

Zak Baig, with Senator VITTER; Colin Peppard, with Senator CARPER; Adrian Deveny, with Senator MERKLEY; Emily Enderle, with Senator WHITEHOUSE; Adam Zipkin, with Senator CORY BOOKER; Michal Freedhoff, with Senator MARKEY; Jasmine Hunt, with Senator DURBIN; and Lisa Hummon-Jones, with Senator COONS.

I have mentioned the great work that Jonathan Black, a member of my staff, has done, but we have also had incredible work by my legislative director, Andrew Wallace, and all of my staff at various points. This legislation has been a heavy burden, and my staff worked hard to get this legislation completed. I truly appreciate the hard work they have done, including my chief of staff and everybody in the office.

We also had the opportunity to consult with and ask for help from the Senate legislative counsel. They worked to turn around text quickly at crucial points, and that makes all the difference in the world—to have text, get it looked at, get the changes made, and get back to the individuals who are involved.

Michelle Johnson-Weider played a key role, as did Deanna Edwards. I am sure there were others over there who also helped us out. This is not a definitive list. There were also many others.

I wish to conclude by thanking, again, our bipartisan partners. Senator VITTER and I have been working on this for years. We took it up after Senator Lautenberg passed away. Senator VITTER was on the committee as the ranking member and the chairman—and back and forth—and then Senator INHOFE took over.

I remember when we had a meeting with Senator INHOFE, and he took a real interest in this legislation. He has incredible calm, steady judgment in terms of pulling together what needs to happen to get a bill done in this sometimes hyperpartisan atmosphere. As chairman, he was always willing to listen to the people on the committee, off the committee, and pull people together to help them find common ground on this bill.

With that, we look forward to working with our House colleagues. Many of us served in the House. We served with House Members FRED UPTON, FRANK PALLONE, JOHN SHIMKUS, and Representative TONKO. These are some of the key people who will be working on this in the House, and we look forward to working with them and their staff and each other to reconcile these bills.

The House has some very good ideas in its bill. We have been a little more expansive and covered more areas, and I hope they will work with us on that. We look forward to working with them and putting the two bills together and then getting this passed early next year.

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. 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.

#### OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to say just a few words this afternoon on the vote that was taken on the Senate floor this morning. I will certainly admit that this was a difficult vote for me. This 2,200-page, \$1.8 trillion spending and tax reform bill certainly does contain provisions that I have advocated for and will continue to press for to benefit different Alaskan groups, small businesses, the energy sector, and others. However, voting in favor of such a massive and consequential piece of legislation without having the opportunity to fully understand or fully vet both its positive and negative implications for Alaska and our Nation or to offer amendments is something I could not do in good conscience.

Leader MCCONNELL, majority whip Senator CORNYN, and so many other leaders in the Senate have worked hard in terms of this process over the past year. You heard a number of Senators come to the floor to talk about what clearly has been a very productive Senate under their leadership, and I want to commend them for their leadership. I appreciate their leadership. I know that in terms of the budget they tried to get this body to the right place, meaning we actually passed a budget for the first time in many years. We passed 12 appropriations bills—again, for appropriations, the first time in many years—but as the bills came to the Senate floor, they were halted, unfortunately, blocked, filibustered. I remember debating not once, not twice, but three times when the other side filibustered the Defense appropriations bill. This Senator still does not understand what was behind all of that, still is not 100 percent sure why the appropriations and funding process was halted in this body. Then we saw the smash-up the last week when everything came together at the end of the year.

I am not sure what the motivation was to do this, but I do know this: The way in which we fund our Federal Government—in this case, 72 hours to read a 2,200-page, \$1.8 trillion, “take it or leave it” bill, negotiated by just a few Members of Congress and the White House—is a broken process, and it is not worthy of our great Nation, nor the people we represent. I also believe it is a principal reason why we have seen an explosion of trillions of dollars in debt that imperils our Nation’s fiscal stability and certainly imperils our children’s future.

Back home in Alaska, we are currently debating through a transparent, open, and contentious process how to best address our State’s significant fiscal challenges. We have big fiscal challenges just like this government does.

In my view, the Federal Government should be doing the same. The bill we voted on today and the process that produced it demonstrates that we are not.

Going forward, I certainly want to continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the leadership on both sides of the aisle to continue to work to improve this process because the people we represent deserve much better than what just transpired.

Obviously there has been a lot of talk about the omnibus bill in the last couple days on the floor, but I just wanted to say a few words. Sometimes it takes a reminder from home, a reminder from what is going on back home to ground us and to remind us of what is really important in our lives, like family and friends and life itself.

#### SEARCH FOR CASEY GRAHAM

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I would like to talk briefly about an effort that is going on in Alaska right now to try to recover one of our own, Casey Graham—an Alaskan Native, a patriot, 24 years old, the son of Steven and Lucy Graham.

He is 24 years old, the son of Steven and Lucy Graham and brother of Cheryl, Michelle, Megan, and Pauline. He is a veteran who served in the Marines and was deployed to serve his country in Afghanistan. He is a young man in the prime of his life.

Casey has been described as smart, hard-working, extremely intelligent, and a shining light for his community, his State, and his country. He lived in Anchorage but was from McGrath, AK. That is about 200 miles from Anchorage on the Upper Kuskokwim River.

About a week ago he was visiting family when he decided to do what most Alaskans do in the winter—go out on a snow machine ride. It is thought that he was on the ice on the river and hit open water. His snow machine and his helmet have been found, but not Casey.

As I speak, the community of McGrath is banding together for the recovery effort. It is a small town—only about 350 people live there—but it is a town with a huge heart. The community has dropped everything. Every day, dozens—as many as 50 Alaskans have gone out to where they think Casey was on the ice to bring him home. Remember, in Alaska it is cold right now. From December 10 when the search began until now, temperatures have ranged from about 22 degrees below zero to a high of about 16 above zero. There is a heated tent on the ice where volunteers go to warm up and eat lunch before they go back out searching. They eat moose stew mostly and, of course, a lot of salmon. The community is emptying their freezers and making sure all the volunteers are fed.

In the true spirit of Alaska, in the true spirit of Christmas, so many companies and individuals across the great