It enables IGs to require testimony from government contractors, subcontractors, grantees, and subgrantees. Currently, most IGs can subpoena documents from entities from outside their agency. However, most cannot subpoena testimony, just documents—although there are a few agencies that can. For example, the inspector general for the Defense Department and the Department of Health and Human Services already have that authority. The ability to require witnesses outside the agency to talk to the IG can be critical in carrying out an inspector general's statutory duties or recovering wasted Federal funds.

The IG community recently provided me with numerous examples of actual, real-life cases that illustrate the need to subpoena witnesses.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a document that lists these accounts.

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

INSPECTORS GENERAL & TESTIMONIAL SUBPOENA AUTHORITY

THE USE OF TESTIMONIAL SUBPOENA AUTHORITY

Examples of when Testimonial Subpoena Authority Would Have Been Useful

Below are examples where subjects of IG oversight could have been served with testimonial subpoena's by an Inspector General:

1. Among a number of schemes identified during a multiagency OIG investigation, Target owner of small businesses submitted overlapping small business proposals to two federal agencies and obtained funding for both projects, approximately $500,000 from each agency. During the course of the projects, the work funded by one of the agencies was falsely reported out in project reports to both agencies. National Science Foundation (NSF) OIG requested interviews with the Target owner and two of his company's employees, and they initially agreed through counsel to be interviewed.

However, during the first of the interviews, an employee confessed to having destroyed company timesheets and created new company time sheets in response to an IG subpoena, and informed NSF OIG that he did so at the Target's request. After that interview, the Target declined to be interviewed. In addition, a fourth employee declined to be interviewed about his timesheets and work performed, which would have been relevant to the fraud scheme. NSF OIG's inability to compel testimony negatively impacted our ability to pursue the obstruction and other potential charges against the Target and company employees.

2. In a matter involving a very senior level Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) executive, instances of serious administrative misconduct were being investigated. During the pendency of the investigation, which had been declined criminally, the executive resigned and refused to cooperate any further. As a result, the investigation was completed without all of the investigative steps completed that would have indicated whether the misconduct was simply the result of a ''bad actor,'' or whether there are more systemic issues that should be addressed by the agency. A testimonial subpoena would ensure that the necessary investigative steps could be completed. This is particularly important in an agency like the SEC where employees are able to leave rather quickly for private sector jobs (the proverbial ''revolving door'').

3. The Peace Corps awarded a $1.5 million contract to a small business under the 8(a) Business Development Program, which is intended to provide eligible small disadvantaged businesses additional opportunities to obtain certain government contracts. The 8(a) Program requires that eligible small businesses perform a significant portion of the contract; however, an investigation disclosed that the small business did not comply with that requirement. Instead, the small business allowed a large subcontractor to perform nearly all of the work. Because

Peace Corps was not in a direct contractual relationship with the subcontractor actually performing the work, OIG had no recourse to obtain statements of the subcontractor.

4. During a criminal investigation conducted by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) OIG of allegations involving a CPSC Assistant General Counsel representing a company obtain contracts to provide supplies to the DoD, records were obtained from the CPSC, Department of the Army, and DoD regarding several of the alleged (accused eventually pled guilty to them) offenses. However, additional offenses could not be proven as CPSC OIG had no authority to require US based members of the foreign company to submit to interviews or provide testimonial information. CPSC OIG requested interviews with both senior managers and agents of the company in question, and although they initially agreed to be interviewed all later declined.

5. During the course of a review conducted after Fast & Furious, DOJ OIG wanted to interview a former U.S. Attorney in Arizona. When asked for a voluntary interview with the then retired U.S. Attorney declined. DOJ OIG had no way to reach the retired U.S. Attorney to elaborate on prior statements he had made.

6. In a Farm Credit Administration OIG case where a senior staff member retired during an investigation, it was subsequently discovered he/she had changed official documents, impersonated an official and committed libel and slander, before retiring during the middle of an investigation on other matters. The former government employee was not receptive to interview post retirement and due to his retirement from government service, there was no recourse.

7. Peace Corps OIG, in the course of performing an audit of one of the largest agency contracts, discovered that an unauthorized subcontractor was performing the majority of the work under the contract. The contract was misidentified as a fixed-price contract, did not include an IG audit clause, and the subcontractor was not in a direct contractual relationship with Peace Corps. Peace Corps OIG was hindered in examining potentially false or fraudulent billing by having to rely solely on documentary subpoenas.

8. NSF OIG conducted an investigation of two professors, a husband and wife, who both served as Principal Investigators at a U.S. university and received grant funds from multiple federal agencies. The Targets also had full time tenured positions at a foreign university and used federal funds to travel to that foreign country, without disclosing their affiliation in either grant proposals or the U.S. university. During the investigation, the Targets declined, through counsel, to be interviewed. The case was declined by the U.S. attorney's office, and ultimately by the state attorney general's office. NSF OIG's inability to interview these Targets negatively affected NSF OIG's ability to obtain all relevant evidence to effectively pursue grant fraud charges against the Targets.

9. The Farm Credit Administration OIG was advised of a contractor who was paid by the agency for contract services it had not provided. Attempts to contact a company representative by mail and telephone were not productive (telephone messages were not returned; certified mail not answered). Fortunately, OIG was able to prevail upon the FBI who had contacts with the company representative. Had the contractor not responded to the FBI contacts, the OIG would have had little recourse in obtaining information from the contractor regarding recovery of the funds. There was a scarce amount of information regarding bank accounts to subpoena for financial records. A testimonial subpoena would have been instrumental under those circumstances.

10. In three other small business grant-fraud cases pursued by NSF OIG, three Targets declined to be interviewed regarding apparent fraud schemes that had been identified. Having testimonial subpoena would have provided an important tool to more effectively pursue these cases.

i. The first Target faked letters of support for his proposals, applied for duplicate proposals to multiple federal agencies, listed his in-laws (over 90) as company employees, and paid for his wife's business facility with federal funds. Target declined to be interviewed, negatively affecting NSF OIG's ability to fully investigate the matter.

ii. The second Target provided financial reports to NSF that did not match his company's expenditure ledger for the award and appeared to include personal expenditures. The Target initially agreed to be interviewed but canceled such interviews on multiple occasions, negatively affecting NSF OIG's ability to fully investigate the matter.

iii. The third Target made up a fake investment company to support a matching award from the agency, and the individual who purportedly signed the investment letter as CFO did not sign the letter and never heard of the fake investment company. The Target initially agreed to be interviewed by NSF OIG, but terminated the interview early on after understanding the implications of the NSF OIG investigation. Since then, he has declined to even comply with a subpoena for documents.

A CASE STUDY: DOD IG'S USE OF TESTIMONIAL SUBPOENA AUTHORITY

Testimonial subpoena authority, found at §8(i) of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, 5 U.S.C. App., was originally provided by §1042 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, 111 Pub. L. 84.

Testimonial subpoena authority has never been delegated, but has always been retained/exercised personally by the DoD IG.

Internal procedures mandate that before a testimonial subpoena is issued: (1) the witness, who cannot be a Federal employee, must have declined a voluntary interview, (2) the interview must be expected to produce information needed to resolve critical issue(s) or corroborate essential facts, and (3) the information sought cannot reasonably be obtained through any other means.

§8(i)(3) of the IG Act requires the DoD IG notify the Attorney General seven days before issuing a testimonial subpoena. This notice requirement has not hindered the DoD IG's use of its testimonial subpoena authority.

To date, since 2010, the DoD IG has considered a total of eight testimonial subpoena requests, all in connection with administrative investigations:

Two requests were considered but denied because they failed to meet the internal procedures criteria.

One request, associated with the Retired Military Advisor (RMA) administrative re-investigation, was authorized by the DoD IG and served on the witness, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

Two requests, also associated with the RMA administrative re-investigation, were authorized by the DoD IG but not served on the witnesses, a former Secretary of Defense and a former DoD General Counsel, because the witnesses belatedly agreed to be interviewed voluntarily.

One request, associated with an internal administrative review of a DCIS investigation, was authorized by the DoD IG and served on the witness, a former DoD Deputy Inspector General for Investigations/ Acting Chief of Staff.

One request, associated with an Audit Policy review of DCAA, was authorized by the DoD IG but not served on the witness, a former DCAA Director, because the witness belatedly agreed to be interviewed voluntarily.

One request, associated with an IPO evaluation of the transfer of ITAR controlled technology by MDA to NASA, was authorized by the DoD IG but not served on the witness, a former NASA contractor, because the witness belatedly agreed to be interviewed.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I also ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter I received yesterday from the Project on Government Oversight.

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

POGO—PROJECT ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT,
December 14, 2015.

Hon. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.
Hon. CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR GRASSLEY AND SENATOR MCCASKILL: The Project On Government Oversight (POGO) is a nonpartisan independent watchdog that champions good government reforms. POGO's investigations into corruption, misconduct, and conflicts of interest achieve a more effective, accountable, open, and ethical federal government. Recognizing the vital role that Inspectors General (IG) play, POGO has investigated and worked to improve the IG system since 2006. This work includes multiple reports on the IG system, maintaining an IG vacancy tracker, and working with Congress to incorporate needed reforms in the Inspector General Act of 2008. In light of this work, we are writing to thank you for introducing the Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015, and to urge Congress to quickly pass this important legislation.

Inspectors General can make all the difference when it comes to creating a better government, but Congress needs to ensure that IGs have access to all the information they need to do their job effectively. Federal agencies have begun to unreasonably challenge IGs' statutory right to access agency data in attempts to prevent embarrassing events from coming to light. It is essential that Congress act quickly to pass the Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015 to prevent the overbroad interpretation of restrictions on IG authority from becoming accepted law, allowing current and future waste, fraud, and abuse to remain hidden.

In order to serve as the eyes and ears of Congress, an IG office must have an unrestricted view of the agency it oversees. This principle is enshrined in Section 6(a)(1) of the Inspector General Act, which states that each IG office shall have ''access to all records, reports, audits, reviews, documents, papers, recommendations, or other material . . . which relate to programs and operations with respect to which that Inspector General has responsibilities under this Act.'' It seems crystal clear that ''all'' means all, but some agencies have fought back against that idea.

The most blatant rejection of ''all means all'' can be found in the July 2015 opinion by the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) that improperly limits IG access and caters to agency resistance to necessary oversight. If left unchallenged, this opinion will allow agencies' incorrect interpretation of Section 6(a)(1) to become de facto law. The OLC's opinion states that the unfettered access afforded by Section

6(a) of the Inspector General Act is superseded by specific restrictions on the dissemination of Title III, grand jury, and FCRA information. The OLC concluded, for instance, that the IG office may not be entitled to obtain these records when conducting financial audits and other administrative and civil reviews that are only tangentially related to DOJ's criminal and law enforcement activities. POGO disagrees with this interpretation because it rests upon a clear misreading of the common language Congress made clear in the law.

Congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle have rightly condemned the OLC's opinion, according to which ''all records'' does not mean ''all records.'' POGO believes this OLC opinion makes a mockery of the entire IG system: these offices cannot possibly be effective watchdogs on behalf of Congress and the American public if agencies restrict IG access and force them to negotiate with agency leaders for access on a case-by-case basis. Agency records provide the raw materials IG offices need to fulfill their statutory responsibilities. The very purpose of having an independent IG is undermined if the office has to seek the agency's permission in order to carry out its mission. Unless Congress acts quickly, this OLC opinion will gut the IG system and prevent meaningful oversight.

While many federal agencies handle records that are highly sensitive and legitimately withheld from public dissemination, that does not mean they should be withheld from IG offices, or by extension from Congress, both of which offer independent oversight and recommendations to improve agency operations. Secret agency programs are particularly susceptible to waste, fraud, and abuse, but IG offices cannot uncover or correct these problems without access to agency records. Agency actions that deny access to those records violate our system of checks and balances, and do so unduly, as IGs have proven they can responsibly handle sensitive information.

For example, the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has shown that it can effectively and responsibly oversee the most sensitive DOJ operations without jeopardizing law enforcement actions. It has reviewed grand jury materials and other sensitive records when it examined the FBI's potential targeting of domestic advocacy groups, the FBI's efforts to access records of reporters' toll calls during a media leak probe, the President's Surveillance Program, and the firing of U.S. Attorneys, among other important and high-profile cases.

Congress needs to clarify that IG offices must be granted access to all agency records notwithstanding any other existing or future law or any other prohibition on disclosure, including but not limited to: 1) the federal rules of criminal procedure; 2) Title III; 3) the FCRA; and 4) laws such as the Kate Puzey Act that restrict the dissemination of personally identifiable information. In addition, Congress should specify that agencies do not waive the attorney-client or other common law privileges when records are turned over to IG offices. The Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015 addresses this issue and corrects the troublesome OLC memo. However, until Congress passes the bill, that memo can be and has been used to block oversight.

The bill also addresses other improper challenges to IG access. Under the Computer Matching and Privacy Protection Act (CMPPA), IGs must get approval from agency leaders in order to match the computer records of one federal agency against other federal and non-federal records. The Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015 would exempt IG offices from the CMPPA so they can access records at other agencies without getting approval from the very officials they are supposed to oversee. Additionally, under current law, IGs can only compel testimony from federal employees. This means that former federal employees, contractors, or grant recipients can refuse to testify before an IG in the course of an investigation. This bill would provide IGs with testimonial subpoena power over these individuals, and allow for fuller and more effective oversight of federal programs and agencies.

In the light of the erroneous July OLC opinion, it is urgent that Congress act now to make sure IGs have the ability to function as intended. Not correcting this precedent now will cripple current and future IGs and in turn limit Congress's and the public's ability to oversee the executive branch and hold it accountable.

Sincerely,

DANIELLE BRIAN,
Executive Director.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, the Project on Government Oversight is a nonpartisan, independent watchdog that has been advocating good government reforms for decades. In this letter the Project on Government Oversight expresses its support for this bill in general and for provisions that equip inspectors general with the authority to require testimony. Let it be clear that the bill also imposes limitations on the authority of IGs to require testimony.

There are several procedural protections in place to ensure that this authority is exercised wisely. For example, the subpoena must be approved by a designated panel of three other IGs. It is then referred to the Attorney General. For those IGs who can already subpoena witnesses' testimony, I am not aware of any instances in which it has been misused. In fact, the inspector general for the Department of Defense has established a policy that spells out additional procedures and safeguards to ensure the subjects of subpoenas are treated fairly. I am confident the rest of the IG community will be just as scrupulous in providing appropriate protection for the use of this authority. You see, we all win when inspectors general can do their jobs. Most importantly, the public is better served when IGs are able to shine light in the government operation and stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

In September we attempted to pass this important bill by unanimous consent. It has been nearly 3 months since leadership asked whether any Senator would object. Not one Senator has put a statement in the RECORD or come to the floor to object publicly. At the August Judiciary Committee hearing, there was a clear consensus that Congress needed to act legislatively and needed to overturn this Office of Legal Counsel opinion that one person out of 2-plus million employees in the executive branch overruled this 1978 act that the inspector general ought to be entitled to all information. Every day that goes by without fixing the opinion of the Office of Legal Counsel is another day that watchdogs across government can be stonewalled.

At that hearing, Senator LEAHY said this access problem is ''blocking what was once a free flow of information'' and Senator LEAHY called for a permanent legislative solution. Senator CORNYN noted that the Office of Legal Counsel opinion is ''ignoring the mandate of Congress'' and undermining the oversight authority that Congress has under the Constitution. Senator TILLIS stated that the need to fix this access problem was ''a blinding flash of the obvious'' and that ''we all seem to be in violent agreement that we need to correct this.''

However, some Members raised concern about guaranteeing IGs unchecked access to certain national security information. Fortunately, we were able to agree on some changes to the bill that addressed those concerns, without gutting the core of the bill. We made these concessions so the bill can pass by unanimous consent. This Senator thanks my colleagues who worked with me to arrive at this compromise.

As we move forward, it is important to note the following: First, I am not aware of a single instance in which an IG has mishandled any classified or sensitive operational information. IGs are subject to the same restrictions on disclosing information as everyone else in the agency they oversee.

Second, the Executive orders restricting and controlling classified information are issued under the President's constitutional authority. Naturally, this bill does not attempt to limit that constitutional authority at all. It just clarifies that no law can prevent an IG from obtaining documents from the agency it oversees unless the statute explicitly states that IG access should be restricted. No one thinks this statute could supersede the President's constitutional authority.

Third, there is already a provision in law that allows the Secretary of Defense to prohibit an Inspector General review to protect vital national security interests and to protect sensitive operational information. We agreed to clarify that already existing provision to include the ability to restrict access to information as well as to prevent a review from occurring. However, we kept the language in that provision that requires notification to Congress whenever that authority to restrict an IG's access to information is exercised.

After making these changes, we attempted to hotline the revised bill last week. Since then, no Senator has publicly stated any other concerns. The cosponsors have worked hard behind the scenes over the past 3 months in good faith to accommodate the concerns of any and all Members willing to work with us. Now the time has come to pass this bill. We all lose when Inspectors General are delayed or prevented from doing their work.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for Inspectors General, overturn the Office of Legal Counsel opinion, and restore the intent of the Inspector General Act. All IGs should have access and timely independent access to all agency records. The most important thing

is the principle that not one lawyer—that any one lawyer in the Department of Justice or any agency of government doesn't have a right to override the opinion of the Congress expressed in a statute so clearly as this is expressed.

Madam President, at this time I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 68, S. 579, the Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015; I further ask consent that the Johnson substitute amendment be agreed to; that 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. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Will the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa has the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Yes.

Mr. GRASSLEY. May I ask on whose behalf the minority leader is objecting? Is it on his own behalf or on behalf of another Senator?

Mr. REID. Other Senators are concerned about it, and I made the objection on my behalf.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I will not question what the minority leader just said, but it seems to me we ought to know who that Senator is besides the minority leader because Senator WYDEN and I have worked very hard over the last 10 years, and we finally got done what we thought was a very good measure for this body; that the people who put holds on legislation ought to be made public, and there has been nothing in the RECORD. So why don't these people have guts enough to put in the RECORD their reasons and who they are? The public has a right to know that.

Mr. REID. I am it.

Mr. JOHNSON. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. No.

Mr. JOHNSON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I want to rise and voice my disappointment. This is a very commonsense piece of legislation that has strong bipartisan support. Senator GRASSLEY has worked tirelessly on this and certainly our committee has as well. We cannot get a simple, commonsense bipartisan piece of legislation passed by the Senate—and then the insult of not even hearing what the objection is.

What is the objection to giving the inspectors general the tools they need to provide the accountability and the transparency to safeguard American taxpayer money?

I cited my example of the Potomac Healthcare system, the Potomac VA health care system, where because an inspector general was not transparent because the VA inspector general held 140 reports on inspections and investigations, the family of Thomas Baer did not realize there were problems. They took their father to that health care facility and their father died of a stroke because of neglect. That is how important this is. Yet we cannot even hear the reason behind the objection as to why they would not allow this very commonsense piece of legislation to pass.

This is very disappointing.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. 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. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 6 p.m. today.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise today to revisit an issue that some in this body I am sure, no doubt, would probably not want to revisit. My intention is not to cause any of my colleagues discomfort, but this is an issue—and the Presiding Officer knows more than most—that needs to be discussed, and the Presiding Officer has done a great job of discussing it. I think it has become pretty clear to most Americans and many Members of this body that this body made a mistake a few months back, a mistake with significant consequences for our security, for the security of the Middle East, and certainly a mistake as it relates to some of our own American citizens. For the first time in U.S. history on a national security agreement of major importance, the mistake that was made was the Congress of the United States moved forward to approve an agreement not on the basis of a bipartisan majority, which is the history of this country, but on the basis of a partisan minority in both Houses. Of course, I am talking about President Obama's Iranian nuclear deal that will very soon—as early as next month, according to the terms of the agreement—be sending tens of billions of dollars to the biggest sponsor of terrorism in the world.

There are many things that are going on in this body right now. We are looking at the spending bills, and there is a lot of concern about terrorism. As a matter of fact, polling is showing that right now terrorism is ranking as the highest concern for Americans—higher even than the economy—given the attacks in California and what is happening with ISIS.

Amidst all of these challenges, however, the implementation of the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran is looming on the horizon and is not being talked about enough in this body. It is critical that we keep our eye on Iran—still the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism—particularly now. Why is it so critical now? Because, as I noted, as early as next month, in January, tens of billions of dollars of sanctions relief will be pouring into the country of Iran according to the terms of the agreement.

I commend my colleague from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ. I was presiding last week in the Senate, and once again he gave another outstanding speech on American foreign policy, on American national security, on what is going on with Iran, what is going on with their activities destabilizing the Middle East, what is going on with their activities which are as we speak violating the Iran U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Yes, I know we debated this issue for a long time on the Senate floor, and I am sure some of my colleagues who voted on this deal are done and they don't want to talk about it anymore.

Mr. President, if you recall, one of the arguments to support this deal, one of the arguments the President was making was that—we were told this deal would change Iran's behavior. President Obama stated that the deal ''demonstrates that if Iran complies with its international obligations, then it can fully rejoin the community of nations.'' The words of the text of the agreement even state that the United States is ''expressing its desire to build a new relationship with Iran.'' And, of course, Secretary Kerry, in hearings and in private briefings with the Senate, noted that he thought—and you saw his actions—that the agreement would establish a much more positive and constructive relationship between Iran and the United States. So that was one of the arguments for the deal we voted on. How is that working out? Well, I think we have gotten a new relationship with Iran, all right, but it is worse than the old one.

Since the signing of the Iranian deal, Iran has taken deliberative steps, definitive steps that continue to undermine the security interests of the United States and our allies and those of our citizens in almost every region,

in almost every realm. Every action the Iranians have taken has seemed to want to increase tension between us, Iran, and some of our allies.

I wish to provide some examples. Almost as soon as the ink was dry on this agreement, the Iran regime and its leaders continued doing what they typically do: chanting ''Death to America.'' And more specifically, the Ayatollah Khamenei predicted that the Zionist regime—of course he is referring to Israel—will be ''nothing'' in 25 years. It is another one of his references to wiping Israel off the map—after the agreement. Then he stated, of the 25-year period, ''Until then, struggling, heroic, and jihadi morale will leave no moment of serenity for the Zionists.'' That is the leader of the country we did this deal with—after we signed the agreement. So it is still certainly provocative in that regard.

How about its funding of Hezbollah, one of its terrorist proxies around the world? It is still full speed ahead. There are estimates of up to $200 million a year. That continues after the signing.

How about abiding by U.N. Security Council resolutions, such as the one that prevents the Quds Force commander, General Soleimani, from traveling? Well, we know that was violated. As a matter of fact, Soleimani went to Moscow to meet with Putin to discuss arms transfers, likely in violation of the U.N. Security Council resolution—the resolution that bans conventional weapons from being imported to Iran. So that was another violation, and they are likely planning another one.

Let me remind this body about the Quds Force commander. This is what former U.S. Army Chief of Staff GEN Ray Odierno said about him:

> Qassem Soleimani is the one who has been exporting malign activities throughout the Middle East for some time now. He's absolutely responsible for killing many Americans. In fact, I would say the last two years I was there the majority of our casualties came from his surrogates, not Sunni or al Qaeda.

This is the person who is negotiating with Putin to trade arms—likely in violation of another U.N. Security Council resolution.

What about his troops? Well, we have seen an increase of Iranian troops in Syria. General Dunford, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, predicted that there are about 2,000 troops in Syria helping to lead the fight to save Assad and working with the Russians to do that.

How about Iran's compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, which bans its ballistic missile program? Remember that issue? We debated that issue on the floor. General Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said that under no circumstances should we agree to lifting that ban, but we did in the deal. Now we are learning that Iran has tested not one but two ballistic missiles on October 11 and November 21 in likely—almost certain—violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929. In my view, that is a violation of the Iran agreement.

This is what our Ambassador to the U.N. stated. She said that the missiles Iran tested only months after we passed the agreement are ''inherently capable of delivering a nuclear weapon.'' So they are testing missiles with that capability. This should concern all Americans. What should really concern all Americans right now is that despite Ambassador Power's statement, it appears the Obama administration is looking to do nothing on this violation of the U.N. Security Council resolution.

This is how my colleague from Tennessee, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, BOB CORKER, put it:

> Iran violates U.N. Security Council resolutions because it knows neither this administration nor the U.N. Security Council is likely to take any action. Instead, the administration remains paralyzed and responds to Iran's violations with empty words, with condemnation, and concern.

As I mentioned, last week my colleague from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ, gave an outstanding speech on this issue on December 8, and he noted—similar to Senator CORKER—that the Obama administration's reaction has been muted, almost one of silence.

Mr. President, there is more. A report from the International Atomic Energy Agency, which we were all anticipating, just recently came out and stated that Iran pursued nuclear weapons in secret until 2009—longer than previously believed. So the country we are doing this deal with, at least according to the IAEA, has been lying to the world.

Iran has been caught lying and cheating. It is testing ballistic missiles against the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 and others; it is still funding global terrorism; it is sending thousands of troops to Syria to prop up Assad; it has sent the man with the blood of thousands of American soldiers on his hands to Russia to talk about arms trading, in likely further violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions; and, of course, it is still chanting ''Death to America'' and talking about wiping Israel off the face of the Earth—all since the Obama administration signed the Iranian nuclear agreement.

There is one more outrage, perhaps the worst one, in my view. In a direct affront to the United States and our citizens, Iran is still holding five Americans against their will in that country. Think about that. Many of us who closely watched the negotiations thought surely, surely Secretary Kerry—who had enormous leverage; the entire world was aligned against Iran—would surely use that leverage to get our citizens free, or maybe if he wasn't going to do it as part of the deal, there would be some kind of side agreement after the signing that they would be quietly released. But, like everything else since the signing of this agreement, the American hostage situation in Iran has actually gotten worse.

I wish to read the names and describe a little bit about the Americans who are currently being held in Iran.

Amir Hekmati of Michigan, a U.S. marine, was detained in Iran in 2011 while visiting Iranian relatives and was sentenced to 10 years in prison for espionage—a U.S. marine who proudly served his country. I am a marine. We don't leave our fellow marines on the battlefield, but evidently the Obama administration has not learned that lesson.

Saeed Abedini of Idaho, a Christian pastor, was detained in Iran in 2012 and sentenced to 8 years in prison on charges related to his religious beliefs. Again, an American is languishing in Iranian jail right now, a pastor.

Robert Levinson of Florida, a former official of the FBI, disappeared in 2007. Iran's leaders denied knowledge of Levinson's whereabouts or any involvement in his disappearance.

Most recently, Siamak Namazi, a Dubai-based businessman, was arrested after the signing of this Iranian nuclear deal—after the signing—was arrested by the Iranian Government while visiting relatives in Iran. Right now, any charges against him are unknown. That happened on October 15.

Of course, Jason Rezaian of California—a journalist for the Washington Post, who was credentialed as a journalist by the Government of Iran—has been detained for over 500 days and recently—again, after the signing of the agreement with President Obama—was sentenced to an undisclosed prison for an undisclosed term for espionage.

That is five Americans right now. I don't have to remind my colleagues that it is the holiday season. It is a time for families and loved ones to come together, to be with each other. But what about the families of these Americans? Who is thinking about them?

Secretary Kerry and President Obama should be on the phone every day working for their release, but that is clearly not happening. As the Washington Post editorial board put it recently:

> Iran appears content to allow Mr. Rezaian and the other Americans to rot in prison indefinitely, even as the regime collects more than $100 billion in sanctions relief and is granted the role it has long sought as a regional power. That should not be an acceptable outcome.

That is the Washington Post. That is the Washington Post editorial—''That should not be an acceptable outcome.'' No, it shouldn't. It should not.

All of this begs some very obvious questions. Given Iran's consistent provocative actions against U.S. interests and our citizens since the signing of the Iran deal and given that one of the promises of the deal—better relations with Iran, more constructive behavior from Iran—has proven to be utterly

false, why in the world are we moving full steam ahead with the lifting of sanctions as early as next month? Think about that. Why indeed are we getting ready to release tens of billions of dollars to the world's biggest sponsor of state terrorism when we know the additional money will only embolden Iran? Just think how they are acting now. When they have tens of billions of dollars to further their terrorist activities, it will embolden them to act in even more nefarious ways against our interests and those of our allies and, most importantly, those of American citizens.

Another question: Why aren't the President and Secretary Kerry at a minimum telling the Iranians they won't see one dime—one dime—of the billions and billions of dollars we are set to hand over to the Iranians until all five Americans are released from prison? Why aren't we using that leverage? That leverage is going to go away as soon as we release that money.

Why are we getting ready to release tens of billions of dollars to Iran when it is clear they are going to simply violate this agreement? That is not just my view. Former Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was quoted as saying just last week that it is not if, but when, Iran will violate President Obama's nuclear agreement.

Just last week she stated: ''They are going to violate it.'' Former Senator, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton knows a little about the issue. She helped negotiate it. ''They are going to violate it,'' she said. ''They are going to violate it, they are going to be provocative about it, and we need to respond quickly and very harshly.'' That is the former Secretary of State.

Well, I agree with the former Secretary of State—the Iranians are going to violate this agreement. In fact, it is very likely the Iranians have already violated this agreement with their U.N. Security Council resolution violations.

So what should we do?

First, for any Americans listening, watching, who care about this issue, I urge you to call the President, call the Secretary of State, call the White House, call the State Department. Tell them something that I believe the vast, vast majority of Americans agree with: Our government should not be relieving Iran of any sanctions while it continues to illegally hold five Americans hostage. We should demand of our President that he should not allow tens of billions of dollars to flood into the biggest terrorist regime in the world while our citizens languish in Iranian jails. This is simple, and it is just wrong.

We need to light up the switchboard. Let President Obama know. Here is the number to the White House switchboard: (202) 456–1414. Call the President and tell him you think it is fundamentally wrong to let five Americans languish in prison while we are getting ready to send the biggest terrorist regime in the world tens of billions of dollars.

Call John Kerry. Here is the number to the State Department switchboard: (202) 647–4000. Tell him: Mr. Secretary, get on the phone. Release these prisoners; release our citizens or don't give Iran any of the billions of dollars they think they are going to get next month.

Second, I agreed with my colleague Senator MENENDEZ when he gave his speech last week that we need to keep the leverage against Iran by tightening the full range of sanctions available to us to penalize Iran for violating U.N. Security Council resolutions, as they have done within the last month. In his speech he also said we need to reauthorize the Iran Sanctions Act. I agree with him, and this body should take action to do just that.

Finally, I am working to get support for a simple bill that would prevent the President from lifting sanctions until Iran is no longer designated a state sponsor of terrorism and until Iran releases our five citizens who are languishing in their jails.

With all due respect to my colleagues who voted for this agreement, I believe this body made an enormous mistake by allowing the President's nuclear agreement to move forward. Iran's actions since the signing of this agreement—day after day, against the interests of the United States and our citizens—have made this 100 percent clear.

This mistake can be undone. We don't have to allow Iran access to tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief while they continue to destabilize the Middle East, while they continue their robust expansive terrorist activities throughout the world. And we certainly—and this is a message for the President of the United States and the Secretary of State. We certainly don't have to allow them the tens of billions of dollars while Iran retains and detains Americans on trumped-up charges in Iranian jails, with no prospect for release. As the Washington Post put it, ''That should not be an acceptable outcome.''

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

PILOT'S BILL OF RIGHTS 2

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 319, S. 571.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 571) to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have worked hard, and I——

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for one question?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Certainly, I will yield.

Mr. INHOFE. This is the request to move to the calendar number, and the next request would be for the consideration.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Then I will be happy to yield at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as ''Pilot's Bill of Rights 2''.

SEC. 2. MEDICAL CERTIFICATION OF CERTAIN SMALL AIRCRAFT PILOTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall issue or revise regulations to ensure that an individual may operate as pilot in command of a covered aircraft if—

(1) the individual possesses a valid driver's license issued by a State, territory, or possession of the United States and complies with all medical requirements or restrictions associated with that license;

(2) the individual holds a medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration on the date of enactment of this Act, held such a certificate at any point during the 10-year period preceding such date of enactment, or obtains such a certificate after such date of enactment;

(3) the most recent medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration to the individual—

(A) indicates whether the certificate is first, second, or third class;

(B) may include authorization for special issuance;

(C) may be expired;

(D) cannot have been revoked or suspended; and

(E) cannot have been withdrawn;

(4) the most recent application for airman medical certification submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration by the individual cannot have been completed and denied;

(5) the individual has completed a medical education course described in subsection (c) during the 24 calendar months before acting as pilot in command of a covered aircraft and demonstrates proof of completion of the course;

(6) the individual, when serving as a pilot in command, is under the care and treatment of a physician if the individual has been diagnosed with any medical condition that may impact the ability of the individual to fly;

(7) the individual has received a comprehensive medical examination from a State-licensed physician during the previous 48 months and—

(A) prior to the examination, the individual—

(i) completed the individual's section of the checklist described in subsection (b); and

(ii) provided the completed checklist to the physician performing the examination; and

(B) the physician conducted the comprehensive medical examination in accordance with the checklist described in subsection (b), checking each item specified during the examination and addressing, as medically appropriate, every medical condition listed, and any medications the individual is taking; and

(8) the individual is operating in accordance with the following conditions:

(A) The covered aircraft is carrying not more than 5 passengers.

(B) The individual is operating the covered aircraft under visual flight rules or instrument flight rules.

(C) The flight, including each portion of that flight, is not carried out—

(i) for compensation or hire, including that no passenger or property on the flight is being carried for compensation or hire;

(ii) at an altitude that is more than 18,000 feet above mean sea level;

(iii) outside the United States, unless authorized by the country in which the flight is conducted; or

(iv) at an indicated air speed exceeding 250 knots.

(b) COMPREHENSIVE MEDICAL EXAMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall develop a checklist for an individual to complete and provide to the physician performing the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7).

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The checklist shall contain—

(A) a section, for the individual to complete that contains—

(i) boxes 3 through 13 and boxes 16 through 19 of the Federal Aviation Administration Form 8500-8 (3-99);

(ii) a signature line for the individual to affirm that—

(I) the answers provided by the individual on that checklist, including the individual's answers regarding medical history, are true and complete;

(II) the individual understands that he or she is prohibited under Federal Aviation Administration regulations from acting as pilot in command, or any other capacity as a required flight crew member, if he or she knows or has reason to know of any medical deficiency or medically disqualifying condition that would make the individual unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner; and

(III) the individual is aware of the regulations pertaining to the prohibition on operations during medical deficiency and has no medically disqualifying conditions in accordance with applicable law;

(B) a section with instructions for the individual to provide the completed checklist to the physician performing the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7); and

(C) a section, for the physician to complete, that instructs the physician—

(i) to perform a clinical examination of—

(I) head, face, neck, and scalp;

(II) nose, sinuses, mouth, and throat;

(III) ears, general (internal and external canals), and eardrums (perforation);

(IV) eyes (general), ophthalmoscopic, pupils (equality and reaction), and ocular motility (associated parallel movement, nystagmus);

(V) lungs and chest (not including breast examination);

(VI) heart (precordial activity, rhythm, sounds, and murmurs);

(VII) vascular system (pulse, amplitude, and character, and arms, legs, and others);

(VIII) abdomen and viscera (including hernia);

(IX) anus (not including digital examination);

(X) skin;

(XI) G-U system (not including pelvic examination);

(XII) upper and lower extremities (strength and range of motion);

(XIII) spine and other musculoskeletal;

(XIV) identifying body marks, scars, and tattoos (size and location);

(XV) lymphatics;

(XVI) neurologic (tendon reflexes, equilibrium, senses, cranial nerves, and coordination, etc.);

(XVII) psychiatric (appearance, behavior, mood, communication, and memory);

(XVIII) general systemic;

(XIX) hearing;

(XX) vision (distant, near, and intermediate vision, field of vision, color vision, and ocular alignment);

(XXI) blood pressure and pulse; and

(XXII) anything else the physician, in his or her medical judgment, considers necessary;

(ii) to exercise medical discretion to address, as medically appropriate, any medical conditions identified, and to exercise medical discretion in determining whether any medical tests are warranted as part of the comprehensive medical examination;

(iii) to discuss all drugs the individual reports taking (prescription and nonprescription) and their potential to interfere with the safe operation of an aircraft or motor vehicle;

(iv) to sign the checklist, stating: ''I certify that I discussed all items on this checklist with the individual during my examination, discussed any medications the individual is taking that could interfere with their ability to safely operate an aircraft or motor vehicle, and performed an examination that included all of the items on this checklist.''; and

(v) to provide the date the comprehensive medical examination was completed, and the physician's full name, address, telephone number, and State medical license number.

(3) LOGBOOK.—The completed checklist shall be retained in the individual's logbook and made available on request.

(c) MEDICAL EDUCATION COURSE REQUIREMENTS.—The medical education course described in this subsection shall—

(1) be available on the Internet free of charge;

(2) be developed and periodically updated in coordination with representatives of relevant nonprofit and not-for-profit general aviation stakeholder groups;

(3) educate pilots on conducting medical self-assessments;

(4) advise pilots on identifying warning signs of potential serious medical conditions;

(5) identify risk mitigation strategies for medical conditions;

(6) increase awareness of the impacts of potentially impairing over-the-counter and prescription drug medications;

(7) encourage regular medical examinations and consultations with primary care physicians;

(8) inform pilots of the regulations pertaining to the prohibition on operations during medical deficiency and medically disqualifying conditions;

(9) provide the checklist developed by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with subsection (b); and

(10) upon successful completion of the course, electronically provide to the individual and transmit to the Federal Aviation Administration—

(A) a certification of completion of the medical education course, which shall be printed and retained in the individual's logbook and made available upon request, and shall contain the individual's name, address, and airman certificate number;

(B) subject to subsection (d), a release authorizing the National Driver Register through a designated State Department of Motor Vehicles to furnish to the Federal Aviation Administration information pertaining to the individual's driving record;

(C) a certification by the individual that the individual is under the care and treatment of a physician if the individual has been diagnosed with any medical condition that may impact the ability of the individual to fly, as required under (a)(6);

(D) a form that includes—

(i) the name, address, telephone number, and airman certificate number of the individual;

(ii) the name, address, telephone number, and State medical license number of the physician performing the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7);

(iii) the date of the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7); and

(iv) a certification by the individual that the checklist described in subsection (b) was followed in the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7); and

(E) a statement, which shall be printed, and signed by the individual certifying that the individual understands the existing prohibition on operations during medical deficiency by stating: ''I understand that I cannot act as pilot in command, or any other capacity as a required flight crew member, if I know or have reason to know of any medical condition that would make me unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner.''.

(d) NATIONAL DRIVER REGISTER.—The authorization under subsection (c)(10)(B) shall be an authorization for a single access to the information contained in the National Driver Register.

(e) SPECIAL ISSUANCE PROCESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An individual who has qualified for the third-class medical certificate exemption under subsection (a) and is seeking to serve as a pilot in command of a covered aircraft shall be required to have completed the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate for each of the following:

(A) A mental health disorder, limited to an established medical history or clinical diagnosis of—

(i) personality disorder that is severe enough to have repeatedly manifested itself by overt acts;

(ii) psychosis, defined as a case in which an individual—

(I) has manifested delusions, hallucinations, grossly bizarre or disorganized behavior, or other commonly accepted symptoms of psychosis; or

(II) may reasonably be expected to manifest delusions, hallucinations, grossly bizarre or disorganized behavior, or other commonly accepted symptoms of psychosis;

(iii) bipolar disorder; or

(iv) substance dependence within the previous 2 years, as defined in section 67.307(a)(4) of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

(B) A neurological disorder, limited to an established medical history or clinical diagnosis of any of the following:

(i) Epilepsy.

(ii) Disturbance of consciousness without satisfactory medical explanation of the cause.

(iii) A transient loss of control of nervous system functions without satisfactory medical explanation of the cause.

(C) A cardiovascular condition, limited to a one-time special issuance for each diagnosis of the following:

(i) Myocardial infraction.

(ii) Coronary heart disease that has required treatment.

(iii) Cardiac valve replacement.

(iv) Heart replacement.

(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR CARDIOVASCULAR CONDITIONS.—In the case of an individual with a cardiovascular condition, the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate shall be satisfied with the successful completion of an appropriate clinical evaluation without a mandatory wait period.

(3) SPECIAL RULE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS.—

(A) In the case of an individual with a clinically diagnosed mental health condition, the third-class medical certificate exemption under subsection (a) shall not apply if—

(i) in the judgment of the individual's State-licensed medical specialist, the condition—

(I) renders the individual unable to safely perform the duties or exercise the airman privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(II) may reasonably be expected to make the individual unable to perform the duties or exercise the privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(ii) the individual's driver's license is revoked by the issuing agency as a result of a clinically diagnosed mental health condition.

(B) Subject to subparagraph (A), an individual clinically diagnosed with a mental health condition shall certify every 2 years, in conjunction with the certification under subsection (c)(10)(C), that the individual is under the care of a State-licensed medical specialist for that mental health condition.

(4) SPECIAL RULE FOR NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS.—

(A) In the case of an individual with a clinically diagnosed neurological condition, the third-class medical certificate exemption under subsection (a) shall not apply if—

(i) in the judgment of the individual's State-licensed medical specialist, the condition—

(I) renders the individual unable to safely perform the duties or exercise the airman privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(II) may reasonably be expected to make the individual unable to perform the duties or exercise the privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(ii) the individual's driver's license is revoked by the issuing agency as a result of a clinically diagnosed neurological condition.

(B) Subject to subparagraph (A), an individual clinically diagnosed with a neurological condition shall certify every 2 years, in conjunction with the certification under subsection (c)(10)(C), that the individual is under the care of a State-licensed medical specialist for that neurological condition.

(f) IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE CACI PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall review and identify additional medical conditions that could be added to the program known as the Conditions AMEs Can Issue (CACI) program.

(2) CONSULTATIONS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Administrator shall consult with aviation, medical, and union stakeholders.

(3) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report listing the medical conditions that have been added to the CACI program under paragraph (1).

(g) EXPEDITED AUTHORIZATION FOR SPECIAL ISSUANCE OF A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall implement procedures to expedite the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate under section 67.401 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) CONSULTATIONS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Administrator shall consult with aviation, medical, and union stakeholders.

(3) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report describing how the procedures implemented under paragraph (1) will streamline the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate and reduce the amount of time needed to review and decide special issuance cases.

(h) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in coordination with the National Transportation Safety Board, shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that describes the effect of the regulations issued or revised under subsection (a) and includes statistics with respect to changes in small aircraft activity and safety incidents.

(i) PROHIBITION ON ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.—Beginning on the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator may not take an enforcement action for not holding a valid third-class medical certificate against a pilot of a covered aircraft for a flight, through a good faith effort, if the pilot and the flight meet the applicable requirements under subsection (a), except paragraph (5), unless the Administrator has published final regulations in the Federal Register under that subsection.

(j) COVERED AIRCRAFT DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered aircraft'' means an aircraft that—

(1) is authorized under Federal law to carry not more than 6 occupants; and

(2) has a maximum certificated takeoff weight of not more than 6,000 pounds.

(k) OPERATIONS COVERED.—The provisions and requirements covered in this section do not apply to pilots who elect to operate under the medical requirements under subsection (b) or subsection (c) of section 61.23 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 3. EXPANSION OF PILOT'S BILL OF RIGHTS.

(a) APPEALS OF SUSPENDED AND REVOKED AIRMAN CERTIFICATES.—Section 2(d)(1) of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is amended by striking ''or imposing a punitive civil action or an emergency order of revocation under subsections (d) and (e) of section 44709 of such title'' and inserting ''suspending or revoking an airman certificate under section 44709(d) of such title, or imposing an emergency order of revocation under subsections (d) and (e) of section 44709 of such title''.

(b) DE NOVO REVIEW BY DISTRICT COURT; BURDEN OF PROOF .—Section 2(e) of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In an appeal filed under subsection (d) in a United States district court with respect to a denial, suspension, or revocation of an airman certificate by the Administrator—

''(A) the district court shall review the denial, suspension, or revocation de novo, including by—

''(i) conducting a full independent review of the complete administrative record of the denial, suspension, or revocation;

''(ii) permitting additional discovery and the taking of additional evidence; and

''(iii) making the findings of fact and conclusions of law required by Rule 52 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure without being bound to any findings of fact of the Administrator or the National Transportation Safety Board.'';

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

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

''(2) BURDEN OF PROOF.—In an appeal filed under subsection (d) in a United States district court after an exhaustion of administrative remedies, the burden of proof shall be as follows:

''(A) In an appeal of the denial of an application for the issuance or renewal of an airman certificate under section 44703 of title 49, United States Code, the burden of proof shall be upon the applicant denied an airman certificate by the Administrator.

''(B) In an appeal of an order issued by the Administrator under section 44709 of title 49, United States Code, the burden of proof shall be upon the Administrator.''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) APPLICABILITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection or subsection (a)(1) of section 554 of title 5, United States Code, section 554 of such title shall apply to adjudications of the Administrator and the National Transportation Safety Board to the same extent as that section applied to such adjudications before the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2.''.

(c) NOTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATION.—Subsection (b) of section 2 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting ''and the specific activity on which the investigation is based'' after ''nature of the investigation''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''timely''; and

(3) in paragraph (5), by striking ''section 44709(c)(2)'' and inserting ''section 44709(e)(2)''.

(d) RELEASE OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS.—Section 2 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is further amended by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

''(f) RELEASE OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) EMERGENCY ORDERS.—In any proceeding conducted under part 821 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, relating to the amendment, modification, suspension, or revocation of an airman certificate, in which the Administrator issues an emergency order under subsections (d) and (e) of section 44709, section 44710, or section 46105(c) of title 49, United States Code, or another order that takes effect immediately, the Administrator shall provide to the individual holding the airman certificate the releasable portion of the investigative report at the time the Administrator issues the order. If the complete Report of Investigation is not available at the time the Emergency Order is issued, the Administrator shall issue all portions of the report that are available at the time and shall provide the full report within 5 days of its completion.

''(B) OTHER ORDERS.—In any non-emergency proceeding conducted under part 821 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, relating to the amendment, modification, suspension, or revocation of an airman certificate, in which the Administrator notifies the certificate holder of a proposed certificate action under subsections (b) and (c) of section 44709 or section 44710 of title 49, United States Code, the Administrator shall, upon the written request of the covered certificate holder and at any time after that notification, provide to the covered certificate holder the releasable portion of the investigative report.

''(2) MOTION FOR DISMISSAL.—If the Administrator does not provide the releasable portions of the investigative report to the individual holding the airman certificate subject to the proceeding referred to in paragraph (1) by the time required by that paragraph, the individual may move to dismiss the complaint of the Administrator or for other relief and, unless the Administrator establishes good cause for the failure to provide the investigative report or for a lack of timeliness, the administrative law judge shall order such relief as the judge considers appropriate.

''(3) RELEASABLE PORTION OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORT.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the releasable portion of an investigative report is all information in the report, except for the following:

''(A) Information that is privileged.

''(B) Information that constitutes work product or reflects internal deliberative process.

''(C) Information that would disclose the identity of a confidential source.

''(D) Information the disclosure of which is prohibited by any other provision of law.

''(E) Information that is not relevant to the subject matter of the proceeding.

''(F) Information the Administrator can demonstrate is withheld for good cause.

''(G) Sensitive security information, as defined in section 15.5 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (or any corresponding similar ruling or regulation).

''(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the Administrator from releasing to an individual subject to an investigation described in subsection (b)(1)—

''(A) information in addition to the information included in the releasable portion of the investigative report; or

''(B) a copy of the investigative report before the Administrator issues a complaint.''.

SEC. 4. LIMITATIONS ON REEXAMINATION OF CERTIFICATE HOLDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 44709(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''The Administrator'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator'';

(2) by striking ''reexamine'' and inserting '', except as provided in paragraph (2), reexamine''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) LIMITATION ON THE REEXAMINATION OF AIRMAN CERTIFICATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may not reexamine an airman holding a student, sport, recreational, or private pilot certificate issued under section 44703 of this title if the reexamination is ordered as a result of an event involving the fault of the Federal Aviation Administration or its designee, unless the Administrator has reasonable grounds—

''(i) to establish that the airman may not be qualified to exercise the privileges of a particular certificate or rating, based upon an act or omission committed by the airman while exercising those privileges, after the certificate or rating was issued by the Federal Aviation Administration or its designee; or

''(ii) to demonstrate that the airman obtained the certificate or the rating through fraudulent means or through an examination that was substantially and demonstrably inadequate to establish the airman's qualifications.

''(B) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Before taking any action to reexamine an airman under subparagraph (A), the Administrator shall provide to the airman—

''(i) a reasonable basis, described in detail, for requesting the reexamination; and

''(ii) any information gathered by the Federal Aviation Administration, that the Administrator determines is appropriate to provide, such as the scope and nature of the requested reexamination, that formed the basis for that justification.''.

(b) AMENDMENT, MODIFICATION, SUSPENSION, OR REVOCATION OF AIRMAN CERTIFICATES AFTER REEXAMINATION.—Section 44709(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(3) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as redesignated, by striking ''The Administrator'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Administrator''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) AMENDMENTS, MODIFICATIONS, SUSPENSIONS, AND REVOCATIONS OF AIRMAN CERTIFICATES AFTER REEXAMINATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may not issue an order to amend, modify, suspend, or revoke an airman certificate held by a student, sport, recreational, or private pilot and issued under section 44703 of this title after a reexamination of the airman holding the certificate unless the Administrator determines that the airman—

''(i) lacks the technical skills and competency, or care, judgment, and responsibility, necessary to hold and safely exercise the privileges of the certificate; or

''(ii) materially contributed to the issuance of the certificate by fraudulent means.

''(B) STANDARD OF REVIEW.—Any order of the Administrator under this paragraph shall be subject to the standard of review provided for under section 2 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (49 U.S.C. 44703 note).''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 44709(d)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''subsection (b)(1)(A)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)(1)(A)(i)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''subsection (b)(1)(B)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)(1)(A)(ii)''.

SEC. 5. EXPEDITING UPDATES TO NOTAM PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) Beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration may not take any enforcement action against any individual for a violation of a NOTAM (as defined in section 3 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (49 U.S.C. 44701 note)) until the Administrator certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Administrator has complied with the requirements of section 3 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights, as amended by this section.

(2) In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(b) AMENDMENTS.—Section 3 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1162; 49 U.S.C. 44701 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''this Act'' and inserting ''the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2''; and

(ii) by striking ''begin'' and inserting ''complete the implementation of'';

(B) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

''(B) to continue developing and modernizing the NOTAM repository, in a public central location, to maintain and archive all NOTAMs, including the original content and form of the notices, the original date of publication, and any amendments to such notices with the date of each amendment, in a manner that is Internet-accessible, machine-readable, and searchable;'';

(C) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) to specify the times during which temporary flight restrictions are in effect and the duration of a designation of special use airspace in a specific area.''; and

(2) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

''(d) DESIGNATION OF REPOSITORY AS SOLE SOURCE FOR NOTAMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator—

''(A) shall consider the repository for NOTAMs under subsection (a)(2)(B) to be the sole location for airmen to check for NOTAMs; and

''(B) may not consider a NOTAM to be announced or published until the NOTAM is included in the repository for NOTAMs under subsection (a)(2)(B).

''(2) PROHIBITION ON TAKING ACTION FOR VIOLATIONS OF NOTAMS NOT IN REPOSITORY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), beginning on the date that the repository under subsection (a)(2)(B) is final and published, the Administrator may not take any enforcement action against an airman for a violation of a NOTAM during a flight if—

''(i) that NOTAM is not available through the repository before the commencement of the flight; and

''(ii) that NOTAM is not reasonably accessible and identifiable to the airman.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply in the case of an enforcement action for a violation of a NOTAM that directly relates to national security.''.

SEC. 6. ACCESSIBILITY OF CERTAIN FLIGHT DATA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 471 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 47124 the following:

''§ 47124a. Accessibility of certain flight data

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term 'Administration' means the Federal Aviation Administration.

''(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

''(3) APPLICABLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'applicable individual' means an individual who is the subject of an investigation initiated by the Administrator related to a covered flight record.

''(4) CONTRACT TOWER.—The term 'contract tower' means an air traffic control tower providing air traffic control services pursuant to a contract with the Administration under the contract air traffic control tower program under section 47124(b)(3).

''(5) COVERED FLIGHT RECORD.—The term 'covered flight record' means any air traffic data (as defined in section 2(b)(4)(B) of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (49 U.S.C. 44703 note)), created, maintained, or controlled by any program of the Administration, including any program of the Administration carried out by employees or contractors of the Administration, such as contract towers, flight service stations, and controller training programs.

''(b) PROVISION OF COVERED FLIGHT RECORD TO ADMINISTRATION.—

''(1) REQUESTS.—Whenever the Administration receives a written request for a covered flight record from an applicable individual and the covered flight record is not in the possession of the Administration, the Administrator shall request the covered flight record from the contract tower or other contractor of the Administration in possession of the covered flight record.

''(2) PROVISION OF RECORDS.—Any covered flight record created, maintained, or controlled by a contract tower or another contractor of the Administration that maintains covered flight records shall be provided to the Administration if the Administration requests the record pursuant to paragraph (1).

''(3) NOTICE OF PROPOSED CERTIFICATE ACTION.—If the Administrator has issued, or subsequently issues, a Notice of Proposed Certificate Action relying on evidence contained in the covered flight record and the individual who is the subject of an investigation has requested the record, the Administrator shall promptly produce the record and extend the time the individual has to respond to the Notice of Proposed Certificate Action until the covered flight record is provided.

''(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2, the Administrator shall promulgate regulations or guidance to ensure compliance with this section.

''(2) COMPLIANCE BY CONTRACTORS.—

''(A) Compliance with this section by a contract tower or other contractor of the Administration that maintains covered flight records

shall be included as a material term in any contract between the Administration and the contract tower or contractor entered into or renewed on or after the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2.

''(B) Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to any contract or agreement in effect on the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 unless the contract or agreement is renegotiated, renewed, or modified after that date.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The table of contents for chapter 471 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 47124 the following:

''47124a. Accessibility of certain flight data.''.

SEC. 7. AUTHORITY FOR LEGAL COUNSEL TO ISSUE CERTAIN NOTICES.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall revise section 13.11 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, to authorize legal counsel of the Federal Aviation Administration to close enforcement actions covered by that section with a warning notice, letter of correction, or other administrative action.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the Feinstein amendment be agreed to; that the committee-reported substitute, as amended, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his hard work and his dedication to the Pilot's Bill of Rights, which is before us now, and I know he has in his heart and mind the best interests of our aviation public.

I have sought to improve this bill. I have had strong concerns about a number of its provisions. I want to thank him and thank Senator THUNE, Senator NELSON, and Senator MANCHIN, as well as Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator REED, for the improvements they have made to the bill. But I feel, with all due respect, that problems remain.

We have an effective medical certification system now which, unfortunately, this bill undermines, in my view. This bill replaces it with an untested framework, making it easier for people with dangerous medical conditions to fly. There is really no medical certificate effective to deal with potential medical problems. I am gravely concerned that this bill may lead to an increase in the number of aviation accidents.

My hope is—since it has 69 cosponsors, and the will of the Senate now is apparently to move forward—that we can perhaps improve it in the course of the FAA reauthorization. I hope some of these issues can be addressed in that process. I hope my colleague Senator INHOFE will work with me to keep the policy proposals outlined in this bill in mind as we go forward with the FAA reauthorization bill—and that is scheduled to be sometime next year—so that further improvements can be given due consideration.

Again, I thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his hard work on this bill, and I withdraw my objection.

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

The amendment (No. 2928) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To clarify the administrative authorities and to improve the physician certification)

On page 37, line 12, after the period, insert the following: ''I certify that I am not aware of any medical condition that, as presently treated, could interfere with the individual's ability to safely operate an aircraft.''.

On page 40, line 6, insert ''and signed by the physician'' after ''followed''.

On page 48, between lines 3 and 4, insert the following:

(l) AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Administrator receives credible or urgent information, including from the National Driver Register or the Administrator's Safety Hotline, that reflects on an individual's ability to safely operate a covered aircraft under the third-class medical certificate exemption in subsection (a), the Administrator may require the individual to provide additional information or history so that the Administrator may determine whether the individual is safe to continue operating a covered aircraft.

(2) USE OF INFORMATION.—The Administrator may use credible or urgent information received under paragraph (1) to request an individual to provide additional information or to take actions under section 44709(b) of title 49, United States Code.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 571), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 571

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 ''Pilot's Bill of Rights 2''.

SEC. 2. MEDICAL CERTIFICATION OF CERTAIN SMALL AIRCRAFT PILOTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall issue or revise regulations to ensure that an individual may operate as pilot in command of a covered aircraft if—

(1) the individual possesses a valid driver's license issued by a State, territory, or possession of the United States and complies with all medical requirements or restrictions associated with that license;

(2) the individual holds a medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration on the date of enactment of this Act, held such a certificate at any point during the 10-year period preceding such date of enactment, or obtains such a certificate after such date of enactment;

(3) the most recent medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration to the individual—

(A) indicates whether the certificate is first, second, or third class;

(B) may include authorization for special issuance;

(C) may be expired;

(D) cannot have been revoked or suspended; and

(E) cannot have been withdrawn;

(4) the most recent application for airman medical certification submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration by the individual cannot have been completed and denied;

(5) the individual has completed a medical education course described in subsection (c) during the 24 calendar months before acting as pilot in command of a covered aircraft and demonstrates proof of completion of the course;

(6) the individual, when serving as a pilot in command, is under the care and treatment of a physician if the individual has been diagnosed with any medical condition that may impact the ability of the individual to fly;

(7) the individual has received a comprehensive medical examination from a State-licensed physician during the previous 48 months and—

(A) prior to the examination, the individual—

(i) completed the individual's section of the checklist described in subsection (b); and

(ii) provided the completed checklist to the physician performing the examination; and

(B) the physician conducted the comprehensive medical examination in accordance with the checklist described in subsection (b), checking each item specified during the examination and addressing, as medically appropriate, every medical condition listed, and any medications the individual is taking; and

(8) the individual is operating in accordance with the following conditions:

(A) The covered aircraft is carrying not more than 5 passengers.

(B) The individual is operating the covered aircraft under visual flight rules or instrument flight rules.

(C) The flight, including each portion of that flight, is not carried out—

(i) for compensation or hire, including that no passenger or property on the flight is being carried for compensation or hire;

(ii) at an altitude that is more than 18,000 feet above mean sea level;

(iii) outside the United States, unless authorized by the country in which the flight is conducted; or

(iv) at an indicated air speed exceeding 250 knots.

(b) COMPREHENSIVE MEDICAL EXAMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall develop a checklist for an individual to complete and provide to the physician performing the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7).

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The checklist shall contain—

(A) a section, for the individual to complete that contains—

(i) boxes 3 through 13 and boxes 16 through 19 of the Federal Aviation Administration Form 8500–8 (3–99);

(ii) a signature line for the individual to affirm that—

(I) the answers provided by the individual on that checklist, including the individual's answers regarding medical history, are true and complete;

(II) the individual understands that he or she is prohibited under Federal Aviation Administration regulations from acting as pilot in command, or any other capacity as a required flight crew member, if he or she knows or has reason to know of any medical deficiency or medically disqualifying condition that would make the individual unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner; and

(III) the individual is aware of the regulations pertaining to the prohibition on operations during medical deficiency and has no medically disqualifying conditions in accordance with applicable law;

(B) a section with instructions for the individual to provide the completed checklist to the physician performing the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7); and

(C) a section, for the physician to complete, that instructs the physician—

(i) to perform a clinical examination of—

(I) head, face, neck, and scalp;

(II) nose, sinuses, mouth, and throat;

(III) ears, general (internal and external canals), and eardrums (perforation);

(IV) eyes (general), ophthalmoscopic, pupils (equality and reaction), and ocular motility (associated parallel movement, nystagmus);

(V) lungs and chest (not including breast examination);

(VI) heart (precordial activity, rhythm, sounds, and murmurs);

(VII) vascular system (pulse, amplitude, and character, and arms, legs, and others);

(VIII) abdomen and viscera (including hernia);

(IX) anus (not including digital examination);

(X) skin;

(XI) G–U system (not including pelvic examination);

(XII) upper and lower extremities (strength and range of motion);

(XIII) spine and other musculoskeletal;

(XIV) identifying body marks, scars, and tattoos (size and location);

(XV) lymphatics;

(XVI) neurologic (tendon reflexes, equilibrium, senses, cranial nerves, and coordination, etc.);

(XVII) psychiatric (appearance, behavior, mood, communication, and memory);

(XVIII) general systemic;

(XIX) hearing;

(XX) vision (distant, near, and intermediate vision, field of vision, color vision, and ocular alignment);

(XXI) blood pressure and pulse; and

(XXII) anything else the physician, in his or her medical judgment, considers necessary;

(ii) to exercise medical discretion to address, as medically appropriate, any medical conditions identified, and to exercise medical discretion in determining whether any medical tests are warranted as part of the comprehensive medical examination;

(iii) to discuss all drugs the individual reports taking (prescription and nonprescription) and their potential to interfere with the safe operation of an aircraft or motor vehicle;

(iv) to sign the checklist, stating: ''I certify that I discussed all items on this checklist with the individual during my examination, discussed any medications the individual is taking that could interfere with their ability to safely operate an aircraft or motor vehicle, and performed an examination that included all of the items on this checklist. I certify that I am not aware of any medical condition that, as presently treated, could interfere with the individual's ability to safely operate an aircraft.''; and

(v) to provide the date the comprehensive medical examination was completed, and the physician's full name, address, telephone number, and State medical license number.

(3) LOGBOOK.—The completed checklist shall be retained in the individual's logbook and made available on request.

(c) MEDICAL EDUCATION COURSE REQUIREMENTS.—The medical education course described in this subsection shall—

(1) be available on the Internet free of charge;

(2) be developed and periodically updated in coordination with representatives of relevant nonprofit and not-for-profit general aviation stakeholder groups;

(3) educate pilots on conducting medical self-assessments;

(4) advise pilots on identifying warning signs of potential serious medical conditions;

(5) identify risk mitigation strategies for medical conditions;

(6) increase awareness of the impacts of potentially impairing over-the-counter and prescription drug medications;

(7) encourage regular medical examinations and consultations with primary care physicians;

(8) inform pilots of the regulations pertaining to the prohibition on operations during medical deficiency and medically disqualifying conditions;

(9) provide the checklist developed by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with subsection (b); and

(10) upon successful completion of the course, electronically provide to the individual and transmit to the Federal Aviation Administration—

(A) a certification of completion of the medical education course, which shall be printed and retained in the individual's logbook and made available upon request, and shall contain the individual's name, address, and airman certificate number;

(B) subject to subsection (d), a release authorizing the National Driver Register through a designated State Department of Motor Vehicles to furnish to the Federal Aviation Administration information pertaining to the individual's driving record;

(C) a certification by the individual that the individual is under the care and treatment of a physician if the individual has been diagnosed with any medical condition that may impact the ability of the individual to fly, as required under (a)(6);

(D) a form that includes—

(i) the name, address, telephone number, and airman certificate number of the individual;

(ii) the name, address, telephone number, and State medical license number of the physician performing the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7);

(iii) the date of the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7); and

(iv) a certification by the individual that the checklist described in subsection (b) was followed and signed by the physician in the comprehensive medical examination required in subsection (a)(7); and

(E) a statement, which shall be printed, and signed by the individual certifying that the individual understands the existing prohibition on operations during medical deficiency by stating: ''I understand that I cannot act as pilot in command, or any other capacity as a required flight crew member, if I know or have reason to know of any medical condition that would make me unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner.''.

(d) NATIONAL DRIVER REGISTER.—The authorization under subsection (c)(10)(B) shall be an authorization for a single access to the information contained in the National Driver Register.

(e) SPECIAL ISSUANCE PROCESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An individual who has qualified for the third-class medical certificate exemption under subsection (a) and is seeking to serve as a pilot in command of a covered aircraft shall be required to have completed the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate for each of the following:

(A) A mental health disorder, limited to an established medical history or clinical diagnosis of—

(i) personality disorder that is severe enough to have repeatedly manifested itself by overt acts;

(ii) psychosis, defined as a case in which an individual—

(I) has manifested delusions, hallucinations, grossly bizarre or disorganized behavior, or other commonly accepted symptoms of psychosis; or

(II) may reasonably be expected to manifest delusions, hallucinations, grossly bizarre or disorganized behavior, or other commonly accepted symptoms of psychosis;

(iii) bipolar disorder; or

(iv) substance dependence within the previous 2 years, as defined in section 67.307(a)(4) of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

(B) A neurological disorder, limited to an established medical history or clinical diagnosis of any of the following:

(i) Epilepsy.

(ii) Disturbance of consciousness without satisfactory medical explanation of the cause.

(iii) A transient loss of control of nervous system functions without satisfactory medical explanation of the cause.

(C) A cardiovascular condition, limited to a one-time special issuance for each diagnosis of the following:

(i) Myocardial infraction.

(ii) Coronary heart disease that has required treatment.

(iii) Cardiac valve replacement.

(iv) Heart replacement.

(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR CARDIOVASCULAR CONDITIONS.—In the case of an individual with a cardiovascular condition, the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate shall be satisfied with the successful completion of an appropriate clinical evaluation without a mandatory wait period.

(3) SPECIAL RULE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS.—

(A) In the case of an individual with a clinically diagnosed mental health condition, the third-class medical certificate exemption under subsection (a) shall not apply if—

(i) in the judgment of the individual's State-licensed medical specialist, the condition—

(I) renders the individual unable to safely perform the duties or exercise the airman privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(II) may reasonably be expected to make the individual unable to perform the duties or exercise the privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(ii) the individual's driver's license is revoked by the issuing agency as a result of a clinically diagnosed mental health condition.

(B) Subject to subparagraph (A), an individual clinically diagnosed with a mental health condition shall certify every 2 years, in conjunction with the certification under subsection (c)(10)(C), that the individual is under the care of a State-licensed medical specialist for that mental health condition.

(4) SPECIAL RULE FOR NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS.—

(A) In the case of an individual with a clinically diagnosed neurological condition, the third-class medical certificate exemption under subsection (a) shall not apply if—

(i) in the judgment of the individual's State-licensed medical specialist, the condition—

(I) renders the individual unable to safely perform the duties or exercise the airman privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(II) may reasonably be expected to make the individual unable to perform the duties or exercise the privileges described in subsection (a)(8); or

(ii) the individual's driver's license is revoked by the issuing agency as a result of a clinically diagnosed neurological condition.

(B) Subject to subparagraph (A), an individual clinically diagnosed with a neurological condition shall certify every 2 years, in conjunction with the certification under subsection (c)(10)(C), that the individual is under the care of a State-licensed medical specialist for that neurological condition.

(f) IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE CACI PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall review and identify additional medical conditions that could be added to the program known as the Conditions AMEs Can Issue (CACI) program.

(2) CONSULTATIONS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Administrator shall consult with aviation, medical, and union stakeholders.

(3) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report listing the medical conditions that have been added to the CACI program under paragraph (1).

(g) EXPEDITED AUTHORIZATION FOR SPECIAL ISSUANCE OF A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall implement procedures to expedite the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate under section 67.401 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) CONSULTATIONS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Administrator shall consult with aviation, medical, and union stakeholders.

(3) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report describing how the procedures implemented under paragraph (1) will streamline the process for obtaining an Authorization for Special Issuance of a Medical Certificate and reduce the amount of time needed to review and decide special issuance cases.

(h) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in coordination with the National Transportation Safety Board, shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that describes the effect of the regulations issued or revised under subsection (a) and includes statistics with respect to changes in small aircraft activity and safety incidents.

(i) PROHIBITION ON ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.—Beginning on the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator may not take an enforcement action for not holding a valid third-class medical certificate against a pilot of a covered aircraft for a flight, through a good faith effort, if the pilot and the flight meet the applicable requirements under subsection (a), except paragraph (5), unless the Administrator has published final regulations in the Federal Register under that subsection.

(j) COVERED AIRCRAFT DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered aircraft'' means an aircraft that—

(1) is authorized under Federal law to carry not more than 6 occupants; and

(2) has a maximum certificated takeoff weight of not more than 6,000 pounds.

(k) OPERATIONS COVERED.—The provisions and requirements covered in this section do not apply to pilots who elect to operate under the medical requirements under subsection (b) or subsection (c) of section 61.23 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

(l) AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Administrator receives credible or urgent information, including from the National Driver Register or the Administrator's Safety Hotline, that reflects on an individual's ability to safely operate a covered aircraft under the third-class medical certificate exemption in subsection (a), the Administrator may require the individual to provide additional information or history so that the Administrator may determine whether the individual is safe to continue operating a covered aircraft.

(2) USE OF INFORMATION.—The Administrator may use credible or urgent information received under paragraph (1) to request an individual to provide additional information or to take actions under section 44709(b) of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 3. EXPANSION OF PILOT'S BILL OF RIGHTS.

(a) APPEALS OF SUSPENDED AND REVOKED AIRMAN CERTIFICATES.—Section 2(d)(1) of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is amended by striking ''or imposing a punitive civil action or an emergency order of revocation under subsections (d) and (e) of section 44709 of such title'' and inserting ''suspending or revoking an airman certificate under section 44709(d) of such title, or imposing an emergency order of revocation under subsections (d) and (e) of section 44709 of such title''.

(b) DE NOVO REVIEW BY DISTRICT COURT; BURDEN OF PROOF.—Section 2(e) of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In an appeal filed under subsection (d) in a United States district court with respect to a denial, suspension, or revocation of an airman certificate by the Administrator—

''(A) the district court shall review the denial, suspension, or revocation de novo, including by—

''(i) conducting a full independent review of the complete administrative record of the denial, suspension, or revocation;

''(ii) permitting additional discovery and the taking of additional evidence; and

''(iii) making the findings of fact and conclusions of law required by Rule 52 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure without being bound to any findings of fact of the Administrator or the National Transportation Safety Board.'';

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

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

''(2) BURDEN OF PROOF.—In an appeal filed under subsection (d) in a United States district court after an exhaustion of administrative remedies, the burden of proof shall be as follows:

''(A) In an appeal of the denial of an application for the issuance or renewal of an airman certificate under section 44703 of title 49, United States Code, the burden of proof shall be upon the applicant denied an airman certificate by the Administrator.

''(B) In an appeal of an order issued by the Administrator under section 44709 of title 49, United States Code, the burden of proof shall be upon the Administrator.''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) APPLICABILITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection or subsection (a)(1) of section 554 of title 5, United States Code, section 554 of such title shall apply to adjudications of the Administrator and the National Transportation Safety Board to the same extent as that section applied to such adjudications before the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2.''.

(c) NOTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATION.—Subsection (b) of section 2 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting ''and the specific activity on which the investigation is based'' after ''nature of the investigation''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''timely''; and

(3) in paragraph (5), by striking ''section 44709(c)(2)'' and inserting ''section 44709(e)(2)''.

(d) RELEASE OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS.—Section 2 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1159; 49 U.S.C. 44703 note) is further amended by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

''(f) RELEASE OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) EMERGENCY ORDERS.—In any proceeding conducted under part 821 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, relating to the amendment, modification, suspension, or revocation of an airman certificate, in which the Administrator issues an emergency order under subsections (d) and (e) of section 44709, section 44710, or section 46105(c) of title 49, United States Code, or another order that takes effect immediately, the Administrator shall provide to the individual holding the airman certificate the releasable portion of the investigative report at the time the Administrator issues the order. If the complete Report of Investigation is not available at the time the Emergency Order is issued, the Administrator shall issue all portions of the report that are available at the time and shall provide the full report within 5 days of its completion.

''(B) OTHER ORDERS.—In any non-emergency proceeding conducted under part 821 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, relating to the amendment, modification, suspension, or revocation of an airman certificate, in which the Administrator notifies the certificate holder of a proposed certificate action under subsections (b) and (c) of section 44709 or section 44710 of title 49, United States Code, the Administrator shall, upon the written request of the covered certificate holder and at any time after that notification, provide to the covered certificate holder the releasable portion of the investigative report.

''(2) MOTION FOR DISMISSAL.—If the Administrator does not provide the releasable portions of the investigative report to the individual holding the airman certificate subject to the proceeding referred to in paragraph (1) by the time required by that paragraph, the individual may move to dismiss the complaint of the Administrator or for other relief and, unless the Administrator establishes good cause for the failure to provide the investigative report or for a lack of timeliness, the administrative law judge shall order such relief as the judge considers appropriate.

''(3) RELEASABLE PORTION OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORT.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the releasable portion of an investigative report is all information in the report, except for the following:

''(A) Information that is privileged.

''(B) Information that constitutes work product or reflects internal deliberative process.

''(C) Information that would disclose the identity of a confidential source.

''(D) Information the disclosure of which is prohibited by any other provision of law.

''(E) Information that is not relevant to the subject matter of the proceeding.

''(F) Information the Administrator can demonstrate is withheld for good cause.

''(G) Sensitive security information, as defined in section 15.5 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (or any corresponding similar ruling or regulation).

''(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the Administrator from releasing to an individual subject to an investigation described in subsection (b)(1)—

''(A) information in addition to the information included in the releasable portion of the investigative report; or

''(B) a copy of the investigative report before the Administrator issues a complaint.''.

SEC. 4. LIMITATIONS ON REEXAMINATION OF CERTIFICATE HOLDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 44709(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''The Administrator'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator'';

(2) by striking ''reexamine'' and inserting '', except as provided in paragraph (2), reexamine''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) LIMITATION ON THE REEXAMINATION OF AIRMAN CERTIFICATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may not reexamine an airman holding a student, sport, recreational, or private pilot certificate issued under section 44703 of this title if the reexamination is ordered as a result of an event involving the fault of the Federal Aviation Administration or its designee, unless the Administrator has reasonable grounds—

''(i) to establish that the airman may not be qualified to exercise the privileges of a particular certificate or rating, based upon an act or omission committed by the airman while exercising those privileges, after the certificate or rating was issued by the Federal Aviation Administration or its designee; or

''(ii) to demonstrate that the airman obtained the certificate or the rating through fraudulent means or through an examination that was substantially and demonstrably inadequate to establish the airman's qualifications.

''(B) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Before taking any action to reexamine an airman under subparagraph (A), the Administrator shall provide to the airman—

''(i) a reasonable basis, described in detail, for requesting the reexamination; and

''(ii) any information gathered by the Federal Aviation Administration, that the Administrator determines is appropriate to provide, such as the scope and nature of the requested reexamination, that formed the basis for that justification.''.

(b) AMENDMENT, MODIFICATION, SUSPENSION, OR REVOCATION OF AIRMAN CERTIFICATES AFTER REEXAMINATION.—Section 44709(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(3) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as redesignated, by striking ''The Administrator'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Administrator''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) AMENDMENTS, MODIFICATIONS, SUSPENSIONS, AND REVOCATIONS OF AIRMAN CERTIFICATES AFTER REEXAMINATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may not issue an order to amend, modify, suspend, or revoke an airman certificate held by a student, sport, recreational, or private pilot and issued under section 44703 of this title after a reexamination of the airman holding the certificate unless the Administrator determines that the airman—

''(i) lacks the technical skills and competency, or care, judgment, and responsibility, necessary to hold and safely exercise the privileges of the certificate; or

''(ii) materially contributed to the issuance of the certificate by fraudulent means.

''(B) STANDARD OF REVIEW.—Any order of the Administrator under this paragraph shall be subject to the standard of review provided for under section 2 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (49 U.S.C. 44703 note).''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 44709(d)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''subsection (b)(1)(A)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)(1)(A)(i)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''subsection (b)(1)(B)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)(1)(A)(ii)''.

SEC. 5. EXPEDITING UPDATES TO NOTAM PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) Beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration may not take any enforcement action against any individual for a violation of a NOTAM (as defined in section 3 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (49 U.S.C. 44701 note)) until the Administrator certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Administrator has complied with the requirements of section 3 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights, as amended by this section.

(2) In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(b) AMENDMENTS.—Section 3 of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112–153; 126 Stat. 1162; 49 U.S.C. 44701 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''this Act'' and inserting ''the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2''; and

(ii) by striking ''begin'' and inserting ''complete the implementation of'';

(B) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

''(B) to continue developing and modernizing the NOTAM repository, in a public central location, to maintain and archive all NOTAMs, including the original content and form of the notices, the original date of publication, and any amendments to such notices with the date of each amendment, in a manner that is Internet-accessible, machine-readable, and searchable;'';

(C) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) to specify the times during which temporary flight restrictions are in effect and the duration of a designation of special use airspace in a specific area.''; and

(2) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

''(d) DESIGNATION OF REPOSITORY AS SOLE SOURCE FOR NOTAMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator—

''(A) shall consider the repository for NOTAMs under subsection (a)(2)(B) to be the sole location for airmen to check for NOTAMs; and

''(B) may not consider a NOTAM to be announced or published until the NOTAM is included in the repository for NOTAMs under subsection (a)(2)(B).

''(2) PROHIBITION ON TAKING ACTION FOR VIOLATIONS OF NOTAMS NOT IN REPOSITORY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), beginning on the date that the repository under subsection (a)(2)(B) is final and published, the Administrator may not take any enforcement action against an airman for a violation of a NOTAM during a flight if—

''(i) that NOTAM is not available through the repository before the commencement of the flight; and

''(ii) that NOTAM is not reasonably accessible and identifiable to the airman.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply in the case of an enforcement action for a violation of a NOTAM that directly relates to national security.''.

SEC. 6. ACCESSIBILITY OF CERTAIN FLIGHT DATA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 471 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 47124 the following:

''§ 47124a. Accessibility of certain flight data

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term 'Administration' means the Federal Aviation Administration.

''(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

''(3) APPLICABLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'applicable individual' means an individual who is the subject of an investigation initiated by the Administrator related to a covered flight record.

''(4) CONTRACT TOWER.—The term 'contract tower' means an air traffic control tower providing air traffic control services pursuant to a contract with the Administration under the contract air traffic control tower program under section 47124(b)(3).

''(5) COVERED FLIGHT RECORD.—The term 'covered flight record' means any air traffic data (as defined in section 2(b)(4)(B) of the Pilot's Bill of Rights (49 U.S.C. 44703 note)), created, maintained, or controlled by any program of the Administration, including any program of the Administration carried out by employees or contractors of the Administration, such as contract towers, flight service stations, and controller training programs.

''(b) PROVISION OF COVERED FLIGHT RECORD TO ADMINISTRATION.—

''(1) REQUESTS.—Whenever the Administration receives a written request for a covered flight record from an applicable individual and the covered flight record is not in the possession of the Administration, the Administrator shall request the covered flight record from the contract tower or other contractor of the Administration in possession of the covered flight record.

''(2) PROVISION OF RECORDS.—Any covered flight record created, maintained, or controlled by a contract tower or another contractor of the Administration that maintains covered flight records shall be provided to the Administration if the Administration requests the record pursuant to paragraph (1).

''(3) NOTICE OF PROPOSED CERTIFICATE ACTION.—If the Administrator has issued, or subsequently issues, a Notice of Proposed Certificate Action relying on evidence contained in the covered flight record and the individual who is the subject of an investigation has requested the record, the Administrator shall promptly produce the record and extend the time the individual has to respond to the Notice of Proposed Certificate Action until the covered flight record is provided.

''(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2, the Administrator shall promulgate regulations or guidance to ensure compliance with this section.

''(2) COMPLIANCE BY CONTRACTORS.—

''(A) Compliance with this section by a contract tower or other contractor of the Administration that maintains covered flight records shall be included as a material term in any contract between the Administration and the contract tower or contractor entered into or renewed on or after the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2.

''(B) Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to any contract or agreement in effect on the date of enactment of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 unless the contract or agreement is renegotiated, renewed, or modified after that date.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The table of contents for chapter 471 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 47124 the following:

''47124a. Accessibility of certain flight data.''.

SEC. 7. AUTHORITY FOR LEGAL COUNSEL TO ISSUE CERTAIN NOTICES.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall revise section 13.11 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, to authorize legal counsel of the Federal Aviation Administration to close enforcement actions covered by that section with a warning notice, letter of correction, or other administrative action.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, let me thank the Senator from Connecticut, because it is complicated. This is something that—it is also very difficult to actually explain a bill to 69 people and get that many cosponsors. But it is something we have been concerned about for a long time. Ten years ago, on the light aircraft, we actually had this language—even stronger than it is now. In that period of time, there hasn't been one accident that can be related to a third-class medical. I think the time has proven itself in 10 years.

To respond, I would be very happy to work with the Senator from Connecticut on problems that may rise that I don't envision right now. I appreciate very much his cooperation and also his staying around this late at night.

Thank you so much.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING MEGHAN ABLES

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to an outstanding Arkansas educator, Meghan Ables, who was named the 2016 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

In nearly 13 years of teaching, Meghan's work in the classroom has made a difference in the lives of students in the Stuttgart School District. While she has taught a variety of subjects at Stuttgart High School, she currently serves as an English and journalism teacher. She has added reading and writing opportunities at the school by reestablishing its monthly magazine, The Bird Banner, and helping launch its studio, Ricebird Television.

Meghan challenges her students to use their skills to improve their community. Her journalism class partnered with Arkansas Children's Hospital as well as the local police and fire departments to raise awareness about safe driving.

Meghan's commitment to education also inspires those who work with her to do their best to encourage further development in the classroom. She has led professional development activities for using literacy techniques in the classroom, presented for the Literacy Design Collaborative, LDC, and provided Teacher Excellence and Support System, TESS, training to her colleagues.

The Arkansas Teacher of the Year program, part of the National Teacher of the Year program, recognizes teachers around the State for their teaching excellence. This truly is a major accomplishment in Meghan's career and something for which she can be very proud. Her outstanding contributions to education, the Stuttgart School District, and her students proves she is well deserving of this recognition.

I would like to offer my congratulations to Meghan Ables for her determination, devotion, and commitment to her students and to education. I am encouraged by her efforts to inspire our next generation of leaders and her drive to help them succeed.•

TRIBUTE TO JOE SIMON, JR.

• Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, today I would like to honor a North Dakotan who is among the longest serving fire department volunteers in my State, keeping his community safe from fires and other threats for more than 65 years. That is a rare distinction in public service. The name Joe Simon, Jr., of Thompson, ND, has been on the volunteer firefighters' roster since his high school days when his father was fire chief.

Joe served for 36 years as the chief of the Thompson Fire Department. During that time, it was Joe's responsibility to keep the department fully staffed, manage training and medical duties, and work on grants to help keep the department running. Though Joe has retired as chief, he is still actively involved with department, helping with monthly checks of equipment and going on fire calls.

According to his friend, George Hoselton, it was under Joe's leadership that the Thompson Fire Department got its first set of the Jaws of Life rescue system—a major purchase for a volunteer department. After a college student died in an accident along the highway near Thompson because no Jaws of Life were available, Joe led door-to-door fundraising efforts to buy the lifesaving equipment. The community, today comprised of just a thousand North Dakotans, contributed enough money that the Thompson Fire Department was able to purchase the Jaws of Life and a rescue vehicle needed to carry the Jaws of Life and other equipment, says George. And that is what Joe is best at: working hard, bringing folks together, and making his community safer.

Joe's volunteerism at the Thompson Fire Department over more than 60 years has made the department a model for other communities around the State and country. Thompson Fire Department has taught classes to share its practices with other fire departments in the region and has long led the way in improving its volunteers' skills and safety. Under Joe's leadership, the department secured one of the earliest automatic defibrillators in the State of North Dakota. Joe also helped get medical first response units up and running at other volunteer departments in the region and was instrumental in getting 911 and emergency first responder radio systems set up in Grand Forks County. Service is a way of life in Joe's family. His wife, Sue, has been an EMT with the Thompson Fire Department for 27 years, which puts her in second place in seniority.

After studying at the University of North Dakota, Joe has spent his life in Thompson helping to grow and support the community in many ways. For 36 years, he worked as the head of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in Grand Forks. Outside of his firefighting duties, Joe has been actively involved in American Legion baseball, Thompson High School football, and almost any other sporting event in town. Every Memorial Day, Joe puts out flags in nearby cemeteries, and reads a list of the honored dead—all of the veterans buried at four cemeteries around Thompson.

Friend and fellow firefighter George says that Joe ''gets the biggest smile on his face when he helps someone. That makes his day.''

Volunteers make up 96 percent of North Dakota's firefighters. They have other jobs but continue to give back, building stronger and safer communities and supporting the very fabric of our State. North Dakotans know that each of us has to step in to help our family and neighbors during tough times, and our first responders know that better than most. It is North Dakotans like Joe who epitomize why our State is such a unique and wonderful place filled with dedicated individuals who put others before themselves.

Thank you, Joe, for your tremendous service to your community and for your tireless efforts to keep communities throughout North Dakota safe.•

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL HAROLD GREGORY ''HAL'' MOORE, JR.

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize retired LTG Harold ''Hal'' Moore of Auburn, AL, for his lifetime of service to the United States of America.

LTG ''Hal'' Moore is best known as the lieutenant colonel in command of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, at the Battle of Ia Drang, in 1965 during the Vietnam war and as the author of ''We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young.'' This book explores the weeklong Battle of Ia Drang where Hal served as the battalion commanding officer and led his troops personally. It is a magnificent book evidencing his courage, leadership, brilliance, and that of his regiment. I read it years ago and have not forgotten it.

Encircled by enemy soldiers and with no clear landing zone that would allow them to depart, Moore managed to persevere despite overwhelming odds. Moore's belief that ''there is always one more thing you can do to increase your odds of success,'' along with the courage of his entire command, are credited with this victory. Hal used the concepts of air assault organization and employment that he and his troopers learned during their time at Ft. Benning, GA, for the first time in actual combat.

Moore then took the lessons he learned from this initial battle and helped instruct future troopers on how to better employ the tactic, saving countless lives going forward. During the Battle of Ia Drang, Moore was referred to as ''Yellow Hair'' by his troops, for his blond hair, and as a tongue-in-cheek tribute referencing GEN George Armstrong Custer, commander of the same 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn just under a century before.

For his actions, Hal was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest military decoration of the U.S. Army. After the Battle of Ia Drang, Moore was promoted to colonel and subsequently took command of the 3rd Brigade, commonly referred to as the Garry Owen Brigade.

After his service in the Vietnam war, Moore served in various assignments until his retirement from the Army, as a lieutenant general on August 1, 1977, after completing 32 years of active service. Today he remains an ''honorary colonel'' of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment.

Along with the book he wrote, Hal is remembered in the 2007 book written by his volunteer driver, ''A General's Spiritual Journey,'' and in the 2013 biography by author Mike Guardia, ''Hal Moore: A Soldier Once . . . and Always.'' Moore has also been designated a Distinguished Graduate by the West Point Association of Graduates and has a 3-mile stretch of Highway 280 in Lee County, AL, named in his honor.

Lieutenant General Moore splits time between Auburn, AL, and Crested Butte, CO. He continues to involve himself in his community. I am proud to call LTG Harold ''Hal'' Moore a fellow Alabamian and to acknowledge and celebrate his long and distinguished life.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:15 p.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:

S. 808. An act to establish the Surface Transportation Board as an independent establishment, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 4:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 2302, and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council: Mr. ISRAEL of New York and Mr. DEUTCH of Florida.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on December 15, 2015, she had presented to the President of the United States the following bill:

S. 808. An act to establish the Surface Transportation Board as an independent establishment, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–3904. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Naphthalene Acetates; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9937–22) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3905. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Choline Chloride; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9936–50) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3906. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Bacillus amyloliquefaciens MBI600 (antecedent Bacillus subtilis MBI600); Amendment to an Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9939–54) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3907. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Azoxystrobin; Tolerance Exemption'' (FRL No. 9939–52) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3908. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Highly Fractionated Indian Land (HFIL) Loan Program'' (RIN0560–AI32) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3909. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tomatoes Grown in Florida; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–15–0058) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3910. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer , Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for Military Personnel'' (RIN0790–AJ17) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3911. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of Community Planning and Development , Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Defining 'Chronically Homeless' '' (RIN2506–AC37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3912. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 67) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3913. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3914. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Name Change from the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) to the Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM)'' (FRL No. 9936–38–OSWER) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3915. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Washington: Interstate

Transport of Ozone'' (FRL No. 9940–05–Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3916. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; El Paso Particulate Matter Contingency Measures'' (FRL No. 9940–03–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3917. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Maryland's Negative Declaration for the Automobile and Light-Duty Truck Assembly Coatings Control Techniques Guidelines'' (FRL No. 9939–99–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3918. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2015''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3919. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting proposed legislation relative to major medical facility construction projects and major medical facility leases for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–3920. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Ultimate Heat Sink for Nuclear Power Plants'' (Regulatory Guide 1.27) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3921. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15–117); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3922. A communication from the Director of Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Listing of Color Additives Exempt from Certification; Mica-Based Pearlescent Pigments; Confirmation of Effective Date'' (Docket No. FDA–2015–C–1154) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–3923. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Management Response for the period from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3924. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 and the Semi-Annual Report of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3925. A communication from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report from the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3926. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, the President's Pay Agent, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the extension of locality based comparability payments; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3927. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''National Security Professional Development Interagency Personnel Rotations 2nd Fiscal Year End Report on Performance Measures''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

H.R. 998. A bill to establish the conditions under which the Secretary of Homeland Security may establish preclearance facilities, conduct preclearance operations, and provide customs services outside the United States, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–180).

By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1169. A bill to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–181).

S. 1318. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for protection of maritime navigation and prevention of nuclear terrorism, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. McCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Gabriel Camarillo, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

*John E. Sparks, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for the term of fifteen years to expire on the date prescribed by law.

*Marcel John Lettre, II, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

*Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Kurt W. Tidd, to be Admiral.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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 Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2401. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. McCAIN (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 2402. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to search all public records to determine if an alien is inadmissible to the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BURR, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2403. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide a period for the relocation of spouses and dependents of certain members of the Armed Forces undergoing a permanent change of station in order to ease and facilitate the relocation of military families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2404. A bill to require the Federal Trade Commission to prescribe regulations regarding the collection and use of personal information obtained by tracking the online activity of an individual, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 2405. A bill to require the disclosure of information concerning the manufacture of methamphetamine upon transfer or lease of covered housing; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. Res. 335. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Aviation Maintenance Technician Day, honoring the invaluable contributions of Charles Edward Taylor, regarded as the father of aviation maintenance, and recognizing the essential role of aviation maintenance technicians in ensuring the safety and security of civil and military aircraft; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. Res. 336. A resolution honoring the Portland Timbers as the champions of Major League Soccer in 2015; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 122

At the request of Mr. McCAIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 122, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow for the personal importation of safe and affordable drugs from approved pharmacies in Canada.

S. 233

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 233, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide compensatory time for employees in the private sector.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Washington

(Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing services to children with medically complex conditions under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program through a care coordination program focused on improving health outcomes for children with medically complex conditions and lowering costs, and for other purposes.

S. 441

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 441, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars.

S. 551

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 551, a bill to increase public safety by permitting the Attorney General to deny the transfer of firearms or the issuance of firearms and explosives licenses to known or suspected dangerous terrorists.

S. 740

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 740, a bill to improve the coordination and use of geospatial data.

S. 849

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 849, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for systematic data collection and analysis and epidemiological research regarding Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease, and other neurological diseases.

S. 928

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 928, a bill to reauthorize the World Trade Center Health Program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 968

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 968, a bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to revise the medical and evaluation criteria for determining disability in a person diagnosed with Huntington's Disease and to waive the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals disabled by Huntington's Disease.

S. 1041

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1041, a bill to eliminate certain subsidies for fossil-fuel production.

S. 1152

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1152, a bill to make permanent the extended period of protections for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction, and for other purposes.

S. 1239

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1239, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to the ethanol waiver for the Reid vapor pressure limitations under that Act.

S. 1375

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1375, a bill to designate as wilderness certain Federal portions of the red rock canyons of the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin Deserts in the State of Utah for the benefit of present and future generations of people in the United States.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1562, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 1697

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1697, a bill to provide an exception from certain group health plan requirements to allow small businesses to use pre-tax dollars to assist employees in the purchase of policies in the individual health insurance market, and for other purposes.

S. 1715

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1715, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims.

S. 1830

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor 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. 1831

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1831, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 1874

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1874, a bill to provide protections for workers with respect to their right to select or refrain from selecting representation by a labor organization.

S. 1915

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) 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. 1982

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance.

S. 2044

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2044, a bill to prohibit the use of certain clauses in form contracts that restrict the ability of a consumer to communicate regarding the goods or services offered in interstate commerce that were the subject of the contract, and for other purposes.

S. 2109

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2109, a bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop an integrated plan to reduce administrative costs under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2148

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) 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. 2159

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2159, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to allow for greater State flexibility with respect to excluding providers who are involved in abortions.

S. 2226

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2226, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the residential treatment programs for pregnant and postpartum women and to establish a pilot program to provide grants to State substance abuse agencies to promote innovative service delivery models for such women.

S. 2312

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2312, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to make improvements to payments for durable medical equipment under the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

S. 2321

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2321, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 regarding reasonable break time for nursing mothers.

S. 2325

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2325, a bill to require the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish a constituent-driven program to provide a digital information platform capable of efficiently integrating coastal data with decision-support tools, training, and best practices and to support collection of priority coastal geospatial data to inform and improve local, State, regional, and Federal capacities to manage the coastal region, and for other purposes.

S. 2361

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2361, a bill to enhance airport security, and for other purposes.

S. 2377

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2377, a bill to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and protect and secure the United States, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 148

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 148, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 326

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 326, a resolution celebrating the 135th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Romania.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 335—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN DAY, HONORING THE INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHARLES EDWARD TAYLOR, REGARDED AS THE FATHER OF AVIATION MAINTENANCE, AND RECOGNIZING THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS IN ENSURING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CIVIL AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 335

Whereas the safety of the flying public is ensured and the integrity of aircraft airworthiness is personally guaranteed by individuals who comprise the professional aviation maintenance technician workforce;

Whereas professional aviation maintenance technicians are key members of the Armed Forces of the United States and help protect the United States through a strong Armed Forces aviation infrastructure;

Whereas the duties of aviation maintenance technicians are critical to the homeland security of the United States and an integral component of the aerospace industry of the United States;

Whereas professional aviation maintenance technicians provide the strong infrastructure through which public confidence in the airborne transportation safety and military aviation strength of the United States is ensured;

Whereas, in 1901, Charles Edward Taylor began working as a machinist for Orville and Wilbur Wright at the Wright Cycle Company in Dayton, Ohio;

Whereas using only a metal lathe, drill press, and hand tools, Charles Edward Taylor built, in 6 weeks, the 12-horsepower engine that was used to power the first flying machine of the Wright brothers;

Whereas the ingenuity of Charles Edward Taylor earned him a place in aviation history when the Wright brothers successfully flew their airplane in controlled flight on December 17, 1903;

Whereas Charles Edward Taylor had a successful career in aviation maintenance for more than 60 years;

Whereas Charles Edward Taylor was honored by the Federal Aviation Administration with the establishment of the Charles Edward Taylor Master Mechanic Award, which recognizes individuals with not less than 50 years of aviation maintenance experience;

Whereas Charles Edward Taylor has become a hero to aircraft maintenance technicians worldwide; and

Whereas 45 States, together with the commonwealths, territories, republics, and federations of the United States, have already declared May 24 to be Aviation Maintenance Technician Day within their jurisdictions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports National Aviation Maintenance Technician Day to honor the professional men and women who ensure the safety and security of the airborne aviation infrastructure of the United States; and

(2) recognizes the life and memory of Charles Edward Taylor, the aviation maintenance technician who built and maintained the engine that was used to power the first controlled flying machine of the Wright brothers on December 17, 1903.

SENATE RESOLUTION 336—HONORING THE PORTLAND TIMBERS AS THE CHAMPIONS OF MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER IN 2015

Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 336

Whereas on December 6, 2015, the Portland Timbers won the Major League Soccer Cup, the championship match of Major League Soccer;

Whereas by defeating the Columbus Crew by a score of 2 to 1, the Portland Timbers won their first Major League Soccer championship and the 20th edition of the Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas Portland Timbers players Diego Valeri and Rodney Wallace scored goals in the Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas Portland Timbers midfielder Diego Valeri was designated by Major League Soccer as the Most Valuable Player of the Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas the victory of the Portland Timbers in the Major League Soccer Cup was the first Major League Soccer championship win for Portland Timbers head coach, Caleb Porter, and Portland Timbers owner, Merritt Paulson;

Whereas by doing charity work, the Portland Timbers organization inspires the people of Portland, Oregon, both on the soccer field and in the community;

Whereas the Timbers Army and the fans of the Portland Timbers, who inspire and exemplify Rose City pride by filling Providence Park with songs, scarves, flags, and confetti, and contributing to the community with charity work, are the best fans in Major League Soccer; and

Whereas the success of the Portland Timbers soccer team will—

(1) broaden an appreciation of athletics in young people; and

(2) encourage Oregonians to volunteer in their communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the Portland Timbers as the champions of Major League Soccer in 2015;

(2) recognizes the outstanding achievement of the Portland Timbers team, ownership, and staff; and

(3) requests that the Secretary of the Senate prepare an enrolled copy of this resolution for—

(A) Portland Timbers owner Merritt Paulson;

(B) Portland Timbers head coach Caleb Porter; and

(C) Portland Timbers general manager Gavin Wilkinson.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2928. Mr. INHOFE (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. REED)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 571, to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2928. Mr. INHOFE (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. REED)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 571, to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 37, line 12, after the period, insert the following: ''I certify that I am not aware of any medical condition that, as presently treated, could interfere with the individual's ability to safely operate an aircraft.''.

On page 40, line 6, insert ''and signed by the physician'' after ''followed''.

On page 48, between lines 3 and 4, insert the following:

(l) AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Administrator receives credible or urgent information, including from the National Driver Register or the Administrator's Safety Hotline, that reflects on an individual's ability to safely operate a covered aircraft under the third-class medical certificate exemption in subsection (a), the Administrator may require the individual to provide additional information or history so that the Administrator may determine whether the individual is safe to continue operating a covered aircraft.

(2) USE OF INFORMATION.—The Administrator may use credible or urgent information received under paragraph (1) to request an individual to provide additional information or to take actions under section 44709(b) of title 49, United States Code.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 15, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 15, 2015, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Afghanistan Intelligence Assessment.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 15, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SR–418, of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 15, 2015, at 10 a.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that LCDR Robert Donnell, a Coast Guard fellow with the Senate commerce committee, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 114th Congress.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 378, 380, and 427 through 430.

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

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote en bloc without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of the nominations, 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 any of the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations 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. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Anthony Rosario Coscia, of New Jersey, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of five years; Derek Tai-Ching Kan, of California, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of five years; Dana J. Boente, of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of four years; Robert Lloyd Capers, of New York, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for the term of four years; John P. Fishwick, Jr., of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia for the term of four years; and Emily Gray Rice, of New Hampshire, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire for the term of four years?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider individually the following nominations at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader: Calendar Nos. 305, 306, 360, and 361; that there be 30 minutes for debate for each nomination equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time on the respective nomination, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination. Further, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that all judicial nominations received by the Senate during the 114th Congress, first session, remain in status quo, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXXI, paragraph 6, of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. For the information of our colleagues, it is my intention to schedule each of these nominations for floor consideration and a vote prior to the Presidents Day recess in February.

HONORING THE PORTLAND TIMBERS AS THE CHAMPIONS OF MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER IN 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 336, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 336) honoring the Portland Timbers as the champions of Major League Soccer in 2015.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 336) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m., Wednesday, December 16; 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; further, that

following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 6 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:06 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at 11 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 15, 2015:

AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ANTHONY ROSARIO COSCIA, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS.

DEREK TAI-CHING KAN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DANA J. BOENTE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

ROBERT LLOYD CAPERS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

JOHN P. FISHWICK, JR., OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

EMILY GRAY RICE, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING GOV. TERRY BRANSTAD ON BECOMING THE LONGEST-SERVING GOVERNOR IN AMERICAN HISTORY

HON. PAUL D. RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the whole House, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Governor Terry Branstad on his 7,642nd day in office. He is now the longest-serving governor in American history. And this day of recognition comes not a moment too soon because his principled leadership is a model for us all.

Over the course of his 21 years in office, he has helped the people of Iowa overcome enormous challenges. He inherited a budget deficit; he now presides over a large surplus. When he came in, the state economy had gone bust; now it is booming. And through good times and bad, he has always stood four-square behind his values.

People say he is good at retail politics, and that is certainly true. But his success is more than a testament to his skill. It is a testament to his devotion. Governor Branstad knows that a true public servant lives among the people. He visits all 99 counties of Iowa every year. He can tell you the ins and outs of everything in Iowa—from soybeans to livestock to insurance. He goes to every small event in every small town because he wants to be there. He listens because he cares.

Asked what he wants his legacy to be, Governor Branstad has said he wants Iowa to be a place where young people want to stay—where there is opportunity for all. I could think of no better goal for every governor in the country.

I also think it is fitting that the long-serving governor whose record he has surpassed was George Clinton, a man who left his state to become vice president. For Governor Branstad, national office would have been a step down. He knows his state. He loves his state. The people of Iowa are grateful for his service. I'm grateful for his friendship. And all of us in the House are grateful for his example.

TRIBUTE TO BILL AND MARILYN RYAN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bill and Marilyn Ryan of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1950.

Bill and Marilyn's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Laura, Mary, Jane, Nancy, Anne, and Carol, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Ryan family that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 65th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, on December 11, 2015, the House of Representatives considered the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015. Regrettably, due to a family commitment I was unable to cast my vote on this legislation. Had I been present, I would have voted yes on the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015.

IN SUPPORT OF OUR CLOSE PARTNER TAIWAN

HON. SCOTT DesJARLAIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the positive steps that our close partner and friend Taiwan has taken in the South China Sea.

On December 12, 2015, the Taiwanese government inaugurated a newly constructed lighthouse and renovated wharf on the Taiping Island, which is the largest natural island of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea and has been administered by Taiwan since 1946. This infrastructure project will help support free and safe passage of ships through the surrounding waters, further enabling Taiwan to offer humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and provide emergency rescue support to passing vessels.

Like the United States, Taiwan is a firm believer in freedom of navigation rights and has actively worked to promote peace and prosperity throughout the South China Sea region. Earlier this year, Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou proposed the South China Sea Peace Initiative, reiterating their government's long-standing position of shelving disputes and promoting joint resource development in these contested waters.

Over the years, Taiwan has continued to play a responsible and peaceful role in the region and as such, I urge my colleagues to join me in working with our Taiwanese partners to promote our common interests and uphold international law.

HONORING CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT JOHN FRANCIS DITRO

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Chief Master Sergeant John F. Ditro who will retire from the United States Air Force on December 31, 2015. Chief Master Sergeant Ditro has more than 27 years of combined military service in the United States Navy, the United States Air Force, and the New York Air National Guard.

Chief Ditro entered the United States Navy through the delayed enlistment program in May of 1982 and was called up to active duty in July of that year. In January of 1983, he was assigned to the United States Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, working on truck diesel engines and aviation fuel pumps in support of the Aviation Fuels Division.

After a brief stint in the naval reserves, Chief Ditro re-enlisted in the United States Navy in March of 1986. He was stationed aboard the *Caloosahatchee* and in March of 1988, Chief Ditro was released from the United States Navy. Chief Ditro then began working as a civilian accountant at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base and in 1994 he joined the Pennsylvania Air National Guard as a Combat Communications technician. In August of 1995 Chief Ditro accepted a position with the New York Air National Guard working as a Command and Control Battle Management Operations specialist in the Northeast Air Defense Sector. Chief Ditro was activated on September 11, 2001 after the attack on the World Trade Center.

In June of 2002, Chief Ditro transferred to the 174th Fighter Wing located at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, New York. Chief Ditro was named the Financial Management Superintendent in 2003; under Chief Ditro's management, the financial services office was named the Financial Services Office of the Year in 2008. In June of 2010, Chief Ditro accepted the challenge to become the first Operations Support Squadron Superintendent leading the charge to assist the Operations Group in all missions as the Chief of Intelligence.

Chief Master Sergeant Ditro's major awards and decorations include: Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with 2 Devices, Air Force Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation, Combat Readiness Medal with 2 Devices, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal with 6 Devices, National Defense Service Medal with

1 Device, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corp Overseas Service Ribbon, Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border, Air Force Longevity with 5 Devices, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 3 "M" Devices, New York Recruiting Medal, New York Humane Service to New York State Medal, New York Air National Guard Outstanding Enlisted Leader of the Year Ribbon, and New York Defense of Liberty award.

Chief Ditro has served his country honorably and for that he has my utmost respect. I want to thank him for his dedication, loyalty, and service to his country. I wish Chief Ditro the best and I hope that he enjoys his retirement with his wife Sandy and his two sons, Jason and Joshua.

CONGRATULATING LOCAL LEADERS IN COCHISE COUNTY

HON. MARTHA McSALLY

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Ms. McSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate local leaders in Cochise County, KE&G construction, and Cemex for their outstanding work on the Palominas Flood Protection and Groundwater Recharge project. This project is the first-ever aquifer protection and recharge effort of its kind implemented at a regional scale, and aims to protect flows of a desert river and its lush streamside habitat while also replenishing the water supplies of local residents. The Palominas project embodies the values of the residents of Cochise County who not only want to ensure protection of our waterways and natural resources, but are looking for solutions to provide more economic opportunity. One-size-fits-all requirements from Washington fail to take into account Arizona's unique landscapes, but the formation of local partnerships allowed the community to come together to create a solution to benefit all, including the citizens, businesses, and native plants and animals.

This project received top state and local honors in Arizona and was recognized internationally for offering a long-term solution to the recurring problem of sheet flow flooding at a local elementary school and the need for aquifer recharge. The project includes a 17 million gallon detention basin that holds storm water runoff, as well as dry wells and infiltration trenches covering 290 acres. These dry wells and infiltration trenches provide additional storage capacity during storms, reduce the loss of water through evaporation, and increase the amount of water recharged into the nearby San Pedro River.

Dennis Donovan, a civil engineer overseeing the project for Cochise County told the Arizona Republic that the project includes the large detention basin with berms to slowly steer the water into a wide channel before spilling over four foot walls that "slow down the storm water to where, to the best it can, it (sinks and) recharges." The water control mechanisms in the basin keep storm water from washing through in a day leaving the basin dry again the next.

The Sierra Vista Herald noted that, "CEMEX's Sierra Vista Plant joined forces with KE&G Construction to complete the project within a three-month time frame. Working through more than two inches of rainfall, these dynamic teams beat the heaviest rains of the summer monsoon season."

The health of the San Pedro River is important to Fort Huachuca and the vitality of the surrounding community. Projects like these help to protect the future of the San Pedro River and demonstrate the commitment of the Army and the community to preserving their natural environment.

HONORING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN VIRGINIA'S 10TH DISTRICT

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the following law enforcement personnel who have recently been honored at the 11th Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner in my district for their invaluable service and commitment to our communities. I submit the following excerpts from a speech delivered by Mr. Jim Wink, who spoke at this event in the fall. This year's honorees are Officer Dustin Bowers of the Mount Weather Police Department, Officer William McCann of the Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center, Deputy Shane Jewell of the Clarke County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Mackenzie Carter of the Winchester City Sheriff's Office, Deputy Aaron Jeter of the Frederick County Sheriff's Office, Laura Patten of the Berryville Police Department, Corporal Richie Lewis O'Connor of Winchester Police Department, Trooper Terry Hilliker of the Virginia Department of State Police, and DEA Special Agent Thomas Hickey of the Northwest Virginia Regional Drug Task Force.

Officer Dustin Bowers has continually displayed the highest degree of competence, esprit de corps, and dedication to the mission at Mount Weather. He routinely goes above and beyond to perform his duties as a police officer, and in doing so, improves the Mount Weather department. Officer Bowers, without hesitation, took on the responsibility of serving as the field training officer for new officers. This year, Officer Bowers was selected to attend the federal law enforcement training center's active shooter instructor course. Since completing the course, Officer Bowers has worked to improve the department's capability to respond to an active shooter incident. He is currently developing an active shooter training program for Mount Weather emergency operation center employees focused on teaching them how to react to shooting incidents in the work place and other public locations. Officer Bowers also, through his own initiative, researched and proposed new equipment that the department purchased, which improved police officer readiness at all levels. Mount Weather Police Department can think of no finer officer more deserving of recognition.

Officer William McCann is the head of the field training officer program, a CPR instructor, training officer, and constant mentor at the detention center in Winchester. He has been nominated and will be the recipient of two life-saving awards. In addition to these two critical incidents, Officer McCann's impact is present on a daily basis. He is one of the most respected and influential staff members in the detention center which accounts for nearly 200 employees. Officer McCann's wealth of knowledge comes from over 20 years of experience in the Maryland department of corrections where he served as a lieutenant.

Deputy Shane Jewell joined the Clarke County Sheriff's Office in 2009. He is a respected instructor at the Rappahannock Regional Criminal Justice Academy, where he teaches defensive tactics. Deputy Jewell supports the mission of this office and is the epitome of a team player. Deputy Jewell's hard work and dedication to the Clarke County community is valuable.

Deputy Mackenzie Carter joined the Winchester City Sheriff's Office only a year ago; however, in a short time, she has displayed her dedication to the office and her team. She exerts a strong ability to assist others and volunteers for extra duties at the sheriff's office. Deputy Carter has the willingness to take on difficult projects and see them to a successful completion, which has repeatedly impressed the sheriff over the past year. Deputy Carter has also shown that she is dedicated to going above and beyond in serving her community. She has participated in and started several community-based fundraising events and community service incentives, such as the CCAP food drive, Evans Home for Children food drive, the Winchester Literacy Foundation summer reading program.

While on patrol one evening, Deputy Aaron Jeter, observed a speeding violator. He made the decision to stop the vehicle for the violation. With the assistance from other deputies; Deputy Jeter was able to recover a large amount of heroin from under the vehicle. The total amount seized from the traffic stop was 261 individual packets of heroin and over $400.00 in cash. Following this seizure, Deputy Jeter continued his increased effort to combat the local heroin epidemic, which plagues our community. Deputy Jeter's work against the local heroin problem is truly noteworthy. The efforts of deputies, like Aaron Jeter, will help curb the amount of heroin related overdoses and deaths, which our community has recently faced. Deputy Jeter's outstanding work with these cases makes him a worthy and deserving candidate for this year's HSCBA award.

Laura Patten serves the Berryville Police Department as the sole civilian employee in the capacity of administrative assistant. She began working for the department in August of 1989 and is looking forward to her upcoming retirement in 2016. Early in her career she served as a crossing guard making sure the children of the community made their way safely to school and back home. In the office, Laura keeps the flow of communication working between the community and officers in the field. Indeed, she is the face and voice of the department working the front desk and answering the phones. It is often an under-appreciated function that Laura provides to the department. Berryville PD Chief Neal White states he is very thankful that she is getting the credit she truly deserves.

Corporal Richie Lewis of Winchester responded to a violent kidnapping last year that involved a male holding a knife to the throat of a female. Lewis helped to neutralize the situation with the help of his team. Upon seeing the officers the suspect became agitated, so the officers withdrew from the building out of fear the suspect would harm the female. When the suspect shut the hall door Cpl. Lewis reentered the building and snuck up to the landing on the third floor. While Cpl. Lewis was approaching the landing, with gun drawn, the suspect reopened the door. Out of fear of shooting the female Cpl. Lewis transitioned from his pistol to his Taser. When the suspect gave

Cpl. Lewis an opening between the female's body and his own, Cpl. Lewis was able to shoot the suspect with his Taser and incapacitate him, bringing the situation to a quick and effective resolution.

Trooper Hilliker handles all traffic and criminal matters with professionalism and personal pride. He continues to take on the extra responsibility of being an explosive K–9 handler on top of his other duties. Trooper Hilliker's dedication to the department and the citizens it serves is unmatched. 2001–2002 Winchester Police Department, 1997–1999 Muskego Police Department Muskego, WI. Terry Hilliker served as a member of the Winchester and Muskego Police Departments as a patrolman where he was tasked with a multitude of responsibilities and challenges when working in local law enforcement. The experience Terry learned during this time is evident in his current role as a trooper. Terry Hilliker started his service related professions with the United States Marine Corps (1976–1996). He served in various command, staff and administrative billets from the platoon, company, and battalion levels to the regimental, brigade, and division level. Terry retired from the Marine Corps with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

DEA Special Agent Thomas Hickey is a contributing member of the Northwest Virginia Regional Drug Task Force and assists members of the force with numerous narcotics cases annually. Special Agent Hickey has been and continues to be a major supporting federal entity essential to fighting the current heroin epidemic. Special Agent Hickey has been instrumental in numerous local heroin cases by providing intelligence information, identifying major Baltimore, Maryland heroin suppliers and arresting and prosecuting large scale Baltimore heroin distributors who have plagued our communities. Special Agent Hickey is a dedicated law enforcement professional who believes in the working relationships between state, local and federal law enforcement agencies. He continues to provide an expert element to the drug task force that is necessary in combating the drug epidemics that plague our communities. Special Agent Hickey responds to active drug overdoses and assists agents by providing support and advice. He prefers to be involved in local drug cases from the beginning, and often responds to and assists local agents at all hours of the day and night. In 2014 special Agent Hickey initiated, investigated, and prosecuted fourteen large scale federal heroin investigations all of which were directly related to the Winchester, Frederick and Clarke county communities.

TAIWAN'S PEACE INITIATIVE IN THE TAIPING ISLAND OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my sincere appreciation for the Republic of China (Taiwan) recent leadership and initiative in pursuing long-term peace and stability in the South China Sea.

In December 2015, a U.S. State Department official expressed that all claimants should work to reduce regional tensions.

I encourage all relevant countries to resolve maritime disputes in accordance with international laws and regulations, including the United Nations Charter and UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). I especially take note of Taiwan's willingness to work with other parties concerned, through consultations conducted on the basis of equality and reciprocity, to jointly ensure peace and stability in the South China Sea, to uphold the freedom of navigation and overflight, and to conserve and develop resources in the region.

Taiping Island is the largest natural and self-sustainable island in Spratly Islands. This island qualifies as an island according to the UNCLOS. Taiwan has set up a hospital in Taiping Island. Over the past decade, this hospital has offered humanitarian assistance to 21 people in 20 cases, including 12 Philippine and Myanmar nationals, which fully demonstrates Taiwan's dedication to humanitarianism.

COMMEMORATING TROY'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DAVID A. TROTT

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of the city of Troy, Michigan. Troy has always been a community of opportunity.

The township of Troy became a home rule city in 1955 after the introduction of commercial and industrial development led to tremendous growth in the post-World War II period. Since 1955, Troy has witnessed a myriad of changes including the construction of I–75, the explosion of growth on Big Beaver Road, as well as thriving residential neighborhoods.

These achievements have not gone unnoticed. Troy is consistently rated as one of the safest cities in Michigan, best places to raise a family, and most recently, one of the happiest places in America.

None of these things would be possible without the thousands of city residents that strive each day to improve their community and take care of their families. It is to you, the residents of Troy that I say thank you for the privilege of representing you in Congress and congratulations to Troy for sixty prosperous years, with many more to come.

RECOGNIZING THE MARSHALL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY TCAL DIVISION II STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. LOUIE GOHMERT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, for more than twenty five years, Marshall Christian Academy has been providing Christian based education to students whose families desire them to have a solid foundation in academics and athletics, while developing excellence and Christ-centered character. It is a great honor to recognize the Marshall Christian Academy Guardians on their most recent accomplishment, capturing the Texas Christian Athletic League Division II 6-man Football State Championship title.

Marshall Christian Academy takes pride in working on the A, B, and Cs—attitude, behavior, and conduct, in both academics and athletics. The school website states, "At Marshall Christian Academy, we play Six-Man Football to work in the character of Christ to our young men. God has blessed us with the opportunity to play the great game of football. Six-Man is an effective tool for developing young men in discipleship and training them in the game of life—how to play a game, how to be tough and how to represent Jesus Christ on and off the field."

The team fought and overcame a number of obstacles before claiming the state title, proving once again they are champions in every sense of the word. Their season was riddled with lengthy travel, inclement weather, illnesses, and a devastating car accident which seriously injured two team members and claimed the life of a family member. But through it all, the Guardians relied on the power of prayer to persevere and emerge triumphant, resulting in a season culminating in their first ever state football championship with a 36–28 win over Annapolis Christian Academy.

The Marshall Christian Academy Guardians achieving this landmark accomplishment include David Florence, Stephan Florence, William Hency, Ryan Stokell, Aslan Bell, Andrew Stokell, Dylan Alford, Hunter Cagle, Dazmond Lewis, Noah Heredia, Caleb Beesinger and Matthew Stokell.

Congratulations should be extended to the dedicated faculty and staff members who so skillfully created the solid foundation of direction and motivation necessary to build a team of champions: Marshall Christian Academy Administrators Raymond Bade, Duane Schultz and Guy Barr III, along with the Guardians' athletic staff comprised of Head Coach Guy Barr III, along with Assistant Coaches Jeff Arrington, Tyrone Robinson and Robert Stokell.

May God continue to bless their efforts so they may one day dedicate their drive and determination to help make this great country even stronger. My most enthusiastic and heartfelt congratulations to the Marshall Christian Academy Guardians, as their legacy is now recorded in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD which will endure as long as there is a United States of America.

REFLECTING ON THE RECOVERY OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS SINCE TYPHOON SOUDELOR

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, on the night of August 2nd and through the early morning of August 3rd this year, Typhoon Soudelor lashed through the Northern Mariana Islands, causing widespread destruction to homes, businesses, and infrastructure, uprooting the lives of the people I represent here in Congress.

Today, I want to reflect on that event, and on the exceptional grace and generosity that have made recovery possible.

The typhoon's impact was especially grave on Saipan, the most populated island in the

Northern Marianas. Soudelor rendered hundreds of families homeless overnight. It also decimated infrastructure—knocking out power and water systems, shutting down the ports, ravaging the college, schools and other public buildings.

Survival is a way of life in our islands. We are accustomed to bracing ourselves through tropical storms and picking ourselves up when skies clear. But the sheer ferocity of Typhoon Soudelor caught us all off-guard. Even the National Weather Service failed to foresee the force of this storm.

That there was no loss of life is testament to the resilience and resourcefulness of our people. And we are grateful to Providence for sparing us.

As long as we live, those of us who experienced Soudelor will not forget the wreckage we saw the morning after. Nor will we forget the hardship that followed, the long hours in line for food and fuel and other necessities, the days of physical suffering and distress, the weeks without power and running water.

Soudelor tested our infrastructure, our government, and our capacity as a community to deal with disaster.

Now, however, four months after the storm, I can report that conditions are greatly improved, since that long and terrifying night in August.

Electricity is restored, and residents have daily water service. Streets have been cleaned in our villages and commercial districts. Students are in school. Businesses have reopened. Workers are employed again. Families are putting their lives back together.

Though there is still much to reconstruct and strengthen to be better prepared and more resilient than before, it is remarkable how far we have come on the road to recovery.

So, today, I want to thank all those who contributed to this successful response to adversity. There are so many individuals and organizations. It is not possible for me to know and name each and every one. Their collective efforts prove how much can be done, when people work together towards a common goal.

First we thank the American people, who gave without hesitation to fellow citizens in need. When all is said and done, American taxpayers will have contributed an estimated 100 million dollars in federal disaster aid to feed those who had no food, shelter those who lost their homes, repair residences and replace lost property, reopen shops and return the economy to life, revive the power and water systems. In doing all this, they gave us the hope that we needed to work our way to recovery.

We thank President Barack Obama and Governor Eloy Inos for their leadership in ensuring the prompt availability of resources to address the state of disaster in the Northern Marianas.

We thank the Federal Emergency Management Agency team, led by Federal Coordinating Officer Stephen De Blasio. FEMA's collaborative spirit set the tone for the response, working with other federal agencies and responders to aid the thousands of typhoon survivors.

We thank our U.S. service members, who mobilized quickly to produce and distribute drinking water, clear debris, clean up fuel spills, and transport critical supplies and equipment.

We thank our Commonwealth emergency management crews, utility workers, police officers and firefighters, healthcare professionals, educators, and other local government employees, who answered the call to serve even as their own families were picking up the pieces of their shattered homes and lives.

We thank our local businesses, shuttered by the storm, who nevertheless rallied together to raise funds for the recovery effort.

We thank the legions of volunteers—of all ages, all religions and races, many survivors themselves—who came forward to share food, water, clothing, shelter, and comfort with their fellow human beings.

And we thank our friends from throughout the Pacific region, and indeed throughout the world, for sending supplies, expertise, and equipment by air and by sea to help us back on our feet.

Today, the marks of Typhoon Soudelor are still to be seen in homes and businesses yet to be repaired, debris yet to be removed. But beneath these physical scars, a new strength is arising.

A new community-based working group known as CARE—the Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts—has emerged. The people in CARE—from all walks of life, private and public sector, formal and informal organizations—are committed to rebuilding our island home so that it is stronger and better than before.

With this newborn spirit of hope, cooperation and interdependence I am confident that we will succeed.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH YEAR OF DESEGREGATION OF THE CITY OF MEMPHIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th year of desegregation of the City of Memphis Fire Department. On July 11, 1955, twelve African American men were recruited to join the Memphis Fire Department and were assigned to Fire Station No. 8 located at E.H. Crump and Mississippi Boulevards. They were: Robert Crawford; Carl Stotts; Floyd Newsum; Norvell Wallace; George Dumas; John Copper; William Carter; Leon Parsons; Richard Burns; Lawrence Yates; Leroy Johnson; and Murray Pugues. Like many African Americans who worked to break the barriers erected by Jim Crow era laws, there were many challenges to being the first to integrate the fire department, but their love for the city of Memphis and desire to keep citizens safe from harm helped them to overcome the challenges with the highest levels of determination and professionalism.

For many years following integration, racial differences dictated how African American firefighters responded to fires. In his book ''Black Fire: Portrait of a Black Memphis Firefighter,'' Robert Crawford recalled how the twelve men were required to wait outside homes belonging to white residents until after the Captain inspected the home to ensure any woman present was appropriately dressed. When responding to fires at residences belonging to African Americans, the twelve were allowed to enter and investigate alongside their white colleagues. Crawford also recounted the challenges he and others faced when working with firefighters from other firehouses around the city, obtaining information on fighting fires and in being considered for promotions.

Fire Station No. 8 became well-known for its crews' perseverance, work ethic and bravery in the line of duty. Over time, other fire companies became open to working with the men, which led to the full integration of the Memphis Fire Department. This was, however, not without resistance from some within the department who were opposed to such change, even into the 1980s when some of the twelve men had been promoted to high ranks. By the time of their retirements, they had achieved the ranks of: Robert Crawford—Deputy Director of the Memphis Fire Department; Carl Stotts—Deputy Chief; Floyd Newsum—Division Chief; Norvell Wallace—Assistant Fire Marshal; George Dumas—Battalion Commander; John Copper—Captain; William Carter—Fire Inspector; Leon Parsons—Lieutenant; Richard Burns—Private; and Lawrence Yates—Private. Sixty years later, the Memphis Fire Department remains integrated and three African Americans have held the highest position of Director, including Alvin Benson who now serves as the Chief of the Shelby County Fire Department.

Mr. Speaker, these twelve men are a part of Memphis history. They are honored with an exhibit at the Fire Museum of Memphis and they have a place in the hearts of the citizens of Memphis. Now, they will be honored and remembered in the United States CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 60th year of desegregation of the Memphis Fire Department.

HONORING THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENT BRIAN TERRY

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Brian Terry and his service to this great country as a U.S. Border Patrol agent.

In 2009, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives began a program known as ''Operation Fast and Furious.'' The program was a maligned attempt to track 2,000 weapons destined for drug cartels.

Five years ago, Border Patrol agents were assaulted by a band of robbers 17 miles inside the U.S. border in Arizona, resulting in the death of Brian Terry on December 15, 2010. Two of the guns found at the scene were linked to Operation Fast and Furious. Together with Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY and the Senate Judiciary Committee, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform attempted to get answers for the Terry family, but this effort has been stonewalled and obstructed by those responsible for the ill-conceived Operation.

Before serving three and a half years with the U.S. Border Patrol, Agent Terry served in the United States Marine Corps and worked as a police officer in Ecorse and Lincoln Park, Michigan, not far from his hometown of Flat

Rock. He was only 40 years old when his life was cut tragically short. Agent Terry is survived by his mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, brother and two sisters.

Some of those involved in Agent Terry's shooting were recently convicted for their terrible crime. However, the Obama Administration continues to actively resist turning over information related to the Congressional investigation into Operation Fast and Furious. We must never give up our fight to ensure the Terry family gets nothing less than full accountability from their government. I have pledged to them before, and do so again today, that I will continue to pursue the truth.

TRIBUTE TO RYAN SCHWEIZER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ryan Schweizer from Dowling Catholic High School for winning the Class 4A Boys Cross Country individual title. Ryan is the son of Mike and Kathy Schweizer.

Ryan has spent his high school career working towards a single goal: winning a coveted state championship. After 4 long years of hard work, Ryan was able to achieve that goal when he crossed the finish line at the 2015 Class 4A Boys Cross Country State Championship. He finished 4 seconds ahead of any other runner.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by Ryan demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Ryan on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing him nothing but continued success in his education and athletic pursuits.

IN RECOGNITION OF MAYOR GERALD W. GROSS OF WEST EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Mayor of the Borough of West Easton, PA, the Honorable Gerald W. Gross, for his 50 years of service as an elected official. His accomplishments were recognized by the West Easton Borough Council on the evening of Monday, December 14.

Mayor Gross first held an official role in West Easton as a member of the Borough Council. It was a position he held for twenty years. In 1986, he was sworn in as the Mayor of West Easton. He has been the mayor for thirty years.

Known to be a patient and giving man, Mayor Gross would take calls from home to hear complaints and questions from Borough residents. He owns a landscaping business and often donates free materials and services to the Borough to maintain parks and recreational areas.

As a dedicated leader, Mayor Gross closely oversaw several large community projects, such as the installment of public sewer lines and the planning and construction of the West Easton municipal building. He also led planning and preparations for the Borough's centennial celebration in 1998, which was ended with a fireworks display.

Mayor Gross has been ardent in his efforts to boost economic development in the Borough. A notable accomplishment was his role in the establishment of a new Northampton County leased DUI Treatment Center in 2012, which generates $50,000 in impact fees for the Borough's general fund. Additionally, he has worked to make the community and its parks safe and clean in order to promote West Easton as a great place for families.

Mayor Gross is also known to be someone who can bring people together. He believes much can be done when people are willing to compromise, and he stresses the importance of listening to each other and staying focused on the greater good of the community. His good works have served as a role model for his daughter, Kelly Gross, who was first elected to West Easton Borough Council in 1993 and currently serves as Council President.

It is an honor for me to recognize Mayor Gerald Gross for his generous nature and his lifetime of service. With a will to do for others, he has improved his community and inspired the next generation of leaders.

CHINA DISCRIMINATES AGAINST CANADIAN FALUN GONG CONTESTANT

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I come here today with yet another example of China's egregious disregard for the most basic of human rights—the right to live freely.

After the Falun Gong's rise in popularity in the 1990s, the Chinese Government perceived this peaceful group as a threat. Over the years, Falun Gong followers in China have been imprisoned, tortured, and killed. In fact, there are more Falun Gong practitioners in prison in China than any other persecuted group.

Last month China hit a new low in its attempt to silence the Falun Gong community. Anastasia Lin is a Falun Gong practitioner who also happens to be Miss World Canada. The Miss World competition is held this year in China but Miss Canada can't go. Why? Because China refused to give her a visa. She was given no explanation why. However, the motive is clear. Beijing does not like how outspoken Ms. Lin has been about China's human rights abuses and religious oppression.

Anastasia Lin moved from China to Canada when she was 13 years old. Yet she has not stopped fighting for the rights of her fellow members of the Falun Gong community. During a congressional hearing in July, Ms. Lin told Members that tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been killed so their organs could be harvested and sold for transplants. Clearly, Beijing's only concern is remaining in power, not the welfare of the Chinese people.

Last week, on the 65th annual International Human Rights Day, I gave another speech demanding Beijing put a stop to this atrocious practice of harvesting organs from prisoners of conscience. It is high time China ends its illegal subjugation of Falun Gong practitioners. Justice must be served.

Unfortunately, Anastasia Lin is an innocent victim of the Chinese Government's attempts to persecute the Falun Gong. It just goes to show how obsessed the Chinese Government is about persecuting the Falun Gong. Beijing is now censoring beauty pageants. But the courageous men and women of the Falun Gong community will not be silenced by Beijing's abuse—beauty pageant or no beauty pageant.

And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO RUTH LAMPE

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ms. Ruth Lampe, who at the age of 102 has received her honorary high school diploma from Winterset High School.

Back in Ruth's younger years it wasn't uncommon for students to drop out of school and go work to help support their family. She did so after her freshman year at Winterset High School. Ruth would have graduated with the class of 1931. Today, Ruth volunteers her time two days a week at the senior center in Winterset where she helps serve meals to those who need it the most. A friend of Ruth's, and another regular at the senior center, worked with the school district for months to attain her honorary diploma.

Mr. Speaker, applaud and congratulate Ruth for receiving her high school diploma after so many years and thank her for staying active in her community. I am proud to represent her in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Ruth and wishing her nothing but the best.

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND TERRORIST TRAVEL PREVENTION ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, today while I rise in support of H.R. 158 the Visa Waiver Program Improvement Act of 2015, I must also note my reservations about some of the provisions in this bill.

President Obama in an address to the American people from the Oval Office specifically asked Congress to pass legislation to address any weaknesses within our visa waiver program (VWP) and for a "stronger screening for travelers to the U.S. without a visa to check if they have travelled to warzones."

After the terror attacks in Paris, France and San Bernandino, California we must ensure

that a law created to encourage travel and cultural exchange is not exploited by those who would do us harm. We must scrutinize and strengthen our VWP and many of the provisions in this bill do just that. I support the provisions in this bill that encourage our allies to share biometric data, improve data sharing on criminal and security concerns and stronger vetting systems This bi-partisan effort is a significant improvement over H.R. 4038, a bill which did nothing but target innocent refugees and exploited xenophobic and unsubstantiated fears.

While I support the overall thrust of this bill, I do have some reservations. I am concerned that there are not exceptions for journalists, ministers or aid workers who provide vital services to a needy population. The exclusion for law enforcement or military personnel should be extended to include people who visit Syria, Sudan, or Iraq for completely innocent and humanitarian reasons. We should continue to scrutinize the VWF so that we do not unnecessarily target innocent travelers.

I hope our colleagues in the Senate take these reservations into account when they consider this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, on December 2, 2015, I inadvertently voted ''aye'' on Roll Call 657. I intended to vote ''nay''. This amendment was offered by Mr. TONKO of New York.

RECOGNIZING TIM GORDON

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Tim Gordon for his service to our country in the United States Army. I believe that America's brave men and women in uniform are the nation's greatest assets. They have made incredible sacrifices for our country and deserve our utmost support and aid for their service.

Mr. Gordon was in the Army from June 1966 through April 1972. During this time, he fought in Vietnam from February 1969 through February 1970, no soldiers were lost under his command. Ultimately, he was honorably discharged with the rank of Captain.

Our nation owes no greater debt of gratitude than the one we owe our veterans. They and their families should be commended. On behalf of the 4th Congressional District of Colorado, I extend my best wishes to Mr. Tim Gordon.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Mr. Tim Gordon for his accomplishments.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR MICHAEL POCHE

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Major Michael Poche of the United States Army for his extraordinary dedication to duty and service to our Nation. Major Poche and his wife Stephanie will be moving on from his present assignment as an Army Congressional Liaison for the Office of the Secretary of Defense to serve as an officer in the Louisiana National Guard.

Army Congressional Liaison officers provide an invaluable service to both the military and Congress. They assist Members and staff in understanding the Army's policies, actions, operations, and requirements. Their first-hand knowledge of military needs, culture, and tradition is a tremendous benefit to Congressional offices. Prior to serving as a Congressional Liaison, Mike served as a Military Congressional Fellow. During that year he also earned a Masters in Legislative Affairs from the George Washington University.

A native of Monroe, Louisiana, Mike first joined the Louisiana National Guard in 1996 and subsequently earned his commission through the University of Louisiana at Monroe ROTC in 2004. During his 19-year Army career, Mike has served in numerous tactical leadership and staff assignments as an Armor and Cavalry Officer. As a platoon leader and troop commander, Mike commanded troops in Iraq over three separate combat tours totaling 35 months.

His great work has not gone unnoticed. During Major Poche's distinguished service to this nation, he has earned awards and decorations including: three Bronze Star Medals, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and four Army Achievement Medals.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the selfless service of Major Poche, his wife Stephanie, and their three children: Kaley, Mari Katherine, and Evan. I wish them the best as they continue to serve our great nation and proceed to the next chapter in their remarkable careers.

IN HONOR OF DAVIDSON COUNTY MANAGER ROBERT HYATT'S SERVICE TO THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the retirement of Mr. Robert Hyatt, Davidson County Manager. Mr. Hyatt has been a tireless advocate for the people of Davidson County, and has fully earned the admiration and gratitude of his fellow North Carolinians.

Mr. Hyatt served as Davidson County Manager for over 16 years after being appointed to the position on May 24, 1999. Prior to his appointment as Davidson County Manager, Mr. Hyatt served as Assistant County Manager of Brunswick County, North Carolina, from 1995 to 1999; Town Manager for the Town of Clayton, North Carolina, from 1988 to 1995; and Town Manager for the Town of Wallace, North Carolina, from 1983 to 1988. This is an impressive record of service for any public servant, and is certainly worthy of the recognition and praise Mr. Hyatt has received during the later years of his service as Davidson County Manager.

Recently, Mr. Hyatt was presented the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest award the Governor of North Carolina can bestow, on December 8, 2015. The Order was created in 1963, and has been presented to honor persons who have a proven record of service to the State of North Carolina. In addition to this prestigious honor, Mr. Hyatt received the ''Service to Agriculture and Extension Award'' from the Davidson County Cooperative Extension for his efforts in support of the local agricultural industry and for his representation in 2015 on the North Carolina State University Visioning Team. Mr. Hyatt was also recognized for his thirty years of service from the International City/County Management Association on September 25, 2013.

In addition to his service as Davidson County Manager, Mr. Hyatt has been an exemplary civil servant through his contributions to a number of other organizations. He has served on the North Carolina City/County Managers Association's Membership Support and Program Committees, and served a three-year term as a member of the executive board for the Boy Scouts for the Uwharrie District of North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in thanking Davidson County Manager Robert Hyatt for his esteemed service to the state of North Carolina and wishing Robert, his wife Teresa, and their two sons, Will and Thom, well as they enter an exciting new chapter of their lives.

TRIBUTE TO RODNEY AND KAREN WAHLE

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Rodney and Karen Wahle of Carson, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married on November 6, 1965, at the Malvern Methodist Church in Malvern, Iowa.

Rodney and Karen's lifelong commitment to each other, their children, James and Jennifer, and their grandchildren, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Wahles that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Henry Ford Health System on their 100th anniversary. Originating from Detroit General Hospital, namesake Henry Ford became the sole investor in 1914 and coupled his entrepreneurial spirit with medical innovation.

Admitting its first patient in 1915, Henry Ford Hospital was so successful in meeting the needs of a city in the midst of a population boom that by 1917 it had already expanded to its current size. In its early days, the hospital revolutionized wait times, reducing them to 30 minutes for a patient to be seen, and opened the nation's first ward for treating chemical dependency. It developed new techniques in the fields of surgery and physical therapy. The excellent quality of care at Henry Ford Hospital would even later inspire works of art from visionaries like Diego Rivera. Beyond the positive impact Henry Ford Hospital has had on Michigan, it has also rendered invaluable service to our country by serving as an army hospital during World War II and caring for our soldiers upon their return.

Henry Ford Health System and its partners have pioneered a broad range of medical knowledge, from bone research to kidney transplants to treatment of high blood pressure to robotic surgery. While innovation may be the driving force behind the success of the Henry Ford Health System, they have never lost focus of the top priority: people. In 2008, they launched the No Harm campaign which, over the course of the next three years, reduced surgical complications, decreased length of stay, and trimmed medical costs by 10 million dollars. Their good stewardship is felt by over 89,000 patients a year in the five-county area, a number that is very impressive for a hospital system that started with 48 beds. Henry Ford Health System's commitment to and investment in the Detroit metropolitan communities are immeasurable. In 2011, Henry Ford Health System was one of only 4 recipients to receive a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, America's highest honor for innovation and performance excellence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring the 23,000 employees of Henry Ford Health System and congratulating them on their 100th anniversary and wish them many more years of success.

REGARDING THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS DEBT RELIEF EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Extension Act of 2015, which I introduced earlier today with my colleagues JERROLD NADLER and DANA ROHRABACHER.

This bipartisan legislation ensures that certain members of the National Guard and Reserves who fall on hard economic times after their service will continue to obtain bankruptcy relief without having to fill out the substantial paperwork required by the so-called ''means test'' under chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Code.

This bill simply extends the existing ''means test'' exception, which will expire at the end of the year if Congress fails to act.

Under the means test, a Chapter 7 bankruptcy case is presumed to be an abuse of the bankruptcy process if it appears that the debtor has income in excess of certain thresholds. The National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008 created an exception to the means test's presumption of abuse for members of the National Guard and Reserves who, after September 11, 2001, served on active duty or in a homeland defense activity for at least 90 days. The exception remains available for 540 days after the servicemember leaves the military.

The National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Extension Act of 2015 would simply extend the exception until December 2019.

This bill is a meaningful way for our Nation to recognize the tremendous sacrifice made by National Guard and Reserve members who have served on active duty or homeland defense since September 11, 2001 and may be suffering financial hardship.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

ACKNOWLEDGING TED BEATTIE

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge a dear friend and an exceptional leader, Mr. Ted Beattie, as he retires as President and CEO of Chicago's Shedd Aquarium. Ted has very many notable achievements during his tenure at Shedd, from the $45 million Wild Reef exhibit that features one of the largest and most diverse shark exhibits in North America; the renovation of the aquarium's popular Abbott Oceanarium marine mammal pavilion; and housing of eight amazing beluga whales.

I have had been pleased that Ted opened the doors of Shedd to several of Chicago's school groups to learn more about marine based sciences and get an in depth look into the vast exhibits to encourage our children to engage in science and biology based careers.

Further, I have been told that Ted is an amazing golfer and as a high school golfer, played with Renee Powell against Legendary Boxer Joe Louis and Althea Gibson. While Ted has called Chicago home for many years, he is undoubtedly an extremely passionate and dedicated Ohio State graduate and fan (a rival of our Flagship University of Illinois).

Ted is an active member of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), and serves on several boards including the American Association of Museums, the Arts Club board of directors and is a member of the Chicago Club, the Commercial Club of Chicago, Economic Club of Chicago, the Onwentsia Country Club and the Plantation Club in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.

I am hopeful that Ted continues his services to the greater arts community and his Alma Mata, the Ohio State University. I am certain that he will continue to enjoy the game of golf that he loves and will inspire those involved in marine sciences for many years to come. Transition to retirement can be fun, enjoyable and relaxing, so to Ted . . .

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

TRIBUTE TO CURTIS AND BRENDA MEIER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and congratulate Curtis and Brenda Meier of Clarinda, Iowa, for receiving the Gary Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award. The Wergin Good Farm Neighbor award is named for Gary Wergin, a long-time WHO Radio farm broadcaster who helped establish the award.

The Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award is made possible by the financial support of the Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers. The award recognizes farmers who contribute their time and talents to their community, including caring for the environment and being good neighbors.

Curtis and Brenda are active in their community and their church. Curtis is a commissioner with the Page County Soil and Water Conservation District and serves on the County Fair Board. The Meiers run their local diversified farm with a number of their family members, including their son, daughter, and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Curtis and Brenda for earning this award. They are shining examples of how hard work and dedication can be a benefit to a whole community I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Curtis and Brenda for their accomplishments and in wishing them nothing but continued success.

RESTORATION TUESDAY

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge Restoration Tuesday, and the need to restore federal voter protections for vulnerable communities. Every Tuesday that Congress is in session shall be known as Restoration Tuesday, and I invite each of you to share constituent testimonials about modern-day barriers to voting.

I am a proud daughter of Selma, Alabama where 50 years ago the brave Foot Soldiers of the Voting Rights Movement dared to challenge an unjust system that prohibited people of color from voting in the South.

Unfortunately, Alabama has not yet fully learned the lessons of its painful past. We have witnessed a renewed assault on our sacred right to vote in the wake of Shelby County versus Holder. In the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision, Alabama implemented

one of the most restrictive photo ID laws in the nation. Under this pernicious voter ID law, only a handful of photo IDs can be used at polling places.

When the State of Alabama started requiring a photo ID to vote, officials claimed it would reduce voter fraud. The reality is that voter fraud is rare—but the end results are that more than 250,000 Alabamians without a photo ID have been disenfranchised. Many of the disenfranchised are African-Americans, low-income individuals, senior citizens, and the disabled.

This past October, Alabama lawmakers decided to make this bad law even worse by reducing services at 34 DMVs across the state. Driver's licenses are the most popular form of ID used at the polls—and 8 out of the 10 counties in Alabama that are impacted have the highest percentage of black registered voters in the state. How is this not discriminatory?

I fully support the federal lawsuit filed by the Greater Birmingham Ministries and the Alabama NAACP, challenging the photo ID law in our state. I have repeatedly argued that Alabama's photo ID law is a renewed assault on voting rights.

I also applaud the U.S. Department of Transportation's decision to investigate the reduction of services at the 34 DMVs in question for a possible violation of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Alabama cannot balance its budget on the backs of those who can least afford it, nor infringe upon the civil rights of minorities by limiting access to the most popular form of identification used to vote.

Voting is at the heart of our democracy. It's our most fundamental right—and duty—as Americans. I am a proud Alabamian, so it disappointments me that for every two steps Alabama takes forward, we take one step back.

Voting should be made easier—not harder—so that no voices are excluded and that every citizen can cast their vote without any unnecessary or unwarranted barriers.

Alabama recently reached a settlement with the Department of Justice to settle claims that the state did not fully comply with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. An investigation by the Department of Justice found that Alabama had largely failed to provide opportunities for Alabamians to register to vote when they applied for or renewed a driver's license.

Mr. Speaker, we have witnessed a number of attempts—not just in Alabama—but across the country to restrict the vote. I stand before you today to urge Congress to restore the vote. Representatives LINDA SÁNCHEZ, JUDY CHU and I introduced the Voting Rights Advancement Act in June to stop the renewed assault on voting rights, and to restore preclearance for states like Alabama where new barriers to voting threaten to silence the most vulnerable voices in our electorate.

We cannot take for granted the battles endured by those who came before us, nor can we neglect our own responsibilities to ensure liberty and justice. The struggle continues, and each of us must do our part to further the cause of human and civil rights for all Americans.

We must restore the voices of the excluded—Congress must act today to restore the vote.

IMPACT OF THE ARTS ON STUDENTS AT SAVOY ELEMENTARY

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to the remarkable impact of art on the educational performance of the students at Savoy Elementary, a public school in my district.

Savoy Elementary Anacostia, located here in the nation's capital, is one of eight pilot schools of Turnaround Arts, a signature program of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Turnaround Arts has had clear, life-changing impacts on the students of Savoy—attendance is up, discipline referrals are down, and the school has made double-digit gains in math and reading scores.

The Savoy Players are a performing group at Savoy Elementary. Led by Carol Foster, a legendary arts leader in the national capital region, this group has been hugely successful. To be part of this group, students must exhibit maturity, grit, excellent attendance, and good grades. The professionalism, spirit, and magnetism of this group has catapulted them into the limelight.

In addition to countless performances for their school community, they have had four performances at the White House, performed with Brian McKnight at the Warner Theater, and brought down the house at the Kennedy Center. But, most importantly, singing, dancing and performing has brought them the joy, meaning, and purpose that every child should experience.

Mr. Speaker, in this holiday season, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the clear benefit exposure to the arts has made for the children of Savoy Elementary, and hope that the new education legislation will bring similar opportunities to kids across the country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AVONTE'S LAW ACT OF 2015

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill, the Avonte's Law Act of 2015, which was inspired by the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Avonte Oquendo of Queens, New York. Avonte was an autistic child who wandered away from his school. His lifeless body was not found for more than a month. ''Wandering'' is very common in children with autism and other disabilities, and sometimes children who wander are non-verbal or cannot communicate well with others, leading to dangerous interactions with strangers or even law enforcement.

This bill authorizes a new grant program within the United States Department of Justice to provide local law enforcement agencies with the resources to procure response tools and increase education and training for first responders, schools, and families with the goal of preventing situations like Avonte's from happening again.

The bill also requires the Attorney General to establish standards and best practices for the administration of any type of voluntary ''tracking'' system used by law enforcement agencies that are awarded these funds. Tracking devices are one of the many ways we can help prevent another tragic situation like Avonte's.

Mr. Speaker, by taking a holistic approach to this issue, we can help children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) live safe and happy lives all around the country.

TRIBUTE TO THE NODAWAY VALLEY BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Nodaway Valley High School Boys Cross Country team for winning the Iowa Class 1A State Cross Country Championship.

I would like to congratulate each member of the team:

Runners: Nathan Venteicher, Shane Breheny, Heath Downing, Brayten Funke, Dallas Kraeger, Skyler Rawlings, and Brycen Wallace;

Head Coach: Darrell Burmeister; and Assistant Coaches: Dave Swanson, Phyllis Eshelman, and Alyse Dreher.

Mr. Speaker, the success of this team and their coaches demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating the team for competing in this rigorous competition and wishing them all nothing but continued success.

LEGISLATION ALLOWING COMBAT VETERANS AN EXTENDED TIME TO FILE FOR REFUND

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will allow members of our military services to file their taxes long after they were due in order to provide an adequate window to claim refunds or credits that may have been owed.

It has come to my attention that some members of our armed forces, in their haste to rejoin civilian life, can occasionally let fall by the wayside tax returns—particularly those that may actually have a refund. While tax liability can follow a taxpayer forever—plus interest and penalties—taxpayers only have a couple years in which to claim a credit or a refund.

This legislation widens the opportunity for a veteran to look back, realize a missed opportunity, and remedy the situation. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this solution.

TRIBUTE TO TIM SESSOMS

HON. MARK WALKER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Tim Sessoms has served his community for more than thirty years.

His life is an example of a rare instinctive trait that actually puts others first. I have personally witnessed the vast amount of people who regularly reach out to Mr. Sessoms for guidance or help.

From the senior adult in the elderly care center to the child in need, Tim Sessoms finds a way to solve the problem or meet the need.

His work as Mayor of Summerfield was another way that Mr. Sessoms chose to give back to his town. His vision and his ability to execute has moved Summerfield to a better place for years to come.

Our community owes the Honorable Sessoms a debt of gratitude. His friends and neighbors know that he walks the walk with integrity and grace. We all owe him a ''thank you'' for a lifetime of putting his fellow man first.

AIKEN NAMED MAIN STREET COMMUNITY

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week, Aiken was named a Main Street Community—one of only two communities to receive this honor from Main Street South Carolina. The Main Street Community designation provides Aiken with a comprehensive training and assistance to revitalize their downtown through a three year boot-camp program. Aiken joins Orangeburg as the second community in South Carolina's Second Congressional District to receive the Main Street Community designation.

After a competitive application process, the city of Aiken was recognized for their work in promoting historic and economic development downtown. In the next few years, they will work with Main Street South Carolina to identify the goals of its community and to provide residents, business owners, and local leaders with key resources to enhance the local economic development.

I am grateful to Mayor Rick Osbon, former Mayor Fred Cavanaugh, City Manager John Klimm, and the entire Aiken City Council for receiving this great honor. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this will bring to Aiken.

In conclusion, God Bless Our Troops and may the President by his actions never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

HONORING REVEREND SAMUEL LITTLEJOHN

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Samuel Littlejohn's 50th anniversary as a spiritual leader and Pastor of Shining Light Missionary Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Reverend Littlejohn was born in Tyler, Texas, to a Baptist minister and a family dedicated to the church. As a young child, his mother, father, and grandfather all instilled an abiding love for and sustaining commitment to his religion. He was baptized at the age of seven at the Greater Hopwell Missionary Baptist Church in Tyler, where he remained a member until he moved to Fort Worth to pursue seminary studies.

In 1951, Reverend Littlejohn moved to Fort Worth and joined Pilgrim Valley Missionary Baptist Church. He served as the Superintendent of the Sunday school, participated in the Senior Choir, and acted as the President of the #2 Usher Department.

Reverend Littlejohn continued his seminary education by earning a missionary degree from Southwest Theological Seminary and Bishop College. In November 1960, Reverend Littlejohn was ordained and gave his first sermon in front of Pilgrim Valley church.

He served the Pilgrim Valley community until 1965, when he was called to pastor Shining Light Missionary Baptist Church, where he has served for the last 50 years.

Along with his work in his church communities, Reverend Littlejohn has continued to be an active and vocal participant in the community. Pastor Littlejohn has worked with the Community Action Agency (CAA), was an organizing member of the first Ministers and Police Taskforce and served as a member of Parent, Preacher, and Principal organization which worked with Fort Worth Independent School District to encourage children to stay in school.

Most notably, Pastor Littlejohn was the driving force behind the Stop Six Community Health Center. Reverend Littlejohn was a founding member of the Stop Six Community Corporation and much of the success of the organization can be attributed to the Reverend. His work greatly impacted the DFW community and is now used as a model in other cities.

Earlier this year, the Black Pastors, Clergy and Ministerial Group Association of Texas, Inc. presented Pastor Littlejohn with the ''Living Legend Award'' and recognized him as one of the honorable senior pastors in Fort Worth.

TRIBUTE TO LEONARD AND MARYANN BRYAN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Leonard and Maryann Bryan of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1965.

Leonard and Maryann's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Steven, Traci, and Cari, their grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Bryans that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

HONORING THE GRAND OPENING OF SOUTHLAKE'S SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the City of Southlake's grand opening of the Southlake Senior Activity Center.

The history of the Southlake senior center began in 1998, when Mayor Gail Eubanks, Southlake's first mayor, donated the original facility to the city to serve as the activity and social center for the growing senior community in Southlake. Since the opening of the original senior center, the population of Southlake has nearly doubled in size. To accommodate the needs of this growing community, plans were developed and approved for the construction of a new community recreation center. On September 27, 2014, the City of Southlake broke ground for the construction of the new, state of the art, recreation and senior center known as The Marq.

The Marq contains over 20,000 square feet of multipurpose space which includes a senior lounge, senior wellness room, game room, banquet hall, and amphitheater. In it, the new Southlake Senior Activity Center will serve the community by providing programs and services to Southlake area seniors, enhancing their lives and fostering a sense of community among the city's residents.

I am extremely appreciative of the City of Southlake and the Southlake Senior Activity Center for continuing to address the needs of the community by enhancing the quality of their infrastructure and the lives of its seniors. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating the City of Southlake and the Southlake Senior Activity Center on the grand opening of their new facility.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE ASSOCIATION FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Association for Talent Development (ATD) as the largest association dedicated to the training and talent development

profession, recognizing them for their annual Employee Learning Week, held December 7th through the 11th, 2015.

ATD's members come from more than 120 countries and work in public and private organizations in every industry sector. ATD supports talent development professionals who gather locally in volunteer-led U.S. chapters and international member networks, and with international strategic partners.

Established in 1943, ATD is a leader in the talent development field. As businesses seek competitive advantages and growth, talent development professionals make sure an organization's best asset, its employees, have the skills they need to help achieve business growth. ATD serves this important community of professionals with research and resources.

To further these goals, ATD has declared December 7th through December 11th, 2015, as ''Employee Learning Week'' and designated time for organizations to recognize the strategic value of employee learning. I applaud ATD and its members for their dedication to developing knowledgeable and skilled employees during Employee Learning Week.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting policies that commit to maintaining a highly skilled workforce.

HONORING PATRICK McCORMICK OF PENNSYLVANIA

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to honor Patrick McCormick on his retirement after more than 38 years of service to the United States of America.

Whether through his service through the U.S. Air Force, New Cumberland Army Depot, or his leadership roles as Director of Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Distribution's Current Operations and Logistics Operations, his tireless dedication, professionalism and sacrifice touched the lives of countless people and challenged all with whom he worked with to be the best.

Through numerous promotions and awards Patrick has left an enduring legacy of service. In particular, by earning the Department of Defense (DOD) Distinguished Civilian Service award, the highest award available for career DOD civilian employees, he demonstrated an exceptional devotion to duty. Through hard work and leadership Patrick's record of service to our Nation's warfighters and citizens is truly outstanding.

It is with great pride along with Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional district that I congratulate Patrick McCormick on his retirement after more than 38 years of service to the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CALIFORNIA CITY

HON. KEVIN McCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of California City, a residential nexus for mining, aerospace and desert tourism in Eastern Kern County.

California City began with a dream worthy of its namesake: the foundation of a suburban metropolis to rival Los Angeles. Sociologist and developer Nat Mendelsohn found in the wide spaces of Kern's High Desert the chance to build a completely planned community from scratch, free of parochial interests. He bought 80,000 acres of desert in 1958, carved out a gigantic Central Park featuring a 20 acre lake, and by 1965 had arranged for the incorporation of a massive, 203 square mile township. Overnight, California City became the third largest city in the state.

For generations before Nat Mendelsohn ever gazed upon the High Desert, mule teams carted the bounty of stranded mines to the railheads at Mojave. This traffic expanded in the 20th century, as neighboring Boron grew to produce half the world's supply of borax. Meanwhile, huddled around ancient dry lakes just a dozen miles from town, America's premier jet aircraft test center—Edwards Air Force Base—began to expand into a permanent institution, with hundreds of employees needing homes and services. Even tourism brought jobs to California City, as the surging popularity of dirt bikes and off-roading drew thrill-seekers through town on their way to the wonders of the interior: Jawbone, Death Valley, Red Rock Canyon, and the Trona Pinnacles. California City grew by leaps and bounds, fed by the steady currents of desert commerce.

Today, as the city celebrates its Jubilee, we have a chance to draw lessons from its history. California City would never have existed without the vision and drive of one entrepreneur, willing to bet everything on a dream. In Kern County—as in America—we are dependent both on the enterprising spirit of our people, and on the power of our communities to persevere when they are united. I am proud today to congratulate the people of California City on this 50th anniversary, and look forward to California City's next 50 years.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE AND CATHERINE ROSS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate George and Catherine Ross of Essex, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1950.

George and Catherine's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Ross family that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 65th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. FRANK C. GUINTA

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call Vote Number 692, I am not recorded because I was absent from the U.S. House of Representatives. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner.

On Roll Call Number 692, had I been present, I would have voted NO.

IN RECOGNITION OF LARRY HOLMES ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING OF THE LARRY HOLMES STATUE IN EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Larry Holmes, who reigned as World Boxing Council Heavyweight Champion from 1978 to 1983, and who will be honored with the installment of a bronze statue depicting the Champ about to strike a punch. His accomplishments not only made the City of Easton known nationally, they also inspired others to strive to be their best, to be a champ.

The statue unveiling held on Sunday, December 13 commenced with a Championship Parade that began on 3rd Street in front of the new Easton City Hall and continued onto the Drive named in the Champ's honor and down to the statue's location in Scott Park on the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers.

''The Easton Assassin'' grew up in the projects. At the age of 13, he dropped out of school to support his family. At the age of 19, he started boxing and pursued a legendary career. His left jab is rated among the best in boxing history. An impressive 44 of his 69 wins were from knockouts. Holmes was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2008.

Larry Holmes is not just a champ for his boxing; he is a champ for his service to the community. After retiring from boxing, Holmes became a businessman and invested in his hometown. He is noted to have employed more than 200 people through his various business holdings at one time including Larry Holmes Enterprises, a real estate and property management company; two restaurants; a training facility; and an office complex. Over the years, he has been a role model for young fighters, and he has supported various charities and youth groups throughout the Lehigh Valley, in particular the Easton Area Community Center (EACC), which used to be known as St. Anthony's Youth Center—the place where he first learned to box. Later, and thanks to Holmes, the EACC's annual fundraiser became well-known as an event attended by boxing champions. Holmes can often be seen at community events and performing with his band.

It is an honor for me to recognize Larry Holmes. He has been a good son to Easton. Through this statue, visitors for generations will see the heart of a legend.

HONORING SONYA GISH OF PENNSYLVANIA

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to honor Sonya Gish on her retirement after more than 30 years of service to the United States of America.

Through her work with the Information Technology Department at New Cumberland Army Depot, and her leadership role as Deputy Director, and later Director, of Distribution Policy and Processing at Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Distribution, her tireless dedication, professionalism and sacrifice touched the lives of countless people and challenged all with whom she worked with to be the best.

Her colleagues describe Sonya as the consummate role model and a truly indispensable asset to DLA Distribution. Her numerous promotions and awards exemplify an outstanding record of service to our Nation's warfighters and citizens. Through work ethic and character, Sonya has truly left an enduring legacy of service.

It is with great pride along with Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional district that I congratulate Sonya Gish on her retirement after more than 30 years of service to the United States of America.

COLONEL MICHAEL P. DIETZ

HON. ROGER WILLIAMS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the distinguished career and military service of Colonel Michael P. Dietz. An Alaskan native, Michael enlisted in the United States Army in Providence, Rhode Island in 1979. As an Enlisted Soldier, Michael served in Europe, Korea and Central America eventually achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant. In 1989, he was given a direct commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Corp. During the First Gulf War, he served with the Third Mobile Armored Corp as a Senior Intelligence Analyst.

Throughout the 1990s Colonel (COL) Dietz served in a series of positions of increasing responsibility in the area of military intelligence to include, operations officer of an Anti-Terrorist Response Team and culminating with the Deputy Command of the 6th Civil Support Team, an Anti-Terrorist Team specializing in Weapons of Mass Destruction. During this time, COL Dietz had operational control of response elements to the events of 9/11 and the Columbia Space Shuttle Disaster over East Texas.

In 2003, COL Dietz commanded mobile collection teams for the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in Iraq. He later commanded the entire DIA effort in Afghanistan in 2004. Both positions required work with Allied Nations.

In 2008–2009, COL Dietz commanded the 636th Military Intelligence Battalion of the Texas National Guard. This is the number one rated MI Battalion in both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

COL Dietz, in his 36 years of service, has served combat tours with 101st Airborne Division, 82nd Airborne Division as a Battalion Commander, 3rd Army, 3rd Special Forces Group, United States Army Special Operations Command, 5th Special Forces Group, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the 636th MI Battalion.

COL Dietz is currently a member of the Warrior Transition Unit at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. This unit specializes in repairing wounded warriors. COL Dietz is in the process of being treated for numerous injuries that he sustained while deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He has been married for 31 years to Elly Del Prado Dietz and his daughter, Sharon is a 1st Lieutenant currently serving at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas and his son, Aidan is a 2nd Lieutenant serving as an Airborne Infantry Platoon Leader in the 143rd INF BN (ABN).

COL Dietz's 36 years of distinguished service reflects great credit upon himself, the Texas Army National Guard, the United States Army and the United States of America. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I wish him and his family the very best in retirement.

TRIBUTE TO THE DOWLING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Dowling Catholic High School Boys Cross Country team for winning the Iowa Class 4A State Cross Country Championship.

I would like to congratulate each member of the Team: Runners: Matthew Carmody, John Clingan, Jack Fink, Matt Fraizer, Skyler Riesberg, Jack Turner, and Ryan Schweizer; Head Coach: Timothy Ives; and Assistant Coaches: Duncan McLean, Gerard Amadeo, Ann Flood, and Kevin Lewis.

Mr. Speaker, the success of this team and their coaches demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating the team for competing in this rigorous competition and wishing them all nothing but continued success.

HONORING THE 240TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NAVY CHAPLAIN CORPS

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the 240th anniversary of the Navy Chaplain Corps. For 240 years, Navy chaplains have served with honor, courage, and selflessness, ensuring that our Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen are able to practice and grow in their faith, regardless of where they serve.

Our Navy chaplains are an invaluable pillar of their military communities. The role of a chaplain is inherently religious. As the makeup of our service members has expanded, the chaplaincy has expanded with it to include representatives reflecting the many faith traditions of our troops, including Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist. When religious leaders become military chaplains, they pledge to equally serve all members of the armed forces, regardless of religious belief. Chaplains faithfully carry out this sacred duty each and every day.

While military chaplains are noncombatants and do not carry weapons, they still serve in harm's way. Sixteen Navy chaplains have given their lives providing religious and spiritual support for our men and women at war. Two Navy chaplains were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their sacrificial ministry to their Sailors and Marines. Lieutenant Commander Joseph T. O'Callahan braved a fiery inferno to administer last rites and direct damage control operations aboard the stricken USS *Franklin* in 1945. Lieutenant Vincent R. Capodanno repeatedly exposed himself to intense enemy fire in Vietnam while administering last rites to dead and dying Marines, refusing treatment of his own wounds and directing corpsmen to his wounded comrades, before being killed while coming to the aide of another. Six naval ships have been named after chaplains with one, the destroyer USS *Laboon*, still in service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me today in recognizing the brave and honorable service of Navy chaplains over the last 240 years.

COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING JOYCE I. MARTRATT ON 50 YEARS OF CIVILIAN SERVICE WITH THE U.S. AIR FORCE

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Mrs. Joyce I. Martratt on her 50 years of civilian service with the United States Air Force. Joyce has served in numerous capacities with the Air Force on Guam, and she has dedicated much of her professional life to furthering its mission and providing critical support to our Airmen.

Joyce was born to Jesus San Nicolas and Rosario Castro Camacho of Hagatna on August 28, 1939. She is the eldest of five children and endured the atrocities of war during the occupation of Guam during World War II. As a survivor of the war, she and her family relocated to the village of Mongmong, where they settled and began to rebuild their lives and homes. In 1955, Joyce was adopted by her Aunt Maria and Uncle Peling Castro in order for her to further her education as they moved to Washington, D.C. before resettling in San Francisco in 1956. She attended Oakland Community College while working for the Gallop Poll. She then moved back to Guam to attend the University of Guam. While at the University of Guam, she met her late-husband Herbert Sablan Leddy, and together they started a family. In 1984, Herbert passed away and Joyce later remarried Charlie Martratt.

Joyce began working at the Andersen Air Force Base in 1965. She was first hired for a temporary job at the Civilian Personnel Office as a clerk typist. She went on to work as a secretary and clerk-stenographer and continued to progress professionally. She served in several capacities, including work for the commander of the 43d Combat Support Group, Vice Commander of HQ Eighth Air Force, command of the 3rd Air Division, and the 43rd Bombardment Wing (Hvy) (SAC), the 633d Air Base Wing (PACAF), and the 13th Air Force (PACAF). Joyce worked with the 13th Air Force until the headquarters moved to Hickam in 2005. After the move, Joyce transferred to the 36th Air Base Wing Commander, where she is currently employed.

During her 50 years of service, Joyce was privileged to be involved in many historic events and assisted and coordinated the visits of distinguished guests to the island. She supported efforts after the fall of Saigon during the Vietnam War when the people of Guam and the U.S. Air Force provided humanitarian aid to over 111,000 Vietnamese refugees who were temporarily housed on Guam during Operation New Life. She has also supported numerous U.S. Air Force missions, including the evacuation of former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and his family from the Philippines in 1986, and care for 6,600 Kurdish refugees who were brought to Guam as part of Joint Task Force Operation Pacific Haven in 1996. For several years, Joyce wrote a column about the local culture for the AAFB newspaper called ''Ask Joyce.''

Joyce has been a hallmark of Andersen Air Force Base and our community in Guam. She has always been a dedicated worker who puts her whole heart into what she does. Joyce is a true professional and her knowledge and background has helped the constant rotation of Commanders better understand the challenges and opportunities at Andersen Air Force Base. Her institutional knowledge is so critical to the entire team at Andersen Air Force Base. Additionally, Joyce is heavily involved in her parish of San Isidro as the director of faith formation and as a catechist. She serves in the community whenever called upon and is dedicated to her family.

I join the United States Air Force and the people of Guam in thanking Joyce I. Martratt for her 50 years of service to our nation, our island, and our Airmen in the U.S. Air Force. She represents the very best of our civilian workforce and is symbolic of the great patriotism that exists on Guam. I commend her for her outstanding career and tireless work in all that she has accomplished. Thank you (Si Yu'os Ma'ase), Joyce.

RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE JOSEPH TYSON ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AS A MEMBER OF THE KINSTON, NORTH CAROLINA CITY COUNCIL

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Kinston, North Carolina City Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem, The Honorable Joseph Tyson who is retiring from public service after 17 years. The City of Kinston, located in my congressional district, has been fortunate to have a remarkable leader in Mr. Joseph Tyson. Through his words and actions as a City Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem, he has demonstrated time and time again that he is one of our state's finest and most effective leaders.

Mr. Tyson spent his formative years in my district in Beaufort, North Carolina until 1964 when he left to attend North Carolina A&T University in Winston-Salem. It was there that he received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. He would spend more than two decades in uniform as an infantry and chemical officer. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

When Hurricane Floyd devastated much of eastern North Carolina in 1999, Mr. Tyson played a pivotal role in guiding the city through myriad issues resulting from the effects of the historic storm. From having to replace a wastewater treatment plant, to navigating the relocation of a large number of the city's residents, Mr. Tyson worked with other leaders to resolve problems for the benefit of the community.

Mr. Tyson has always looked for ways to give back, even after dedicating so much of himself to his city and his country. Following his retirement from the Army in 1993, Mr. Tyson began working as the senior Army instructor for the JROTC program at Kingston High School. He taught cadets important leadership skills and equipped them with the tools they needed to succeed. He motivated and encouraged those under his command to be the best version of themselves.

Mr. Tyson has been a strong and steady leader for his community and has succeeded in making Kinston a better place for current and future generations. He has earned the respect and trust of his fellow councilmen, and has the admiration of a grateful community, whom he has diligently served.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize this man of conviction, principle, and exceptional character as he retires after nearly two decades on the Kinston City Council. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing The Honorable Joseph Tyson the best of luck as he embarks on the next chapter of his life.

HUNGARY AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before the Paris attacks, pundits sitting in far-flung capitals of the world were throwing lobs at Hungary for turning a blind eye to the plight of Syrian refugees. Now that we know that one of the attackers posed as a refugee to get into Europe and then stayed in a refugee camp as he made his way from Greece to Paris, I'd like to do something I know the pundits won't do: go back to an old story to make sure they got it right.

First, the outside world's opinions of what Hungary should or should not do are wholly irrelevant. Hungary is a sovereign country that ultimately will make its own political decisions based on its interests and concerns on a case-by-case basis. Whether Hungary lets in refugees from a conflict that it had absolutely nothing to do with is a purely Hungarian question. Just like we wouldn't want Canada telling us what to do, nor does Hungary want countries like Germany telling it what to do.

The fact of the matter is that the refugee issue is complex. There are two sides to the morality argument. Yes, there is a moral argument to helping those fleeing war, but let's not forget about the moral argument for a government keeping its promise to its citizens that it will protect them. Refugees pose serious economic and security concerns to the countries of Europe. Modest estimates suggest that Germany, who has touted a welcoming posture towards the refugees, will find itself spending as much as 10 billion euros in 2015 to accommodate these newcomers. If Hungary were to spend even half of that amount, it would cost the country upwards of 7% of its annual budget.

While Germany may be financially capable of weathering the financial storm precipitated by the influx of refugees, Hungary's economy may not. Despite notable improvements in recent years in both trade and investment, Hungary's unemployment rate sits now at 10.5%. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development notes that, although Hungary successfully exited from recession in early 2013, the recovery of its economy is modest at best. The OECD notes Hungary must ''maintain fiscal discipline,'' underscoring Budapest's need to invest in its own people and economy—not spend billions accommodating others.

Putting the economic factors aside, it is quite obvious that taking in Syrian refugees comes with a whole host of security concerns. ISIS has openly boasted in recent months that it is sending operatives to Europe under the guise of refugees, intending to fulfill the terrorist organization's threat to stage attacks in the West. European and American intelligence officials report that ISIS has set up a wing that specializes in launching terrorist attacks abroad, providing guidance, training and funding for attacks that kill the most civilians possible. Earlier this month British media outlets reported that the Tunisian leader of an al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group was smuggled into Europe posing as a refugee in October before being arrested and deported to Tunisia. Unfortunately, we have seen the bloody aftermath of the attacks on Paris, which were carried out in part by an ISIS terrorist who entered Europe as an asylum seeker.

The Hungarian Government does not think all of the refugees are terrorists. But the grave security concerns should not be written off for the sake of humanitarianism. Hungary has a humanitarian obligation to its own people too. Hungary has called on the European Union to set up the necessary institutions and orderly processes to handle this massive influx of people into the bloc. Hungary and its neighboring eastern and central European countries should not be expected to bear the burden of this sea of refugees. More than anything, these countries should not be judged for making decisions based on their own interests. That is simply their right.

And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO THE URBANDALE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Urbandale High School Girls Cross Country team for winning the Iowa Class 4A State Cross Country Championship.

I would like to congratulate each member of the team:

Runners: Mickey Cole, Carly Klavins, Neanagit Malow, Casey Middleswart, Julia Noah, Avery Peterson, and Elyse Prescott;

Head Coach: Dan Davis

Assistant Coach: Carla Madson.

Mr. Speaker, the success of this team and their coaches demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating the team for competing in this rigorous competition and wishing them all nothing but continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETE AGUILAR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, on December 2, 2015 I was absent from the House of Representatives due to a mass shooting terrorist attack in my district. I was also absent on December 3rd and 8th through 11th. Due to my absence, I am not recorded on roll call votes 656 through 693. I would like to reflect how I would have voted had I been present for legislative business.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 656, on Agreeing to the Upton of Michigan Amendment No. 1 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 657, on Agreeing to the Tonko of New York Amendment No. 2 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 658, on Agreeing to the Gene Green of Texas Amendment No. 14 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 659, on Agreeing to the Beyer of Virginia Amendment No. 17 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 660, on Agreeing to the Schakowsky of Illinois Amendment No. 19 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 661, on Agreeing to the Tonko of New York Amendment No. 22 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 662, on Agreeing to the Castor of Florida Amendment No. 23 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 663, on Agreeing to the Polis of Colorado Amendment No. 24 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 664, on Agreeing to the Barton of Texas Amendment No. 25 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 665, on Agreeing to the Conference Report for S. 1177, to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to ensure that every child achieves.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 666, on Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 546, Providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 22, to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 667, on Agreeing to H. Res. 546, Providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 22, to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 668, on Agreeing to the Cramer of North Dakota Amendment No. 26 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 669, on Agreeing to the Rouzer of North Carolina Amendment No. 30 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 670, on Agreeing to the Pallone of New Jersey Amendment No. 37 to H.R. 8.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 671, on the Motion to Recommit with Instructions for H.R. 8, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 672, on Passage of H.R. 8, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 673, on Agreeing to the Conference Report for H.R. 22, To authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 674, on the Motion to Adjourn.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 675, on the Motion to Adjourn.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 676, on the Motion to Adjourn.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 677, on the Motion to Adjourn.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 678, on the Motion to Adjourn.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 679, on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, H.R. 158, the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 680, on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, H.R. 3842, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers Reform and Improvement Act of 2015.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 681, on Consideration of H. Res. 556, Providing for consideration of H.R. 2130, Red River Private Property Protection Act.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 682, on Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 556, Providing for consideration of H.R. 2130, Red River Private Property Protection Act.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 683, On Agreeing to H. Res. 556, Providing for consideration of H.R. 2130, Red River Private Property Protection Act.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 684, on Agreeing to the Cole of Oklahoma Amendment No. 2 to H.R. 2130.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 685, on the Motion to Table the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 686, on Passage of H.R. 2130, the Red River Private Property Protection Act.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 687, on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, H.R. 3578, the DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 688, on the Motion to Table the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 689, on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, H.R. 2795, the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations or ''FRIENDS'' Act.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 690, on Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 560, Providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 and providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to H.R. 2250, Making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 691, on Agreeing to H. Res. 560, Providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 and providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to H.R. 2250, Making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

I would have voted ''yes'' on Roll Call Vote number 692, on the Motion to Recommit with Instructions the Conference Report for H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call Vote number 693, on Agreeing to the Conference Report for H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015.

HONORING MAMIE VEST

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and Representative BOB GOODLATTE, I submit these remarks in honor of the life of Mamie Vest of Floyd and Roanoke, Virginia. Mamie was born on August 9, 1938, and was the youngest child of Deputy Sheriff William Lewis Phillips and Cordova Quesenberry Phillips.

Though a native of Floyd County, Mamie's career in art was launched by an internship in Charlotte, North Carolina at the Delmar Studios photography business. She returned to Roanoke, where she went on to enjoy her career in advertising, design, and public relations. She also married the love of her life, Earl Stewart Vest.

Mamie worked as a graphic artist for Roanoke Engraving, became director of art services at Brand Edmonds Advertising, and—by the age of 28—founded her own independent business, Mamie Vest Associates. Additionally, Mamie also served as a legislative aide in both the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates, as well as a long-time advisor to Representative GOODLATTE.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, Mamie created and directed advertising for over 80 local, state, and federal Republican campaigns. She was a talented and fierce trailblazer and, in recognition of her work in advertising, Mamie won the American Advertising Federation's Silver Medal Award in 1982.

In addition to being politically active, Mamie was an active member of our community. She was an active member of the Roanoke City Sign Ordinance Committee, served as Chairman of the Roanoke City Arts Commission, and served as the Roanoke Valley Coordinator for the Virginia Bicentennial Commission. Mamie also was appointed by Governor Linwood Holton to the Consumer Credit Study Commission, by Governor John Dalton to the Advisory Committee on Furnishing and Interpreting the Executive Mansion, and by Governor George Allen to the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

Regrettably, Mamie passed away on November 17, 2015. She is survived by her husband of 56 years, her granddaughter Sedona Marguerite Hanks, as well as her sister and brother-in-law, George and Ruth Heafner of Greensboro, N.C., Helen Mabry of Cherryville, N.C.; sister-in-law, Barbara Vest of Maryland. Also surviving are many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, and cousins.

Mamie Vest was dedicated to her work and her family. She had a tremendous impact on our community and, though she will be greatly missed by many, she will long be remembered. We are both honored to have called her a friend. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Mamie's family and loved ones. May God give them comfort and peace.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF DWAYNE AND CAROL CHESTNUT

HON. DINA TITUS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the golden wedding anniversary of Dwayne and Carol Chestnut, two dear friends, respected community leaders, generous philanthropists, and loyal Democrats. They have three children, Kay, Michelle, and Mark, and two grandchildren, Darrel and Danielle Jobe.

Carol and Dwayne met as teenagers in high school when, coming out of class, he held the door open for her. Carol responded, ''It is good to know that there are still gentlemen and scholars left.'' Dwayne was smitten and holds the door for Carol still today.

When Carol and Dwayne were courting in Texas in the early fifties, their favorite song was ''Too Young'' by Nat King Cole. Its words were prophetic: ''This love will last though years may go.'' The joy they find in each other spills over into the numerous lives, including my own, which they have touched over the fifty years they have been together.

Congratulations. Here's to many more good times and sweet memories to come.

ANGELO CANDELORI: A LIFETIME OF OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express gratitude and deep appreciation for the leadership and commitment of one of New Jersey's most dedicated public servants, Colonel Angelo Candelori.

For over 30 years, Colonel Candelori has volunteered countless hours and offered exceptional guidance and insights as a member of the Fourth Congressional District's Service Academy Nominations Board—a task he has taken most seriously and accomplished with great success. Year after year, Colonel Candelori has ''sweat the details,'' tediously poring over the applications of prospective Service Academy nominees. With great scrutiny and wisdom he has interviewed every young man and woman, recommending only those whom he felt were most deserving of my congressional nomination.

I have benefitted greatly from Colonel Candelori's expertise, discernment, dedication, and desire that our armed services receive the best and brightest possible officer applicants. And so, too, has the United States military.

Having served for 32 years in the United States Marine Corps and the reserves—a tenure that overlapped with his time on our Service Academy Board—Colonel Candelori relied on his instinctive knowledge and judgement, as well as years of military training, to help identify young applicants best suited to become America's next generation of military leaders. With honor, integrity, courage and dedication, Colonel Candelori easily embodies the Marine Corps motto ''Semper Fi''—proving to be ''always faithful'' to the United States of America, his fellow Marines, and all members of our armed forces.

If you knew Colonel Candelori personally, you would know that his dedication to his community and his commitment to public service is evident beyond his military career. For many years Colonel Candelori was a member of the Hamilton Township Planning Board and the Hamilton Township Development Review Advisory Board. His positive impact in many local and state volunteer and/or civic organizations resulted in his designation as a Point of Light by President George H. W. Bush. Colonel Candelori was also named a recipient of the U.S. Secretary of Energy's Community Service Award and the Enrico Fermi Federation Achievement Award.

Recognition of Colonel Candelori's leadership quality is international as he was knighted with the title of Cavalieri in the Order of Solidarity by the government of Italy. He served as president of the Societa Cavalieri d'Italia and is a past trustee of the Italian-American National Hall of Fame and a past president of the Enrico Fermi Federation.

Mr. Speaker, to say that Colonel Angelo Candelori is a patriot and a gentleman would be an understatement. He is a remarkable, dedicated family man and community leader who has truly advanced the common good.

This year, as he steps down from his more than three decades of assisting in the vetting of future uniformed military officers, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Colonel Angelo Candelori for his dedicated service to the citizens of New Jersey and to the United States of America.

IN HONOR OF GOVERNOR TERRY BRANSTAD

HON. ROD BLUM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, who yesterday became the longest serving governor in the history of the United States, surpassing former Vice President George Clinton from New York.

Governor Branstad has now served 7,642 days as governor. I salute and congratulate him on his dedication to the state of Iowa and his passion for public service.

Born and raised on a farm in Northern Iowa, Governor Branstad's life has been dedicated to the advancement of the state of Iowa. After a tenure in the United States Army, he served three terms in the Iowa House of Representatives and was subsequently elected as the Lieutenant Governor.

In 1982, at the age of 35, he was elected as the youngest governor in Iowa history. After his first four terms in office, Governor Branstad refocused his boundless energy on continuing to serve the state as the President of Des Moines University. He returned as governor in 2010 and is currently serving his sixth term.

During his administration, Iowa has seen record low unemployment rates, as well as an admirable budget surplus. His endless energy and strong work ethic inspires all of us who serve in elected office to constantly strive to improve our performance on behalf of all Iowans.

Thank you, Governor Branstad, for all that you have done for the great state of Iowa and your nearly twenty-one years of service.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S8647–8688.

Measures Introduced: Five bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2401–2405, and S. Res. 335–336. **Page S8684**

Measures Reported:

H.R. 998, to establish the conditions under which the Secretary of Homeland Security may establish preclearance facilities, conduct preclearance operations, and provide customs services outside the United States, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–180)

S. 1169, to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–181)

S. 1318, to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for protection of maritime navigation and prevention of nuclear terrorism, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S8684**

Measures Passed:

Pilot's Bill of Rights 2: Senate passed S. 571, to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S8674–82**

Inhofe (for Feinstein/Reed) Amendment No. 2928, to clarify the administrative authorities and to improve the physician certification. **Page S8678**

Honoring the Portland Timbers: Senate agreed to S. Res. 336, honoring the Portland Timbers as the champions of Major League Soccer in 2015. **Page S8686**

Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that Senate consider individually the following nominations, at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader in consultation with the Democratic Leader: Wilhelmina Marie Wright, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota, John Michael Vazquez, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, of Iowa, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Iowa, and Leonard Terry Strand, of South Dakota, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Iowa; that there be 30 minutes for debate for each nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time on the respective nomination, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nominations. **Page S8687**

Nominations Status Quo—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that all judicial nominations received by the Senate during the 114th Congress, first session, remain in status quo, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXXI, paragraph 6, of the Standing Rules of the Senate. **Page S8687**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Anthony Rosario Coscia, of New Jersey, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of five years.

Derek Tai-Ching Kan, of California, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of five years.

Dana J. Boente, of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Robert Lloyd Capers, of New York, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for the term of four years.

John P. Fishwick, Jr., of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Emily Gray Rice, of New Hampshire, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire for the term of four years. **Pages S8687, S8688**

Messages from the House: **Page S8683**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S8683**

Executive Communications: **Pages S8683–84**

Executive Reports of Committees: Page S8684

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S8684–86

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Page S8686

Additional Statements: Pages S8682–83

Amendments Submitted: Pages S8686–87

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S8687

Privileges of the Floor: Page S8687

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:06 p.m., until 11 a.m. on Wednesday, December 16, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S8688.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Patrick Joseph Murphy, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of the Army, Janine Anne Davidson, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Navy, and Lisa S. Disbrow, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Air Force, all of the Department of Defense, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Marcel John Lettre, II, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Gabriel Camarillo, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, and Vice Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, to be Admiral, and Commander, United States Southern Command, all of the Department of Defense, and John E. Sparks, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

AFGHANISTAN

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee received a closed briefing on an assessment of Afghanistan intelligence from national security briefers.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine transition assistance, after receiving testimony from Susan Kelly, Director, Transition to Veterans Program Office, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Economic Opportunity, Veterans Benefits Administration; Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training Service; Elizabeth Voticky, The Coca-Cola Company, Atlanta, Georgia; Matthew Kress, Starbucks Coffee Company, Seattle, Washington; Eric Eversole, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, and Daniel Smith, The American Legion, both of Washington, D.C.; and Lieutenant Colonel Michael Zacchea, USMC (Ret.), University of Connecticut Entrepreneur Bootcamp for Veterans, Hartford.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 15 public bills, H.R. 4246–4260; and 4 resolutions, H.J. Res. 76–77; H. Con. Res. 102; and H.Res. 565, were introduced. Pages H9327–28

Additional Cosponsors: Pages H9329–30

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows: H.R. 3878, to enhance cybersecurity information sharing and coordination at ports in the United States, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–379, Part 1); H.R. 2285, to improve enforcement against trafficking in cultural property and prevent stolen or illicit cultural property from financing terrorist and criminal networks, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–380, Part 1); and Committee on Ethics. In the Matter of Allegations Relating to Representative Jared Polis (H. Rept. 114–381). Page H9327

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Kelly (MS) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. Page H9309

Recess: The House recessed at 12:25 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. Page H9313

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Pages H9313, H9322**

United States Holocaust Memorial Council—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council: Representatives Israel and Deutch. **Page H9313**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:05 p.m. and reconvened at 4 p.m. **Pages H9313–14**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and agree to the following measure:

Supporting freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech: H. Res. 536, amended, supporting freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 399 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 694. **Pages H9318–22**

Recess: The House recessed at 4:45 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H9321**

Appointing the day for the convening of the second session of the One Hundredth Fourteenth Congress: The House agreed to H.J. Res. 76, appointing the day for the convening of the second session of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress. **Page H9322**

Privileged Resolution: The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 102, providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President. **Page H9322**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, December 16. **Page H9322**

Suspension—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015: H.R. 3654, amended, to require a report on United States strategy to combat terrorist use of social media. **Pages H9314–18**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H9313.

Senate Referral: S. 2044 was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce. **Page H9326**

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote developed during the proceedings of today and appears on page H9321. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D1316)*

H.R. 2250, Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016. Signed on December 11, 2015. (Public Law 114–96)

S. 599, to extend and expand the Medicaid emergency psychiatric demonstration project. Signed on December 11, 2015. (Public Law 114–97)

S. 611, to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems. Signed on December 11, 2015. (Public Law 114–98)

S. 1170, to amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research. Signed on December 11, 2015. (Public Law 114–99)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the Administration's strategy in Afghanistan, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider the nominations of Robert A. Salerno, and Darlene Michele Soltys, both to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years, 10:55 a.m., SD–338.

House

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled "Examining the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Mass Data Collection Program", 10:30 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled "The Future of U.S.-Pakistan Relations", 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled ''Egypt Two Years After Morsi (Part II)'', 1 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Government Operations, hearing entitled ''Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), Office of Government Ethics (OGE), and Office of Special Council (OSC) Reauthorization'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Joint Meetings

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: to hold hearings to examine Azerbaijan's persecution of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reporter Khadija Ismayilova, 2 p.m., 2200–RHOB.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

11 a.m., Wednesday, December 16

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will be in a period of morning business until 6 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Wednesday, December 16

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of the following measures under suspension of the rules: 1) H.R. 3750—First Responders Passport Act of 2015; 2) H.R. 2241—Global Health Innovation Act of 2015; 3) Concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2297—Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015; 4) H.R. 3878—Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act of 2015; 5) Concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2820—Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Authorization Act of 2015; and 6) S. 1347—Electronic Health Fairness Act of 2015.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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