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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 12, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DOUG LAMALFA 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 5, 2016, 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 11:50 a.m.

VOTING RIGHTS ACTIVIST SHEYANN WEBB-CHRISTBURG JOINS CONGRESSWOMAN SEWELL AT PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FINAL STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise on Restoration Tuesday to honor my guest to tonight's State of the Union Address. Ms. Sheyann Webb-Christburg of Montgomery, Alabama, will be joining me as my special guest to President Obama's final State of the Union Address.

Sheyann was 8 years old and was one of the youngest foot soldiers who marched from Selma to Montgomery. I believe that Sheyann is the embodiment of the struggle for voting rights equality in Alabama and in America.

On this Restoration Tuesday, it is my sincere hope that her presence will remind us of the modern-day fight for ensuring that every American citizen has access to the ballot box.

At an early age, Sheyann recognized that America had failed to live up to its own promise by depriving African Americans of their sacred right to vote. Sheyann's bravery reminded those around her that they are fighting for the next generation—her generation—as fervently as they were fighting for their own. Her courage also made it possible for me to represent our hometown of Selma in Congress.

On a personal level, I am thankful to call Sheyann my friend and mentor. She was my childhood babysitter, so I literally grew up in her shadow.

Her presence at President Obama's final State of the Union should once again remind us of the gravity of our responsibility to protect the vote for all Americans. Since the civil rights era ended, there are now modern-day barriers to voting. Since the Supreme Court struck down section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in 2013, my office has made restoring this critically important section one of our top priorities.

For the past 3 years, my State of the Union guest has represented a different aspect of the voting rights movement:

In 2014, my guest to the State of the Union was Selma's mayor, George Evans. As mayor of the birthplace of the Voting Rights Act, he represented the dynamic role Selma and her leaders have played in the fight for voter equality.

In 2015, I invited the 104-year-old Amelia Boynton Robinson as my guest to the State of the Union. As the matriarch of the voting rights movement, Amelia challenged an unfair and unjust system that kept African Americans from exercising their constitutionally protected right to vote. I will always cherish the time we spent together when she honored me as my special guest.

I think it is befitting that since last year my special guest was the oldest living foot soldier, that my guest this year would be the youngest living foot soldier—Sheyann Webb.

All of these individuals have paved the way for me to accomplish all that I have today, and I am forever grateful. Their legacy should inspire us not to take for granted the very sacred vote, and that is the right to vote. Their sacrifices remind us that there is much more work to be done, and my hope is that this Chamber will take on the challenge of doing that work.

We should try to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965. I think that our work begins even today. I hope that Sheyann Webb, as my special guest to the State of the Union, will remind all of us that it is really important that we protect the sacred right to vote.

DANGERS OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S RECKLESS REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shed more light on President Obama's reckless refugee resettlement agenda and the danger that it poses to Americans.

In my office, we are getting many calls about this as you hear about the new plans that he has and also as our constituents watch the news of what is happening in Germany and what is happening in other communities. Let me cite just a couple of examples.

Printed on recycled paper.

Last week, according to The Wall Street Journal and numerous media outlets, two refugees from Iraq were arrested for making false statements involving terrorism. These arrests took place one in California and one in Texas.

In the California arrest, one refugee came to the U.S. in 2012 and subsequently traveled to Syria in November 2013. He bragged in social media posts about fighting alongside terrorist groups such as Ansar al-Islam. This refugee returned to the U.S. a few months later. When interviewed by the FBI in October 2014, he denied being a part of any extremist group and denied providing materiel support to terrorists.

What we found in Texas is this. The refugee was charged on three counts: attempting to provide materiel support to the Islamic State, procuring citizenship or naturalization unlawfully, and making false statements.

This is precisely why President Obama's plan to admit thousands of additional Syrian refugees into the country at a time of heightened jihadist threats and the San Bernardino massacre is beyond reckless and is dangerous to our communities.

There is no way to vet the refugees that are coming from Syria and Iraq and verify that they are the person represented on the documents that they carry. Are the documents false, or is the person who they say they are or someone else? It proves what many have been saying for months about Islamic extremists: they can and will exploit the refugee program.

These arrests showcase what is so painfully obvious to the American people: the President's agenda is endangering our national security, and it is costing our hardworking taxpayers millions of dollars.

Let me ask you a few questions:

Do you feel more or less safe than you did 8 years ago?

Do you fear the attack of terrorism in your community?

Do you question your safety when you go to a public event?

How does the President's foreign policy and our national security affect where you work and where you live?

How can the administration be so naive?

How can the administration continue to put partisan politics over the safety of the American people?

How can the administration continually refuse to name our enemy?

Yes, we are at war with radical Islamic extremism. We must confront the danger of radical extremism and check the President's irresponsible resettlement agenda.

I want to mention H.R. 4218. It is legislation that I drafted and introduced with Representatives BARLETTA, DESJARLAIS, and LAMAR SMITH. Under the bill, no funding would be made available for refugee resettlement operations until four conditions are met:

Number one, Congress passes a joint resolution approving of the President's refugee resettlement plan;

Number two, CBO provides a report to Congress scoring the long-term cost of the program;

Number three, DHS submits a report identifying all terrorists and criminal activity connected to refugees since 2001;

And number four, the President submits a report to Congress on the prior year's cost of admitting refugees and proposes offset spending cuts to pay for the resettlement program.

We must halt the President's refugee resettlement operations. It is simply too dangerous, and we cannot afford the risk to our Nation's security.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, January is Human Trafficking Month, and I rise today to continue to be a voice for the countless victims of human trafficking in the United States.

If we, as Members of Congress, want to truly address the sex trafficking epidemic, we must face the facts. We must acknowledge and address the direct link between children in the foster care system and children who become victims of sex trafficking. For far too many children, the foster care system is an unwitting gateway to sex trafficking. This is a nationwide issue that requires a Federal response.

In 2010, 59 percent of the children arrested on prostitution-related charges in L.A. County were in the foster care system. A 2007 report from the U.S. Department of Justice found that 85 percent of identified child sex trafficking victims in New York State also had contact with the child welfare system. Further, according to the FBI, an estimated 70 percent of child sex trafficking victims in Florida had histories with the child welfare system.

Children in the foster care system are our children. When they fall victim to trafficking, it means that all of us have failed. To help all victims of trafficking, including foster youth, we must change our mindset on how we address this horrific crime.

A child who cannot consent to sex should never be called a prostitute. The men who prey on them are not johns; they are child molesters.

''T'' Ortiz Walker Pettigrew is a former foster care youth who became a sex trafficking victim. When she was 15 and still in foster care, ''T,'' as she is called, was arrested for prostitution. While serving time in juvenile hall, she discovered that more than half of the girls serving with her were also charged with solicitation and, like her, forced to sell themselves.

She described her treatment in juvenile hall as how you would treat a dog in a kennel. She was put in a box and kept waiting. She was treated like a criminal and did not receive any counseling or support services. Because she was punished and not helped, she was arrested again when she was 16 years old, and she spent her 17th birthday in juvenile hall.

I am grateful that she found the strength and support to escape from her pimp. She now uses her voice to advocate for sex trafficking victims and to urge policymakers at all levels of government to do our jobs to prevent young girls from becoming sex trafficking victims.

Because of actions from women like ''T,'' local officials in Los Angeles have changed their approach to addressing this issue. They haven't realized that arresting the victims won't solve the problem.

Last year, L.A. County Sheriff Jim McDonell announced that his department will immediately stop arresting children on prostitution charges. This announcement was coupled by the L.A. County Board of Supervisors adopting a countywide effort to ensure that child victims of sex trafficking are truly treated as victims and receive the support services they need instead of punishment.

Last year, this Congress came together as Democrats and Republicans to pass comprehensive human trafficking legislation, but our work does not end when the bill is signed. We must also use our positions to urge local officials in our districts to follow the best practices used around the country.

To truly make a difference this Human Trafficking Awareness Month, I urge all Members to reach out to their local sheriffs and local elected officials and urge them to learn from Los Angeles and begin treating sex trafficking victims as victims. Although the legislation is a great step forward, we should also use the power of our voices and our positions to ensure that more girls get the help they need instead of being treated as criminals.

CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as we get further away from December 17, 2014, the date that President Obama announced his change in U.S. policy toward Cuba, it has become apparent that there could be no abusive or provocative act committed by the tyrannical Castro regime that the Obama administration is not willing to overlook or willing to excuse.

Even after the Cuban regime was caught red-handed shipping surface-to-air missiles, two MiG aircraft, and tons of Cuban-made weapons and munitions to North Korea in violation of several U.N. Security Council resolutions, it could not stop President Obama's desire to placate the Castros.

This and the most recent revelation that the United States Government found out in June of 2014 that Cuba managed to come into possession of a

U.S. Hellfire missile and continues, to this day, to turn over that sensitive military technology are not isolated events. Both incidents underscore exactly how egregiously the administration has erred and the extraordinary lengths to which the President will go in order to hide these transgressions from Congress and from the American people.

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You see, Mr. Speaker, after the President made his December 17, 2014, announcement, it has been revealed that not only did the administration keep Congress uninformed of the negotiations, but the negotiations had been taking place for over a year and a half.

If we follow the timeline, that means that these secret negotiations were taking place after the administration was already made aware that the Castros were in possession of a U.S. Hellfire missile and after Havana sent the illicit shipment of arms to Pyongyang.

Even after the administration offered concession after concession to the Castros—the loosening of restrictions on travel, the opening of Embassies—the list goes on and on—the President refused to make the returning of sensitive missile technology a precondition to the negotiations or to the implementation of this misguided policy.

Let's stop and think about this for a second, Mr. Speaker.

The President has given the Castro regime almost everything it could have asked for. What did we ask for in return? Did we demand free and fair elections? Of course not. Did we demand the end of the persecution of dissidents and the release of political prisoners? You have got to be kidding. Of course not. Did we demand the regime stop the long list of human rights abuses? No.

In fact, just this past Sunday, over 200 people were arrested in Cuba because they were calling for religious tolerance. But never mind that. Let's look at the cool, classic Chevys that are all through the streets of Havana. That is what we are supposed to be talking about.

The President didn't even demand that the Communist regime, with known and close military ties to Russia, China, and North Korea, turn over to the U.S. the Hellfire missile it had been in possession of since June of 2014.

I don't need to remind my colleagues of how incredibly dangerous it is for the Castros to be in possession of this sensitive military technology or how incredibly damaging it could be to our own national security interests when, not if, the regime turns that technology over to one of our adversaries.

Last year both the Russian Minister of Defense and China's top military official visited Havana to discuss ways to strengthen their military cooperation efforts with Cuba, and a senior Castro regime official traveled to North Korea for military talks.

Mr. Speaker, not only has the President's Cuban policy been a disaster for the people of Cuba, it has been a disaster for our own safety and security. There should be—there must be—a full and thorough investigation into this Hellfire missile incident. If this administration won't do what is necessary to hold the Cuban regime accountable, then we in Congress must use every available tool in order to do so.

We cannot allow the administration's endless train of concessions to the tyrannical Cuban regime to continue while it turns its back on those who are suffering under the regime's oppression. This is not what America stands for, and we should not allow President Obama's misguided foreign policy objectives to ever change that.

SERGEANT MATTHEW McCLINTOCK

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, on the wall outside my office are the faces of 149 men and women from Washington State who were killed in action over the past 14 years in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

Today it is with reverence that I will add the 150th face: Sergeant Matthew McClintock's. Matthew was killed in Helmand Province in Afghanistan on the 5th of January.

Sergeant McClintock was a Green Beret, an engineer, a National Guardsman, as well as a dedicated friend, son, husband, and father.

He joined the Army in 2006 and served in both Iraq and Afghanistan over the course of three tours. On one of his tours, his best friend was killed. So you can imagine what was in his mind when he was now leading a group in Afghanistan and one of his men was on the ground, hit. He knew the danger, but he went out to try and save his teammate.

He epitomized everything we admire about our warriors: their skill, their mettle, their commitment to their teammates, to their families, and to us as a nation. The loss of a promising, smart, steadfast young man, whose devotion to family and country was freely given, should not and will not be accepted without sorrow and respect.

I had the chance to meet Matthew's wife, Alexandra, and their 3-month-old son, Declan, on Friday, when Matthew came back to Dover Air Force Base. Everything his family said about him speaks of a man I would like to have known.

It is said that the true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him but because he loves what is behind him. Matthew leaves behind a proud and beautiful family.

His wife asked that she have a chance to go up to Walter Reed to see the man her husband went out to save, who is still alive. That is the kind of family this is. We, as a nation, should be forever grateful that someone of his caliber—and his family—continues to choose to fight.

Mr. Speaker, we have entered the 15th year of this war, and it is easy to forget what is still going on in Iraq and Afghanistan and in other places where our soldiers are.

I became aware of this because somebody in my district was Matthew's father-in-law. He called me up and asked if I would be of help. I was glad to do it, but I realized I had not been aware of what had happened to him.

So I asked the Army press people: Was this reported in the press?

They said, yes, that it was on television for 45 seconds.

The American people are being allowed not to see and not to hear about Matthew McClintock. They are not being told what is going on.

We sent him there. We gave him the gun. We gave him the bullets. We gave him the body armor. We gave him everything and sent him over there and asked him to do this for us. He did it. He was willing to lay down his life for us.

We deserve more time with people like Matthew and like many of the soldiers who went before him. But for those who survive them—Matthew's teammates, his family—Alexandra and especially Declan—when this war finally ends, they deserve long and happy lives in peace.

WASP ARLINGTON INURNMENT RESTORATION ACT

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

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the contributions the WASPs have made to our great country. These are the Women Airforce Service Pilots, and they represent an elite group of female pilots.

They flew combat missions during World War II. These women displayed courage, valor, and a willingness to serve, and they made invaluable contributions to our Nation's efforts to battle on the world stage.

There were fewer than 1,100 WASPs, and 38 of them died during their service. But because the unit was created in 1942, the WASP group was never granted full military status.

In 1977, Congress retroactively granted Active-Duty status to these brave pilots to ensure that all VA policies, laws, and services would apply to them; yet, the Army recently denied the request of WASPs who were seeking a place in Arlington National Cemetery. They say they are running out of space.

This decision flies in the face of our Nation's efforts to recognize, reward, and treat honorably the contributions of all of our veterans. These women deserve the same honor that is bestowed upon hundreds of thousands of their fellow servicemembers.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring and supporting the bill.

I say this to the VA: Find the space.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, universities are supposed to be in the business of illumination, but as we have seen in recent cases at Cal Tech and at UC Berkeley, that is not always the case.

At UC, world-renowned astronomer Geoff Marcy sexually harassed students for years with no consequences. The light of knowledge can cast some dark shadows. Brave women recently alerted my office to still more harassment in astronomy, now at the University of Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD this report from the University of Arizona regarding Dr. Timothy Slater. This report was sealed for over a decade while Dr. Slater went on with his career. His example shows why so few women continue careers in science and in engineering.

CONFIDENTIAL

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Complaint No: 04–06A–MKM
Complainant: Administrative Review
Respondent: Dr. Timothy Slater
Department: Department of Astronomy, Steward Observatory
Date Complaint Received: August 2004
Report Date: March 31, 2005

BACKGROUND

Prior to July 2004, several individuals approached the EOAAO to discuss sexually charged conduct they were experiencing in the College of Astronomy, and Steward Observatory. They stated that the conduct was occurring across ranks; some indicated the conduct was creating a sexually hostile work environment. Some indicated retaliation might be occurring. These individuals refused to file complaints against the department because they feared work-related repercussions, including unlawful retaliation. Consequently the EOAAO met with administrators in the Department of Astronomy and Steward Observatory to discuss initiating an investigation into sexual harassment, sexually hostile work environment. The department, in turn, formalized a request for investigation, such that this Administrative Review began in August 2004.

Responsive to evidence obtained in the early stages of investigation, the EOAAO named Dr. Tim Slater as a respondent in this case, on September 24, 2004. The EOAAO notified Dr. Slater of his respondent status in accordance with EOAAO procedures, identifying sexual harassment and retaliation as the relevant issues.

Dr. Slater was hired by the University of Arizona on August 6, 2001, as an Associate Professor of Astronomy. He received tenure standing in May 2004. He has a variety of duties at the university, including his post as the Conceptual Astronomy and Physics Education Research (CAPER) team leader.

SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

In the course of the investigation, the investigator interviewed multiple individuals—some more than once—who were associated with the Department of Astronomy, Steward Observatory, and/or the CAPER team. Witnesses were selected either randomly, or with an effort to cross-section levels of authority and closeness, professional and/or personal, with the respondent. All efforts were made to get a comprehensive point of view.

ISSUE

Did Dr. Slater violate the University's Sexual Harassment Policy, as well as the policy's Retaliation component?

Witness B stated that Dr. Slater and Witness J make a lot of sexual jokes and create sexual banter on a regular basis. She noted a lot of the women tend to ignore this when it is occurring around them.

On a regular basis, Dr. Slater has told Witness B she would teach better if she did not wear underwear.

On at least one occasion he grabbed her underwear through her dress, stretched it and snapped it, and said, ''You'd look a whole lot better without these on,'' or words to that effect. That same day he invited her to attend a lunch with a visiting female graduate student from [redacted] and Witness J. Dr. Slater indicated they would be lunching at a local topless bar. At lunch both Dr. Slater and Witness J paid for and received lap dances. Dr. Slater offered to purchase a lap dance for Witness B; she declined and he did not push the issue further.

Witness B reported that during the semester the sexual conduct occurs daily.

Witness C provided the following information:

Witness C stated that she has continual but infrequent interaction with Dr. Slater during the course of her work. She stated that her concern regarding Dr. Slater reflects sexual conduct occurring on one day: [redacted] Witness C traveled with Dr. Slater to [redacted] by car, in the company of a female graduate student.

During the car trip, Witness C told Dr. Slater some work she had completed for CAPER. He responded by saying, ''Awesome! I could just kiss you full on the mouth,'' or words very close to those. Witness C stated she found this response distasteful.

Later he asked her, ''How bad can I be with you?'' When she asked him what he meant, he asked her if she would be reporting his comments back to her supervisor.

Dr. Slater went on to relate that when he goes to academic conferences out of town he goes online to set up ''hook-ups'' (sexual dates) with women in the geographic area. He told Witness C that his personal (sexual) record was four (4) women in twenty-four (24) hours.

Dr. Slater also stated that he and his wife occasionally set up manage-a-trois.

Dr. Slater and the accompanying female graduate student discussed the upcoming visit of Dr. Slater's colleague. She asked Dr. Slater if she would have to sleep with him, to which Dr. Slater replied, ''No, not this one.'' Witness C looked at them and exclaimed, ''What?'' whereupon Dr. Slater told her that occasionally he might have to ask her to take one for the team.

Talking about Witness J, Dr. Slater said, ''Yeah, he likes the young ones. Witness C asked if that individual did not have a girlfriend. Dr. Slater replied that a girlfriend was one thing, but a student was another. Witness C asked if the students were minors, to which Dr. Slater responded that they were all probably over 18.

He added that he, Dr. Slater, preferred a more mature woman who knew ''her way around the bedroom.'' Some minutes later he turned to Witness C and asked her if she knew ''anything about or was any good at giving blowjobs, because (the accompanying female—name deleted) does not like to give or receive them—maybe you could give her some pointers.''

Witness C then told Slater he was being completely inappropriate. She said, ''You barely know me. I only started a couple of weeks ago, and you're already talking to me like this. Doesn't the U of A give sexual harassment training, or were your absent that day?'' She went on to say that she has a particularly large boyfriend (whom she described, in part, as Black) She told Dr. Slater that he would not appreciate the manner in which Dr. Slater was speaking to her. Dr. Slater then asked Witness C if it were true that once you went black, you'd never go back,'' or words to that effect.

Later Dr. Slater joked that he would pull off at a rest stop so they could have a threesome. Witness C responded by saying, ''Like that's going to happen,'' or words to that effect. After that she tried changing the subject every time it turned sexual, and then she related a story of personal tragedy (nonsexual,) which she noted seemed to sober Dr. Slater and the other female right away.

Witness C stated that she reported Dr. Slater's conduct to the Principle Investigator (PI) on her project. The PI, in turn, told her she should report it to her supervisor, which she did.

[Relevant to Witness D's testimony] Witness C stated she was aware that Dr. Slater appeared to be trying to take [redacted] program [redacted] away from the department and bring it over to Steward Observatory where he also works. She stated he has been pulling funding from the program. Additionally he bad-mouths the Program Coordinator, Witness C's supervisor. He has also been giving responsibilities previously held by that supervisor to his various graduate students.

The witness recalled that other female graduate students had commented that their advisors, Dr. Slater and Witness J, were too sexual in their demeanor.

INFORMATION FROM RESPONDENT

On September 30, 2004 Dr, Tim Slater provided the following information:

He stated that he recalled two occasions on which individuals complained directly to him about his personal conduct.

In [redacted] talking about a bachelor party at a strip club, such that a graduate student commented, ''That really creeps me out when you talk that way in front of me,'' or words to that affect. He recalled apologizing.

A graduate student and former CAPER team member telling him that it had made her uncomfortable when he massaged her shoulders publicly, while hosting a teacher workshop. Dr. Slater recalled that she was concerned others might misinterpret the nature of their relationship, were they to observe his gesture.

Dr. Slater characterized himself as a ''touchy'' person who often hugs people. He stated that he is a ''flirtatious'' person, and defined that as ''friendly,'' and ''flattering.'' He stated this is mostly with the CAPER group, since CAPER constitutes his primary professional and social interaction.

Dr. Slater stated that he hugs males as well as females, and that he brought many people on the team [CAPER] from Montana and Kansas [universities there.] Many had lived in his house with him and his wife from time to time, and some of the relationships were of 10–12 years' duration. He added they had been in each other's weddings. He stated that they all socialize together at someone's house (often his) on 2–3 occasions per month.

Dr. Slater stated that he and Witness J run the CAPER group, and that within the group they have a joke that he, Slater, is the ''mom,'' and Witness J is the ''dad.'' He stated that some of the CAPER team members were more like family than others; he listed the two groups.

Regarding reports that he had given out ''sex toys'' at social events; he recalled that

he had given one female graduate student a pickle or cucumber-shaped vibrator at a ''pre-marriage'' party. He could not recall having given out chocolate handcuffs, as specifically alleged. Regarding the vibrator, he recalled that the recipient was a collector of the vegetable it represented, and that he was certain she was not offended by it. He recalled there were pickle or cucumber jokes going around the office for several days, thereafter.

Dr. Slater did not recall making the comment that he would have to install cameras in his home, as alleged, and referential to the alleged comment that everyone [in CAPER] had engaged in sexual activity in his home. Dr. Slater reiterated that many of the CAPER team members had, in fact, lived with him at his house over the years.

Regarding allegations that he stopped to look at women, and commented on their appearance, he stated this was common practice for him, and that he might have done it anywhere from ''one-to-ten-to-a-hundred times.'' He denied that he had a rating system, but recalled saying things like, ''You're going to have to say that again, because that's too distracting.'' He confirmed he had made such comments to women in the department and often Witness J, who joked with him in a similar fashion.

Regarding allegations that he told a colleague he had a prohibition against ''blue balls'' in the office (referencing an exercise ball,) he stated he did not recall making the comment, but that it was ''consistent'' with the kinds of comments he would make.

He believed he had not told a colleague he would have invited her to swim over the weekend but for the likelihood she would wear her swim suit. He stated he doubted that comment because he is not exclusionary by nature.

He did not recall telling a [subordinate female] colleague that she would teach better were she to stop wearing underwear, and did not recall snapping her underwear [through her T-shirt dress, as alleged.] However, he stated, he did tend to say a lot of sexual things.

Dr. Slater confirmed that he took a visiting female graduate student, as well as a male and a female [subordinate] colleague to lunch at a local strip club. He did not recall that specific event, but stated that he [and the accompanying male] usually purchase lap dances when they go. He usually offers to purchase lap dances for others, as well. He stated they go about once per month, and that it's usually a mixed group (male and female.)

Dr. Slater recalled that a group of department women had gone to a male club in honor of a wedding or birthday, and reported having a terrible time. Somehow, as an offshoot to that situation, one of the women [Witness B] thought she might like female clubs better, and decided to join the men. He could not recall how many times she attended, but thought probably several. He stated that he has gone with his wife, and several of the graduate students and/or colleagues. He stated the tab is always collected for ''Dutch'' treat: departmental funds are never used.

For complete report go to *http://speier.house.gov*.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 11, 2016.

CATHERINE E. LHAMON,
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Civil Rights, Department of Education, Washington, DC.

DEAR ASSISTANT SECRETARY LHAMON: Thank you for your leadership and commitment to eradicating sexual harassment and assault on college campuses. Knowing your interest in this area, I wanted to bring the attached report to your attention, which details disturbing sexual harassment by a former faculty member at the University of Arizona. Despite finding that Dr. Timothy Slater committed a policy violation in the matter of ''sexual harassment, hostile work environment,'' the report and its incriminatory revelation were sealed, and Dr. Slater moved to a new job at the University of Wyoming, where he continues to supervise students and teach workshops. In light of this, I ask that the Office of Civil Rights clarify whether universities that find a Title IX violation by faculty or staff are required to disclose the results of their investigation to other educational institutions.

The incidents described in the report are alarming. One complainant said that Dr. Slater told her on a regular basis that ''she would teach better if she did not wear underwear'' and ''grabbed her underwear through her dress, stretched it and snapped it, and said 'You'd look a whole lot better without these on,' or words to that effect.'' He asked another complainant ''if she knew anything about or was any good at giving blow jobs, because (name deleted) does not like to give or received them—maybe you could give her some pointers.'' Dr. Slater himself admitted that he gave an employee a vegetable-shaped vibrator, that he frequently commented to his employees and students about the appearance of passing women, and that he told one person ''that his personal sexual record was four women in 24 hours.''

Staff spoke directly to a witness who recounted several inappropriate interactions. She observed Dr. Slater instructing an undergraduate student to ''touch your elbows behind your back for me'' in order to scrutinize the student's breasts, and touching graduate students on the leg while making inappropriate statements. At a lab social event at the Slaters' residence, video pornography was shown before dinner. She recounted hearing Dr. Slater tell male colleagues on more than one occasion that he enjoyed teaching large lectures in rooms with stadium seating because the female students in Arizona wear short skirts and often forget to cross their legs. Dr. Slater once required the witness to attend a lunch at a fully nude strip club with him in order to discuss her academic work, with the implied consequence that he would not discuss her work with her if she refused to go. While she was there, she was pressured to attend future lunches at the strip club. According to the witness, it was made clear to her, though never explicitly stated, that if she wanted to function in the lab that she had to take part in this sexualized culture. Because of these incidents, the witness left the field of astronomy.

Staff spoke directly to another witness, who experienced inappropriate comments and unwanted physical contact from Dr. Slater. At a one-on-one work meeting, he told her that all the other graduate students had sex at his house, that he had video cameras, and asked when she would also have sex at his house. During a lab social, she witnessed Dr. Slater and another lab supervisor stating that at this party, lab members were going to use the Slaters' hot tub naked. Dr. Slater also touched her shoulders and stroked her back while she was teaching, until she sent him a formal email requesting that he stop. Due to the hostile work environment, the witness transferred out of Dr. Slater's group, losing years of progress towards her graduate degree.

A third witness separately confirmed that Dr. Slater led laboratory outings to strip clubs.

The Slater report is disturbingly similar to the recent case at the University of California, Berkeley, in which Dr. Geoff Marcy, a prominent astronomer, violated campus sexual harassment policies with minimal consequences for 9 years until his story was publicized through the media. As the University of Arizona did with the Slater case, UC Berkeley kept the final report on Dr. Marcy's behavior confidential, perhaps because, as Science Magazine put it, ''[t]he details of UC Berkeley's inquiry into Marcy's conduct does not reflect well on the institution, with the process stretching for more than 4 years and Marcy given only weak sanctions after repeated promises to reform.'' The final report from UC Berkeley contained a sentence that could be applied equally to Dr. Marcy and Dr. Slater: ''[i]t cannot be overstated how Respondent's inherent influence and authority over the complainants, real or perceived, heightened the impact of his behavior on those experiencing or witnessing it.''

The Slater case, while lurid, is just a symptom of a much larger problem—how to prevent harassment, and effectively deal with it when it occurs. Dr. Slater states that he is now reformed, but there are still few consequences for faculty members who sexually harass students. In some ways, the situation is reminiscent of the Catholic Church's coddling of child-molesting priests. As in the Church, universities protect perpetuators with slap-on-the-wrist punishment and secrecy, while victims are left alone to try to put their academic careers and lives back together. One peer-reviewed study found that over a quarter of women surveyed (and 6% of men) have been sexually assaulted while conducting scientific fieldwork, and 71% of women and 41% of men also reported that they were sexually harassed.

The profound effect of this dynamic on the participation of women in science cannot be overstated. From 2002 through 2012, women received one-third or fewer of the doctorates awarded in physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, and computer science, and as of 2013 one-third or fewer of all tenure or tenure track faculty positions in core STEM fields were held by women. Indeed, all of the victims we talked to suffered career consequences as a direct result of the harassment, including losing years of graduate work, forgoing professional opportunities, and changing fields of study. In the Marcy case, one of the victims, who had aspired to work at NASA, left astrophysics entirely as a direct result of being harassed.

When students found to have violated university policy through the Title IX disciplinary process transfer to another institution, the university that found the violation may inform the other institution, but is not obligated to do so. While this policy is vastly insufficient, it at least allows universities to have the option to inform other universities of the final results of a disciplinary proceeding. However, no similar guidance exists for faculty or staff. I ask that the Office of Civil Rights issue a clarification on the FERPA or Title IX disclosure requirements when faculty or staff whose conduct violated Title IX transfer to another institution.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

JACKIE SPEIER.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, some universities protect predatory professors with slaps on the wrist and secrecy, just like the Catholic Church sheltered child-molesting priests for many decades.

The incidents described in this report are lurid and disturbing. One graduate student was told regularly by Dr.

Slater that she would teach better if she did not wear underwear. He asked another graduate student to give women pointers on oral sex techniques.

Dr. Slater himself admitted that he gave an employee a vegetable-shaped vibrator and that he frequently commented to his employees and students about the appearance of women.

My staff spoke with one female grad student who was required to attend a strip club in order to discuss her academic work with Dr. Slater. The woman has since left the field of astronomy.

The second female grad student told us that, during a one-on-one work meeting with Dr. Slater, he told her that all of the other graduate students had had sex at his house, that he had video cameras, and asked when she would join him to have sex there. She transferred out of Dr. Slater's lab, losing years of work.

This is a significant reason as to why women hold fewer than one-third of the faculty positions in science and engineering.

Dr. Slater has said he is now reformed, which may be the case, but his actions, however lurid, are just symptoms of a larger problem of how to effectively deal with sexual harassment in academia.

I agree with Dr. Meg Urry, the president of the American Astronomical Society, who said: ''In my view, this is what it would take to move the needle: severe and visible consequences for violating policies on harassment—and they do have to be visible.''

That is why I plan to introduce legislation to require universities to inform other universities of the final results of a disciplinary proceeding. When students, faculty, or staff whose conduct has violated title IX transfer to another institution, the universities to which they are moving should be aware of their past conduct.

I encourage anyone who has experienced sexual harassment in science, whether it is related to this incident or another, to call my office.

Students enter astronomy to study the stars, not their professors' sex lives. It is time to stop pretending sexual harassment in science happened a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

BARBARA STOCKTON PERRY

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

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, on New Year's Day, we mourned the loss of a great lady, Barbara Stockton Perry. Today I rise to celebrate Barbara's 89 years of life that she devoted to her Christian faith, to her family, and to her community.

Barbara was born on November 3, 1926, in the town of Franklin, which is a small North Carolina mountain community that is tucked away under the Great Smoky Mountains.

Though the population was very small, Barbara had a large personality and a keen mind. She was the valedictorian of Franklin High School in 1943, and she graduated cum laude from Brenau College in 1947.

□ 1030

She then went on to the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill School of Law. She was the only woman in the class of 1950, and she was a member of the law review as well. This was classic Barbara, distinguishing herself as a highly intelligent woman who was not afraid to break glass ceilings.

Barbara's first position out of law school was as assistant legal counsel to the Belk Stores Corporation in Charlotte. Then, after marrying Warren Perry in June of 1951, she moved to Kinston, North Carolina, with him and became a partner at Perry, Perry and Perry law firm. There, she became involved in the State bar and the local bar and was named to the Board of Governors of the North Carolina Bar Association.

Community service was important to Barbara. So throughout her life, she donated her time and efforts to a long list of organizations, including the United Way, the North Carolina Symphony, the Kinston Arts Council, the Kinston-Lenoir County Bicentennial Commission, and the Pride of Kinston organization. A lifelong educational advocate, Barbara also served on the Board of Trustees of Parrot Academy, Lenoir Community College, Brenau University, and UNC-Chapel Hill, where she was elected to two terms on the Board of Governors of the entire 16-university UNC system.

In recognition of her contributions to North Carolina, she was honored by two North Carolina Governors, Jim Holshouser and Pat McCrory. Both of these Governors awarded her the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. If ever anyone instilled and fostered pride in the great State of North Carolina, certainly it was Barbara Stockton Perry.

Ever devoted to faith, Barbara served for many years on the board of Angel Ministries. She was a long-time member of the Gordon Street Christian Church and more recently joined the Faith Fellowship Church.

While her contributions to her community are beyond measure, Barbara's true joy was her family. She lost the love of her life, Warren, in 2003, but theirs was a life filled with adventure. By all accounts, they traveled the world together and shared a dance on all seven continents. At home, this extraordinary lady was known to her family simply as Mama Perry. She was happiest when she was surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and extended family.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to condense the life of this truly remarkable woman into a few short minutes. I will close in saying that I was honored and privileged to know her, and I give thanks to Barbara Perry for devoting her life to her family, her community, and her faith. She will be missed beyond measure. May God always bless her.

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the monthly jobs report for December. It was another in a long, uninterrupted string of good reports. The report showed that the economy gained 292,000 private sector jobs last month and that the unemployment rate fell to 5 percent.

During 2015, the economy added nearly 2.7 million jobs. Nevertheless, many of my colleagues across the aisle continue to talk as if the recovery under President Obama has been lackluster. They seem to forget the economic meltdown that occurred under the leadership of the prior administration. But the millions of Americans who lost their homes, their jobs, they haven't forgotten.

Let's look at how far we have come in the period after President Bush left office. The truth is, the record is pretty impressive. First, a reminder of where we started. Back in January of 2009, when President Bush left office and President Obama was sworn in, the economy shed nearly 820,000 private sector jobs in January in 1 month alone. As former Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke described it, we were facing the worst financial crisis in global history, including the Great Depression.

Between the end of 2007 and the second quarter of 2009, real GDP fell by 4.2 percent. Around $17 trillion in household wealth evaporated during the Great Recession. To put that number in some perspective, $17 trillion is about equal to our entire gross domestic product, the sum total of all the goods and services produced by the entire economy of the United States for all of 2014. That is a great deal of money to lose. In fact, it would be almost enough to pay off our entire national debt.

In July of 2009, there were about seven unemployed workers for every single job opening in the country, meaning that no matter how hard most unemployed people tried to get a job, six out of every seven of them were going to be just out of luck. You may recall that back then our colleagues across the aisle were adamantly opposed to extending jobless benefits.

By October of 2009, the unemployment rate had reached 10 percent. Housing prices were falling. Lending was frozen. The stock market had cratered. Businesses were failing. People all over the country were losing their jobs, their homes, their savings, and their hopes. It was a pretty terrible time for millions of Americans.

Now, much has changed. 2014 and 2015 were the strongest 2 years of job creation since 1998 to 2000, when Bill Clinton was President. The private sector is powering the economy forward. Our businesses have added 14 million jobs over a record 70 consecutive months of job growth. Wages have finally begun to rise. Nominal average hourly earnings for all private employees have now risen 2.5 percent over the past year. The ratio of unemployment seekers to job openings has fallen from 7 to 1 to 1.5 to 1. That is about the lowest this ratio has been since early 2007.

Since the start of the Obama administration, our real GDP has increased by 14 percent. The U.S. auto industry, which was on death's door when President Obama took office, is now healthy, thriving, and enjoyed record sales in 2015. Our auto industry is now exporting and creating even more jobs. Oil and gas prices are low. Mortgage rates remain low. Inflation is simply not a factor. The dollar is strong, and housing prices are back up to where they were in 2007.

All of this recovery was not an accident, not a stroke of good luck. Things certainly would have been quite different if we had only listened to the counsel of our colleagues across the aisle. They vehemently opposed efforts taken by the Obama administration to stimulate the economy, and they opposed actions by the Federal Reserve that turned out to be very critically important.

What would have happened without these actions by the Federal Reserve and the Democrats in Congress? The recession would have lasted twice as long, according to a recent study by highly respected economists Alan Blinder and Mark Zandi. The Blinder-Zandi study found that without these actions, the unemployment rate would have reached nearly 16 percent, and we would have lost twice as many jobs, more than 17 million. It is a bit scary to even think about.

So the facts show that we have had a very strong recovery. Are we done? Absolutely not. There is much more work to do to ensure the recovery reaches everyone. Big challenges remain. Many families are struggling to make ends meet, to make the mortgage payment, to save for their children's education. We need faster wage growth, accessible child care, and higher education that is affordable to all families. It is time to pass comprehensive immigration reform and to protect Americans from gun violence.

I am excited about the opportunity to make real progress on these issues this year, and I look forward to working in a bipartisan way to continue to focus on the challenges facing middle class families.

PRO-LIFE

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

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, the Declaration of Independence contains a passage that every student in America learns at an early age. It explains that each of us are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, chief among them the right to life. This highlights and reminds us just how much our Founders valued the right to life.

As an elected Representative, the words in our Declaration that follow are equally compelling: To secure these rights, governments are instituted among men. How often we forget that government exists first and foremost to secure the right to life.

Now, this is an immense responsibility, one that I take very seriously, because one of the highest honors I have in representing the Fourth Congressional District of Texas is defending the most vulnerable among us, our unborn children. I am proud to have a voting record that reflects my unwavering commitment to protecting unborn life and ending taxpayer funding of abortion.

I will also be the first to tell you that legislators represent only one piece of the puzzle in the ongoing and vital effort to promote a culture of life. There are literally thousands of unsung pro-life heroes in the Fourth Congressional District of Texas, whose effort to promote a culture of life are not about gaining recognition or notoriety, but are simply rooted in an abiding sense of protecting the inalienable right to life, which our Founding Fathers spoke of.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a few of these pro-life heroes in my district, people like Melanie Grammar and Deborah Butts with the Texas Federation of Republican Women; Michelle Smith and Ann Hettinger in Rockwall, Texas; Chip Adami at the True Options Pregnancy Center in Sherman; Mason Randall and Robin Stevenson at Lake Pointe Church Adoption Ministry; Kristie Wright at the First Choice Pregnancy Resource Center in Texarkana; Threesa Sadler and Tim Stainback at the Raffa Center in Greenville; Joanne Vuckovic at the Rockwall Pregnancy Resource Center; and the great folks at both the Paris and Fannin Pregnancy Care Centers.

The dedication of individuals like these and thousands of others across the Fourth Congressional District of Texas is appreciated, it is necessary, and it certainly does not go unnoticed. Thank you all for your commitment to protecting the incredibly important cause of life.

BILL TO COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESS COMPACT IMPACT IN AFFECTED JURISDICTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced legislation that will help address the impact of the Compact of Free Association—these are the Pacific Islands—on affected jurisdictions like Guam and the State of Hawaii.

I continue to support the intent of the Compact, and I do understand the benefits that these agreements have for our Nation and our security. However, the costs borne by our local governments amount to millions of dollars for providing social services to Compact migrants are unsustainable, and Congress must act to provide relief for affected jurisdictions who have spent millions of local funds to support the Compact and the migrants.

COFA migrants make positive contributions to our community, but insufficient support from the Federal Government causes a significant socioeconomic strain on our island communities. This strain only increases, especially with uncertain economic conditions in the Freely Associated States, as well as the impact climate change is having on Pacific Island nations.

The bill I am introducing, as well as proposals that I have made in the past, will provide relief and empower local jurisdictions with solutions to reduce the burden of the Compact.

The best solution to Compact impact would be an increase in annual mandatory funding from the current $30 million to the $185 million recommended by the GAO. However, the current budget environment makes appropriating this very difficult.

Nonetheless, I am proud to also cosponsor another bill, a bill introduced by Congressman TAKAI of the State of Hawaii, that would increase this annual appropriation, and I hope that we can at least have a debate on this measure.

However, as we work to find long-term solutions to Compact impact, I believe that there are important and innovative fixes that would provide much-needed relief to our local governments without much cost to taxpayers.

Now, this approach is a more budget-friendly way to address this challenge. The bill's provisions address four areas to reduce the burden.

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First, my bill would permit the affected jurisdictions to use the amount that they have spent to provide social services to COFA migrants toward the non-Federal portion of providing Medicaid to their local residents. The bill proposes a new formula that would increase the Federal medical assistance percentage for each of the affected jurisdictions, and this would go a long way toward alleviating the burden on affected jurisdictions by increasing the percentage assistance provided by the Federal Government for Medicaid.

Secondly, the bill would categorize elementary and secondary education-aged COFA students as federally connected students and make them eligible for Impact Aid. I understand the fiscal challenges that the Impact Aid community faces, and I am committed

to working with them to address the effect this bill may have on them. The bill attempts to offset this effect by increasing funding authorization and ensures that we are not taking from one group just to pay another.

Thirdly, this legislation would clarify Congress' intent when we extended eligibility for housing assistance programs to the COFA migrants. This bill ensures that U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent residents are not displaced and are given priority when applying for housing benefits.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, this bill would commission independent research on the viability of the current compacts and make recommendations on policy alternatives moving forward. I do hope that this research will provide strategic guidance as we move toward renewal of the compacts in 2023 and ensure that we are administering these agreements in the best way.

I am so very pleased to count the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. TAKAI) as an original cosponsor of my bill.

As this Congress discusses solutions for the crisis in Puerto Rico, it is important that we also discuss challenges that the other territories face, especially the challenge of supporting the Compact of Free Association. While the challenges facing affected jurisdictions are nowhere near as serious as Puerto Rico, Mr. Speaker, doing nothing would only welcome economic and security challenges down the road.

I do look forward to this bill becoming law and it being a tremendous help to jurisdictions affected by the Compact impact.

INDEPENDENCE PLAZA HONORS AMERICA'S SPACE PROGRAM

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 1972, my dad was transferred from northwest Alabama to southeast Texas. I remember the first time I got off the Gulf Freeway, headed east down NASA Road 1, and saw the Johnson Space Center and the Nassau Bay resort hotel with an NBC studio on top. Right then, it hit me: my neighbors were astronauts, Moon walkers. My life was changed forever.

The next 9 years were rather dull. Three missions of Skylab and one handshake with the Russians on Apollo-Soyuz.

The excitement came back in 1981. The Space Shuttle *Columbia* flew for the first time. The space shuttle was the heart and soul of human spaceflight until July 21, 2011, when three words ended the program: ''Houston, wheels stop.''

Those words were heard in the dark, 4:57 a.m. Texas time. My home was dark for 4½ years. That darkness will end on January 23 when Space Center Houston opens Independence Plaza right by the Johnson Space Center. Independence Plaza will have the Space Shuttle *Independence* atop the 747 transport carrier.

Our space shuttles flew 133 successful flights, with crews as small as two or as large as seven, with 55,000 pounds of payload. Our shuttles carried astronauts from 17 nations: Belgium, Canada, France, Israel, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, and America.

Our shuttle built the International Space Station, which has had a human being on board since November 2, 2000. Scott Kelly has been on board the ISS since March 27, 2015. Scott must love the view because he will come home after 1 year in orbit.

The Hubble Space Telescope would have been the biggest piece of space junk ever without the space shuttle. When it was launched in 1990, it was a telescope that needed glasses. Its vision was blurry. Five shuttle missions followed, fixed its vision, gave it decades of new life, and changed history.

But Independence Plaza will do more than remind us of the achievements of our space shuttle. This exhibit will ensure we never forget the two crews we lost on space shuttles. Dick, Michael, Judy, Ron, Ellison, Greg, and Christa touched the face of God when *Challenger* exploded after 73 seconds of flight on January 28, 1986. Eighteen years later, on February 1, 2003, we lost Rick, Willie, Michael, Kalpana, David, Laurel, and Ilan when *Columbia* returned mortally wounded and broke up over their home, my home State of Texas. Independence Plaza will ensure that these 14 heroes will always be revered, and a new, young generation of Americans will follow their lead and soar into the heavens.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FINAL STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one recalls the state of the Union that President Obama inherited upon taking office: overwhelming problems occasioned by the near collapse of the economy, 700,000 jobs lost before he was even in office half a month. It would take many months more to arrest the slide. There were fierce battles, arguments about whether we should spend money to try to help people and industries.

His work was complicated by the announcement early on by the Republican leader in the Senate that his number one goal was not to fix the economy or deal with health care or the environment or national security; it was to prevent President Obama from being reelected to a second term.

Time has shown that the money that was spent was critical, and most independent experts agree that we should have invested more heavily in things like rebuilding and renewing America. Even so, our performance has been better than any of the other developed economies.

Those results were achieved with divisions and arguments that continue to be played out today on the national political stage as there are people seeking the Presidency later this year. But my hope is that, as the President addresses this Chamber tonight, there might be an opportunity to move past some of the divisions and controversy.

My hope is, as the President looks up in the gallery and sees the First Lady, that he might pause and acknowledge her important work in health and nutrition; that he might spend just 3 minutes on a topic that can bring people together; that he would admit that we as a government still pay too much to the wrong people to grow the wrong crops in the wrong places, that we would be far better off if we weren't subsidizing people to grow food that actually makes Americans sick.

I would hope that he would propose that the Federal Government help more farmers and ranchers with research and market access at home and abroad. Let's pay those farmers and ranchers to protect water quality and water quantity.

I would hope that he would propose that we subsidize more healthy food in our schools and for senior citizens and low-income people.

I would hope that he would acknowledge the revolution that is taking place in food and agricultural thought and policy in this country, as documented in the recent PBS special, ''In Defense of Food,'' with Michael Pollan.

There is an exciting national movement promoting value-added agriculture, healthy food, animal welfare, and environmental protection that will strengthen rural and small town America and provide more satisfaction for the men and women who work in agriculture.

It would only take 3 minutes, but it would be an important milestone for this revolution of food and farm policy that cannot happen soon enough.

RECOGNIZING COACH FRANK BEAMER ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coach Frank Beamer on the occasion of his retirement as the head football coach at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University—more commonly known and fondly known as Virginia Tech—located in Blacksburg, Virginia, as Coach Beamer concludes his highly successful career. For almost three decades, Coach Beamer has been a tremendous leader in Virginia and a mentor to hundreds of student athletes.

In 29 seasons under Coach Beamer's leadership, Virginia Tech football has enjoyed unprecedented success, notching 237 wins, three Big East championships, four Atlantic Coast Conference

championships, and the opportunity to play for a national championship. His ''Beamer Ball'' style of play has led Virginia Tech to become one of the Nation's most respected college football programs.

In 1999, Coach Beamer was named the consensus Associated Press College Football Coach of the Year.

Coach Beamer's first postseason berth as head coach at Virginia Tech was a trip to the 1993 Independence Bowl game, which resulted in a victory for the Hokies. It was only fitting that Coach Beamer ended his coaching career with a 55–52 victory over the University of Tulsa in the 2015 Independence Bowl, capping off a school record 23 straight postseason bowl games.

Raised a short drive from Blacksburg, in Hillsville, Virginia, Coach Beamer graduated from Hillsville High School, where he earned 11 varsity letters as a three-sport athlete in football, basketball, and baseball. He went on to attend Virginia Tech as an undergraduate and started 3 years as a cornerback, playing on the Hokies' 1966 and 1968 Liberty Bowl teams.

While attending Radford University to receive his master's degree in guidance, he began his coaching career in 1969 as an assistant at southwest Virginia's Radford High School.

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From there, he went on to work as a graduate assistant at Maryland for 1 year, followed by the Citadel for five seasons, where he was defensive coordinator for two of those.

In 1979, Coach Beamer joined Murray State University as defensive coordinator and was named head coach in 1981.

In 1987, he made his way back to his native southwest Virginia to take the reins at Virginia Tech. He has brought honor to southwest Virginia and Virginia Tech by always being the consummate Virginia gentleman and a darn good football coach to boot.

He has devoted his time and passion to the teams he has coached as well as the greater southwest Virginia community. In fact, in 2004, he was presented with a Humanitarian Award by the National Conference of Community and Justice for his contributions to fostering justice, equity, and community in the Roanoke Valley.

As evidenced by his incredible success, Coach Beamer has much to be proud of and can look back on an honest and accomplished career. His passion for coaching led him to achieve what many coaches only dream of.

He has positively shaped the futures and touched the lives of the Virginia boys and girls that he has dealt with—particularly, the boys on his football team—and has made us a better State. This is truly the great measure of a great coach.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to help commemorate the career of a remarkable man. After 29 years of dedicated leadership to Virginia Tech and the greater community, I would like to thank Coach Beamer for his service. I wish him and his family all of the best in his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO OTIS CLAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mr. Otis Clay, an outstanding international artist who lived, worked, and was intimately involved in the North Lawndale community of Chicago, which I am proud to represent.

Otis Clay was born in Waxhaw, Mississippi, and ultimately made his way to the west side of Chicago, where he made his home.

Otis began his musical career as a gospel singer and, like many other artists, switched over to rhythm and blues and recorded his first hit in 1967, ''That's How it is When You're in Love,'' which reached number 34 on the national charts.

Otis performed and recorded in Europe, Japan, and Switzerland. Although Otis Clay reached national acclaim, he continued to live in the North Lawndale community, was a regular at local churches, festivals, and community events. He established his own recording studio, owned a local cleaners, and was known as a regular in the community.

I was fortunate to have Otis Clay attend and perform at many events that I sponsored over the years, and it was indeed an honor to be able to call him my personal friend.

Otis was involved with the Tobacco Road Project and was instrumental, along with Alderman Dorothy Tillman, in establishing the Harold Washington Cultural Center in the Third Ward on the south side of Chicago.

My neighborhood and our world community has lost a great artist and entertainer, but also a great human being. I extend condolences to his family. I know that, when the gates swing open, Otis Clay will come walking in.

E-FREE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to tell the story of Sabrina Fregoso of Diamond Springs, California. Sabrina is one of the tens of thousands of women harmed by the permanent sterilization device Essure.

In August of 2012, Sabrina welcomed her fourth child, at which time she discussed permanent sterilization with her physician. Her doctor recommended Essure and assured her that the procedure was safe.

Immediately following the Essure procedure, Sabrina began to notice a consistent and substantial decline in her health, including losing control of her bowels, extensive weight gain, severe bloating, hair loss, and sores covering her body. Her lower back, hips, and leg joints became painful. She experienced numbness in her feet and sharp heel pain that made it difficult to walk.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise again as their voice to tell this Chamber that their stories are real, their pain is real, and their fight is real.

My bill, the E-Free Act, can halt this tragedy by removing this dangerous device from the market. I urge my colleagues to join in this fight because stories like Sabrina's are too important to ignore.

KEMP FORUM: ANTIPOVERTY

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend brought together a group of innovators at the Kemp Forum on Expanding Opportunity in South Carolina. This important forum highlighted new and creative ideas to address the stubborn problem of poverty in America.

The Federal Government spends more than half a trillion dollars each and every year on antipoverty measures. That is a significant devotion of resources. Yet, while some progress has been made in the last 50 years, today there are still nearly 50 million Americans living in poverty.

Nobody would deny that the results fall far short from where they need to be. This is because, at the end of the day, success in the war on poverty is measured not at the program level, but on the individual level. Success isn't about how many programs exist, but how many people can improve their lives by moving up and out of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, one of the fundamental principles of this great Nation is the idea of freedom of opportunity, the opportunity to find work, to support yourself, and to support your family.

By working with local community groups like YouthBuild and leaders like Bob Woodson, I have been able to see numerous success stories, like my guest for tonight's State of the Union address, Lavell Brown.

This young man has successfully worked with community groups in North Chicago to grow as an individual and to get on a path to a sustainable career, and he is now giving back to others at YouthBuild Lake County.

This model of empowering the individual and helping them develop the skills needed to escape poverty is what we need to replicate millions of times over. If we can combine the focus on individuals with a relentless drive to innovate, I am confident that, in the next 50 years, our efforts to end poverty and provide greater opportunities will be a success.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Nathaniel Demosthene, First Timothy Christian Church, Spring Valley, New York, offered the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, it is with thanksgiving and a mournful heart that we approach this day as we remember the lives lost and tragically affected by the earthquake in Haiti 6 years ago this day.

Today we are grateful, God, for the lives rescued by the actions of our President as well as the bipartisan endeavors of the Members of this Congress and the heroic men and women in the armed services.

We pray for our elected Representatives in this assembly and ask that You imbue them with wisdom as they face ever-increasing difficult and complex decisions concerning the direction of this country. Enable them to act responsibly and selflessly in the fulfillment of their oaths of office.

Bless our Nation and teach us to leverage our resources to ameliorate the lives of our global citizens, especially the most vulnerable among them, both domestic and abroad.

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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. KILMER 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND NATHANIEL DEMOSTHENE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Reverend Nathaniel ''Nate'' Demosthene of Nyack, New York, for offering today's opening prayer.

A graduate of Spring Valley High School and of Yale University, Pastor Nate teaches in the East Ramapo Central School District and at Rockland Community College.

For the last 5 years, he has led First Timothy Christian Church, which, under his guidance, has been a source of support for Haitian Americans in our community following the devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Together we will continue to work toward our shared goals of democracy, prosperity, and success for the Haitian people.

Again I thank Pastor Nate for his excellent work and for being here today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

REJECT EPA'S POWER GRAB OF THE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

(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, this week we will send a measure to the President that rejects the EPA's waters of the United States power grab, a measure that the Senate has already joined us in supporting.

The EPA's plan would grant it jurisdiction over fully 95 percent of my home State of California, allowing an unaccountable Federal agency to insert itself into land use decisions across the State. In my district, residents have experienced Federal actions so ludicrous that I can't make them up.

In Tehama County, a farmer was fined for planting wheat in a manner that the government claimed damaged navigable waters. Never mind that the farm has been listed as a wheat allotment by the USDA for decades.

In another instance, the government used the Clean Water Act to attack a family farm for shifting to more efficient irrigation systems, this during a drought in California. Imagine getting fined for saving water.

In both instances, the government sanctioned farmers for activities that are clearly exempt under the Clean Water Act.

In fact, language I sponsored to defund the regulation of exempt activities was signed into law in December; yet, the EPA persists in these illegal activities.

When Congress can't trust Federal agencies to use the authority they already have and when we can't trust them to follow clear congressional direction, how can we possibly consider granting them more power and more responsibility?

IN HONOR OF U.S. ARMY STAFF SERGEANT MATTHEW McCLINTOCK

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Matthew McClintock, a fallen hero who answered the call to serve his country.

Last week I had the solemn honor of joining his family—his wife, Ali, his 3-month-old son, Declan, his parents, and others—at Dover Air Force Base for Sergeant McClintock's final trip home. It was an experience I will never forget. It is important that his service and the sacrifice that he and his family have made be acknowledged here in the House of Representatives.

Sergeant McClintock joined the Army in 2006, and he served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. On his most recent deployment, he was serving as a citizen soldier in a National Guard Special Forces unit.

Not only will he be remembered as a Green Beret and as a hero, he will be remembered as a loving son, husband, and father who was so proud to welcome his son into the world. That world is stronger and better because of his service.

Nothing we can say can ease his family's pain, but I can promise that the service of this hero and his sacrifice will not be forgotten. It will live on in the memories of those he called comrades and in the memories of his commanders, who routinely cite the example he set.

It will live on in the gratitude of this Nation. Most importantly, it will live on with his wife, son, and other family members, who knew better than anyone else his love for his country and for the people in his life.

THE PRESIDENT'S PUSH ON GUN CONTROL

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the President's proposed executive actions on gun control. And you will probably hear more about this tonight, right here in this Chamber.

The Second Amendment has been engrained in American life since 1791, and, since then, Congress has been committed to preserving those constitutional rights. However, the President has a different agenda.

His proposed plan on gun control is yet another example of his unconstitutional legislative strategy, using executive orders and circumventing Congress to get his way.

Recent events have shown us that Americans deserve the right to protect

themselves, and stripping law-abiding citizens of their right to bear arms will not accomplish that.

The American people do not want to see their Second Amendment rights limited, and neither do I. I will do everything in my power to fight against this administration's gun grab.

For 225 years, Americans have had the right to bear arms, and I am not about to see this right be compromised for the sake of a political legacy. The Constitution is not merely a significance. It is the law of the land.

END THE OVER-PRESCRIPTION OF PAIN KILLERS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, last month the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued guidelines that urge primary care physicians to think twice before prescribing opioids for pain relief. I strongly support their call. Last year I asked the Federation of State Medical Boards to encourage stronger guidelines as well.

New research suggests that the over-prescription of opioids may be widespread across the medical community. Pain management is an important part of a physician's practice, but it is critical that prescribers understand when options other than these highly addictive drugs are available.

Mr. Speaker, last year the number of fatal overdoses from prescription painkillers increased by 16 percent and, from heroin, 28 percent. There are 19,000 Americans who lost their lives, and more die every day.

I thank the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for their work on this issue, and I urge the administration, Congress, and the medical community to end the over-prescription of painkillers.

THE PRESIDENT'S LEGACY OF FAILURE

(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, this evening the President will address Congress and the American people and will defend his legacy of failure in jobs, national defense, and more gun control.

The President's legacy has destroyed jobs and has increased regulations that cripple small business. He should change course to support creating jobs and reducing unnecessary regulations, and he should repeal ObamaCare.

The President's legacy overseas—abandoning Iraq, not upholding the red line in Syria, and opposing a NATO training force in Libya—allowed ISIS to grow, with children fleeing, drowning at sea.

The President should change course to actually destroy ISIS. American families need a positive plan for victory in the global war on terrorism.

The President's legacy of more gun control would not have stopped any of the mass attacks. The President should change course to reform mental health and to stop terrorists from attacking American families.

I join the rest of America in hoping the President offers a positive agenda for the American people tonight, not more Big Government failure.

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

2015 NCAA FOOTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY

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

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with Congressman ROBERT ADERHOLT, as well as with the rest of the Alabama delegation, to congratulate Coach Nick Saban and the Crimson Tide for a tremendous victory last night in the NCAA National Football Championship.

What can I say? Roll Tide.

The win represents the 16th National Football Championship for the Crimson Tide and the fourth national title in 7 years under the leadership of Coach Nick Saban. What an awesome record.

The State of Alabama and its delegation are extremely proud of the talented football players, coaches, students, and fans. From Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry, quarterback Jake Coker, and the tremendous 95-yard run of Kenyan Drake, all of the players—the entire 2015 team—deserve our applause and congratulations. This team will join the annals of Tide history as one of the 16 national championship teams. What an honor.

We also acknowledge the Clemson University Tigers for a great season and a great championship game last night.

I want to personally acknowledge Representative JEFF DUNCAN and his staff for the friendly wager and the spirited banter on social media. I know that Congressman DUNCAN will look great on the Capitol steps in the Bear Bryant houndstooth hat and in the University of Alabama tie. Now bring on that South Carolina barbecue.

Once again, we, the Alabama delegation, stand here today with slight humility and great pride to congratulate the Crimson Tide of the University of Alabama as the 2015 National Football Champion.

What do we say collectively? Roll Tide.

SERVICEMEMBERS RETIREMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, most of America's Guard and Reserve forces also hold civilian jobs in addition to their military service; but, unfortunately, the IRS doesn't treat these heroes fairly when it comes to their retirement savings.

Right now, if a Guard or a Reserve servicemember decides to benefit from a Thrift Savings Plan, or TSP, match, then the IRS may limit the member's ability to save for retirement simply because he also has a civilian career.

This is wrong, which is why I will be introducing the Servicemembers Retirement Improvement Act. I am pleased that the bill is supported by a wide range of military and veteran advocacy groups.

Just because they happen to be serving our country, our servicemembers shouldn't be penalized when it comes to saving for their retirements. We are working hard to right this wrong.

THE STATE OF THE UNION'S EMPTY SEAT

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, tonight, for the first time, there will be one empty seat in our First Lady's box for the State of the Union Address. One seat will be left open next to Ryan Reyes, whose boyfriend, Daniel Kaufman, was shot and killed in the recent terrorist attack in San Bernardino. That open seat will represent Daniel and all of the Americans who have lost their lives to gun violence.

Tonight, when I look at that empty chair, I am going to be thinking about Mary Matsumoto, a 72-year-old woman who was shot and killed in San Pedro last January; Armando Bejar, a 15-year-old boy who was shot and killed in Compton in September; Lucille Wills, a 74-year-old woman who was shot and killed in Carson in April; Emmanuel Sosa, an 18-year-old young man who was shot and killed in Wilmington, California, in June.

That seat will represent the 436 people who have been shot and killed in just Los Angeles County alone since the last State of the Union. Heartbreakingly, if we were to save empty seats for each one of those victims, every seat on the House floor tonight would be empty.

□ 1215

HONORING THE LIFE OF HOWARD GAMBLE

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

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of Dr. Richard Howard Gamble of Sheffield, Alabama, who passed away on Christmas Day.

Howard served as a giant in the field of dentistry where he held numerous

leadership positions, including the president of the Academy of General Dentistry, president of the Alabama AGD chapter, and president of the Alabama Dental Association.

Additionally, Howard devoted 17 years of public service to the State of Alabama serving as mayor of Sheffield, police and fire commissioner, city councilman, and Colbert County commissioner.

However, I am sure that Howard would be most proud of his record serving our country in the United States Air Force.

Despite these impressive accomplishments, Howard didn't live to rack up titles or positions. He lived to fulfill his mission of making a difference in the lives of his patients and his community. In that regard, Howard was a huge success.

On a personal note, I am incredibly proud to follow in Howard Gamble's footsteps as a dentist who answered the call of public service and to call Howard a personal friend. His lifelong contributions to advancing the field of dentistry will not be forgotten.

Finally, I would like to honor Howard, a graduate of the University of Alabama School of Dentistry, by saying two words that Howard would want to hear more than anything else: ''Roll Tide.''

Thanks for all the smiles, Howard. You will be missed.

IN HONOR OF JOSEPH JACKSON, JR.

(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 rise today in honor of Joseph Jackson, Jr., a resident of my hometown of Anaheim, California.

Mr. Jackson was born on April 14, 1937, to a domestic worker and a janitor in Memphis, Tennessee, during the height of segregation.

His tremendous civil rights contributions date back to 1960 when he was elected as the Youth Council president of the NAACP at Tougaloo College, Mississippi.

On March 27, 1961, as a young college student, Mr. Jackson participated in a peaceful civil rights movement with eight others. You see, he wanted to be able to go into the Jackson, Mississippi, Municipal Library. They did a sit in—a ''read in,'' they called it. These nine civil rights students were recognized as the Tougaloo Nine.

Mr. Jackson's desegregation movement started small, but his efforts led our Nation to ultimately desegregate public institutions.

As we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Day, he has had an incredible impact, but let us not forget the Tougaloo Nine.

We honor Mr. Joseph Jackson, Jr., and the Tougaloo Nine for their historic achievements, nonviolent activism, and their courage to advocate for a civil society.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN BENTLEY

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend and compatriot, John Bentley of League City. John lost his fight to cancer on December 20. He was a mere 73 years old.

John and his beloved Geri, his wife, moved to League City in 1999 where they immersed themselves into the community by getting involved in local politics, nonprofits, and the local church.

John served on the Galveston County Health District's United Board of Health and served as a chair for precinct 152 for the county Republican Party. He also helped form the Bay Area Pachyderm Club where he was the club's vice president this year.

John was very passionate about local politics and became a very influential figure in our county. Along with his wife Geri, they established the Clear Lake Tea Party in 2009 where John served as the group's chairman in 2010.

It is with great sadness I must say good-bye to my friend, but it is important that we celebrate his life and be comforted in the fact that he is now with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

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

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in advance of Martin Luther King Day to recognize Dr. King and the advocates of peace, equality, and social justice who continue his work today.

Dr. King spoke of a dream: that his children would grow up in a world where they would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. Thanks to his work and sacrifice, I have had the benefit of growing up in a changing world where our content is more important than the color of our skin.

We still have more work to do. I want my children to grow up in a changed world where, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation, we can all be treated equally.

I hope this Congress will remember Dr. King and will continue to work to ensure that all Americans have the right to vote, equality under the law, and the opportunity to succeed.

SANCTITY AND DIGNITY OF EVERY HUMAN LIFE

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

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, during his visit this September, less than 20 feet from where I stand, Pope Francis stood before this Congress and encouraged us ''to protect, by means of the law, the image and likeness fashioned by God on every human face.'' Throughout my time representing the people of Kansas, I have fought to defend the sanctity and dignity of every human life and to honor this Papal admonition.

Next week, on January 22, the anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, hundreds of young people from all across Kansas will come together at the March for Life, united in their mission to advocate for the unborn. They will come from Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School, from Bishop Carroll High School, from Conaway Springs, from Colwich, from Chanute, and from all across the Fourth District of Kansas.

I am proud that despite the millions of abortions that have been performed in the United States since Roe, that these young people remain steadfast in their efforts to end this unspeakable violence which has acted as a scourge against the unborn for far too long.

As these young people march on America's front lawn, the National Mall, I am encouraged that together we can secure the right for the life of the unborn and end a practice that runs contrary to the most sacred principles on which this Nation was founded.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF GEORGE MACOMBER

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

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Congressional Ski and Snowboard Caucus, I rise today to recognize the life of George Macomber, an accomplished New England business leader, a mentor, and a very dear friend who passed away in December.

Throughout his career, George was stalwart in his business, his athletic prowess, and his philanthropy. He was an Olympic ski racer on the U.S. ski team in 1948 and 1952, an official for the Eastern Amateur Ski Association, and a leader in business and philanthropy as president of the George B.H. Macomber Corporation.

He loved the challenge and thrill of downhill ski racing, and he was a founder in 1957 of Wildcat Mountain Ski Area in my district in Pinkham, New Hampshire.

Yet, as George found such extraordinary success, he never forgot to give back to his community. Over the years, he was a fierce supporter and advocate for many important causes in Boston and throughout New England.

He was the father of three extraordinary ski racers and the grandfather of several more. He and his wife Andy masterfully balanced their ski racing careers, their successful business career, and their generous philanthropy.

George Macomber will be missed by many, but his legacy of generosity, entrepreneurship, and extraordinary athleticism will live on for years to come. He will be sadly missed.

EVERY LIFE IS PRECIOUS

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I stand today in defense of innocent life. My wife Jacquie and I are blessed with seven wonderful children, each with their own unique gifts that they bring to the world.

I am and always have been pro-life. I am also opposed to Federal funding of abortion.

On January 6, the House sent the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act to the President's desk. This bill would have made Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the United States, ineligible for much of the Federal funding it receives, instead reallocating those funds to provide for other women's health centers.

Unfortunately, the President put politics ahead of policy and vetoed the bill. The fight is far from over.

This year on the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade, I join many Americans in mourning the death of the more than 56 million babies who have been lost. The bill passed by Congress is proof the American public is determined now more than ever to maintain the standard and principle that every life is precious and must be protected.

CALIFORNIA WATER LEGISLATION

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform that even if the El Nino rains and snows continue, the drought crisis in California is not over. The need to get California water legislation passed and signed into law in Washington and Sacramento is more urgent now than ever.

While the people I represent are hurting and over 1 million acres of some of the most productive farmland in the world goes unplanted, people in our country and around the world, sadly, go hungry. If this El Nino effect continues, there will be an opportunity to move water to arguably the driest part of California, which I represent a part of. Therefore, Congress must pass legislation that can provide short-term relief so water can be delivered to the San Joaquin Valley, because the livelihood of our farmers, farm workers, and farm communities depend on it. There still is time.

We have a broken water system in California. It is time we fix it. Failing to pass legislation to fix our broken water system is irresponsible and a disservice to all Californians, including the people who I represent.

TERRORISTS ATTEMPTING TO COMMIT GENOCIDE AGAINST CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the most ancient Christian communities of all are in the Middle East where faith has been handed down in unbroken succession since the Apostles. It is there that terrorists are attempting to commit genocide against Christian believers.

To an alarming extent, they are succeeding. For the first time in 16 centuries, there is no Catholic Mass offered in Mosul. Christians were once 15 percent of the population in Syria. Now, they are less than 5 percent. The percent in Egypt has been cut in half. ISIS has over 100 Christians captive, even as we speak.

Christian refugees are often afraid to stay at United Nations camps due to the threats of violence even there. As a result, there are disproportionately few Christians among those granted refugee status by the United States. Only about 3 percent of Syrian refugees admitted into the United States are Christians.

While Christians are perhaps the most threatened group of all in Syria, the United States must not allow another genocide to happen on our watch, and we must ensure that we are helping those who are most vulnerable.

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF HAITI EARTHQUAKE

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the devastating earthquake that struck the nation of Haiti on January 12, 2010. Today marks 6 years since the magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck some 15 miles south of Port-au-Prince, which is Haiti's population center and the seat of its government.

The aftermath of the quake was unimaginable. It is estimated that as many as 316,000 people perished and nearly 1.3 million were displaced. This tragedy struck in a nation already hobbled by grinding poverty, health disparities, and food insecurity.

Today, there remain approximately 147,000 internally displaced people in Haiti with countless others remaining displaced outside of IDP camps.

The world and the American people, though, responded to the earthquake with compassion and generosity. To date, the U.S. has contributed billions to recovery efforts, along with donors from around the world.

The Assessing Progress in Haiti Act, which I introduced in the House—it was a bipartisan effort with Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN—which President Obama signed into law 2 years ago, provides critical oversight and reporting to ensure that aid be delivered in the most effective way possible. Unfortunately, more work needs to be done.

□ 1230

PAYING RESPECTS TO NEIL RATCHFORD

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay respects to Neil Ratchford, who passed away peacefully on Sunday at the age of 87.

Mr. Ratchford was born on November 1, 1928. He grew up and lived his entire 87 years in Guyton, Georgia.

He will be remembered as the sausage man because he made hot meat sausage, a family tradition since 1898. He continued this family tradition until 1999, when he passed along the business to his son-in-law.

Throughout his life, he stayed community- and family-minded, believing that the best committee meetings were those with three members and two absent.

For over 50 years, along with his friend Lawton Nease, he spearheaded the 5th Sunday Men's Breakfast, which brings fathers and their sons together for a morning of faithful worship at the Guyton United Methodist Church.

He was a man of few words but believed you should make your words count. In the end, he joins his wife, Mary Olive, having lived a long, fruitful life raising four children and two grandsons, who now attend my alma mater, the University of Georgia.

My thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

A BANNER YEAR FOR THE LAS VEGAS VALLEY

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, 2015 was a banner year for the Las Vegas Valley. We broke records by welcoming more than 42 million visitors from around the globe to enjoy all that Las Vegas has to offer, and that is thanks to the hardworking men and women at our hotels, our restaurants, shops, casinos, and the supporting industries and agencies.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge Rossi Ralenkotter and his team at the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. The LVCVA has made Las Vegas not just a great place to live and work and visit, but also a brand that is recognizable worldwide.

Last week I had the pleasure of hosting Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx in my district for a tour of the Consumer Electronics Show and a roundtable with local government transportation, tourism, and economic development leaders. We discussed the

intersection of transportation policy and the tourism industry, and we shared exciting new plans about how to revitalize our aging infrastructure.

With the passage of the FAST Act and provisions I helped secure to ensure travel and tourism are part of our transportation planning, we have in place a long-term bill that will help bring this vision to life.

Mr. Speaker, 2016 promises to be an even bigger and better year for Las Vegas. Come and see and enjoy it for yourself.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE THUNDERING HERD

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

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, if it seems like I stand here every year around this same time giving the same speech congratulating the same football team on winning the same national championship, it is because I do.

I am here again to congratulate the North Dakota State University Bison on making football history by winning their unprecedented fifth FCS national championship, defeating Jacksonville State of, yes, Alabama, 37–10 in Frisco, Texas, last Saturday.

Mr. Speaker, Bismarck's own Carson Wentz, our quarterback, earned MVP status for the second year in a row, an accomplishment made more remarkable by the fact that he missed the last eight games with a broken wrist on his throwing arm. His backup, freshman Easton Stick, deserves credit for leading the Thundering Herd to eight consecutive victories en route to Frisco.

Excellence is never accidental, Mr. Speaker. The coaching staff and the athletes at Bison Nation earned their place in history through hard work and exceptional preparation. These are to be admired by our Nation and aspired to by our Nation.

I look forward to standing here next year to celebrate the green and gold on winning an FCS six-pack.

Go Bison.

WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Mrs. ROBY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, this week we are again taking important and long-awaited action on behalf of farmers, foresters, and anyone who owns land by sending to the President's desk a joint resolution ending the aggressive overreach by the Environmental Protection Agency into private lands.

S.J. Res. 22 is a joint resolution with the U.S. Senate to end the EPA's ridiculous waters of the United States rule seeking to expand the definition of ''navigable waters'' to include puddles, ditches, and other small bodies of water, making them subject to inspection.

Of course, we all want to ensure that rules are followed to keep our waters clean, but making puddles and ditches subject to inspection just to expand the reach of Federal regulators has nothing to do with clean water.

Mr. Speaker, you might recall that the House voted to put a stop to the waters of the U.S. rule last year, and the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals granted a nationwide stay on the rule. However, this joint resolution is the measure we needed to finally send this bill to the President and put the responsibility for this harmful rule on him.

I will continue to fight against this radical environmental agenda being forced on Americans by this administration through executive overreach. The Congress is right to take steps to stop it.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, recently the Harris County, Texas, Precinct 4 Constable's Office received a phone call from Alaska. The Anchorage Police Department was looking for a missing teenage girl. They knew that she had met some bad people on social media and believed she was in Houston. They were correct.

Human sex traffickers targeted her on social media because slave traders are on the prowl for young, impressionable girls at the mall and online. They act like a friend or a boyfriend until they trap the victim. Then they enslave and force these young girls to sell their bodies over and over again. Mr. Speaker, our kids are sold at the marketplace of sex slavery.

Why was this teenager trafficked from Alaska to Texas? Because of demand. People, sex deviants are willing to buy and force other humans into bondage. We cannot end human trafficking without ending demand.

As we recognize Human Trafficking Awareness Month, Americans must fight for our kids and combat this modern-day slavery. That includes sending the sellers and the buyers of kidnapped young girls to prison and rescuing the victims.

And that is just the way it is.

WELCOME TO HUNTINGTON, DR. GILBERT

(Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Dr. Jerome ''Jerry'' Gilbert as the 37th president of Marshall University in my hometown of Huntington, West Virginia.

Dr. Gilbert has decades of experience in higher education. He comes to Marshall from Mississippi State University, where he served as provost and executive vice president for 6 years.

I have no doubt that Dr. Gilbert will carry on the legacy of the beloved late Dr. Stephen J. Kopp, whose vision for Marshall University has helped transform it into the tremendous institution that it is today. He will also build upon the work of interim president Gary White, who has faithfully guided Marshall through a difficult time in the institution's history.

I am sure Dr. Gilbert and his wife, Leigh, and his family will see the Huntington community is one that they will be proud to call home.

As the university continues to capitalize on recent successes, including the new Arthur Weisberg Family Applied Engineering Complex, I look forward to working with Dr. Gilbert during this exciting new chapter for Marshall University.

Welcome to Huntington. Welcome to Marshall University, Dr. Gilbert.

Go Herd.

WE MUST SOLVE THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROBLEM

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this is an exciting day as the President presents to us his vision for the Nation. In addition, over the weekend, Speaker RYAN indicated his vision and the opportunity for Members of Congress to pass serious legislation, which includes criminal justice reform.

How exciting it is to be the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations and to work with my colleagues Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. CONYERS and all of my colleagues on that committee to talk about important issues.

Just today, we passed a bill dealing with mental health programs. A DOJ report found that 64 percent of those in jail, 54 percent of State prisoners, and 45 percent of Federal prisoners have some form of mental illness. Jails and prisons now house more than three times the number of mentally ill individuals than do mental health facilities and hospitals.

It is clear that part of criminal justice reform deals with mental health, but it also deals with rehabilitation and reentry, which we are discussing in the Committee on the Judiciary. In addition, we are working on reforming the juvenile justice system.

My message, Mr. Speaker, is, as the President speaks, as the Speaker has spoken, it is time now that we come collaboratively, Republicans and Democrats, and truly end mass incarceration and find a way to solve the criminal justice problem both by reducing gun violence, reducing crime, and helping the people who need the help.

CRISIS IN MADAYA, SYRIA

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

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to turn your attention to the crisis in Madaya, Syria.

Since July 2015, this town has been under siege by the evil regime of Bashar al-Assad. It has deprived the citizens; it has starved them; and in the last month, at least 31 have died. Those who try to flee face indiscriminate barrel bombs and targets by the Assad regime.

Bill Clinton once said that the greatest regret of his Presidency was inaction in Rwanda. Mr. Speaker, I fear that our greatest regret, both of this President and of this House, will be inaction in Syria. There are over 250,000 dead men, women, and children by the evil regime of Assad because they believed that to target women and children puts more collective pain than to target just fighters.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to destroy ISIS—and we all want to destroy ISIS—you cannot destroy ISIS with the existence of Assad. Assad is the greatest recruiter to ISIS that has ever existed. Whether it is ISIS today or the next iteration tomorrow, Assad must go for the sake of a free Syria.

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, January 12, 2016.

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 January 12, 2016 at 11:31 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to (relative to the death of Dale Bumpers, former United States Senator from the State of Arkansas) S. Res. 343

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ISIS AND THE EXTREMIST SHIITE CABAL

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to further the remarks of the gentleman from Illinois who just spoke.

There are those who think we can just go after ISIS. Keep in mind, the Shiite extremist alliance of Tehran, of Assad, of Hezbollah has killed far more Americans than ISIS has, starting with our marines in the 1980s, and including hundreds of our servicepeople in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have killed far more civilians than ISIS ever aspired to, over 200,000 in Syria alone.

Finally, as long as Assad is in power in Syria, the Sunni community will be rising up in rebellion. Assad doesn't fight ISIS; but he did, in effect, by his policies, create ISIS.

In addition, the extremist Shiites around Maliki in Baghdad did the same in Iraq by oppressing the Sunni community of Iraq and giving rise to this ISIS scourge. Let us remember, we have got to go after ISIS and the extremist Shiite cabal.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. NEWHOUSE. 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 Washington?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1644, SUPPORTING TRANSPARENT REGULATORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS IN MINING ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S.J. RES. 22, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3662, IRAN TERROR FINANCE TRANSPARENCY ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 14, 2016, THROUGH JANUARY 22, 2016

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 583 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 583

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1644) to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure transparency in the development of environmental regulations, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 22) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency relating to the definition of ''waters of the United States'' under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; and (2) one motion to commit.

SEC. 3. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 3662) to enhance congressional oversight over the administration of sanctions against certain Iranian terrorism financiers, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 4. On any legislative day during the period from January 14, 2016, through January 22, 2016—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 5. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 4 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

□ 1245

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 583, providing for consideration of three important pieces of legislation. Those are H.R. 1644, the STREAM Act; H.R. 3662, the Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act; and S.J. Res. 22, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' rule relating to the definition of waters of the United States under the Clean Water Act.

The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 1644 under a structured rule, making four amendments in order, three from the Democrats and one from the Republicans, H.R. 3662 under a closed rule and S.J. Res 22 also under a closed rule.

Mr. Speaker, like many Americans, I have grave concerns about the administration's nuclear agreement with Iran. Since the agreement's adoption in July, Iran has shown no goodwill or intention of improving its relationship with the West. In many ways, the Iranian regime has increased its aggressive attitude toward the United States and our allies.

Against U.N. Security Council resolutions, the rogue nation has expanded its ballistic missile program, testing two missiles as recently as last fall. Just on December 26 an Iranian military ship fired a rocket near U.S. and French military vessels in the Persian Gulf. These incidents occurred just months before crippling international sanctions against the country are scheduled to be lifted.

Further, Iran continues to be a state sponsor of terrorism, a direct threat to our closest ally in the region, Israel, continues rampant human rights abuses, and continues the wrongful imprisonment of five American citizens.

President Obama and senior administration officials have claimed that the nuclear agreement and lifting of economic sanctions, which could return as much as $100 billion in frozen assets to Tehran, will help Iran down a more moderate path. However, reality appears to show the contrary is occurring.

Just weeks after the deal was signed, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stated that: We won't allow American political, economic, or cultural influence in Iran.

And just last week the Supreme Leader told a gathering of prayer leaders that: Americans have set their eyes covetously on elections, but the great and vigilant nation of Iran will act contrary to the enemies' will, whether it be in elections or on other issues, and, as before, will punch them in the mouth.

While President Obama may find something positive in Iran's actions and statements, I believe Congress owes it to the American people to view Iran with skepticism and concern.

H.R. 3662, the Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act, requires the President to certify that those individuals and entities receiving sanctions relief under the Iranian nuclear deal are not involved in Iran's support for terrorism, its human rights abuses, or its ballistic missile program.

By passing this legislation, Mr. Speaker, Congress can help ensure that the U.S. will continue to sanction and deter terrorism and illegal ballistic missile tests within the state of Iran.

In arguing for the nuclear deal's adoption, the President committed to Congress and to the American people that our ''sanctions on Iran for its support of terrorism, its human rights abuses, its ballistic missile program, will continue to be fully enforced.''

This legislation gives us the opportunity to hold the President to his word and conduct the necessary oversight to ensure that sanctions are enforced.

Additionally, this rule will provide for consideration of two other very critical measures that will help protect American businesses and families from the administration's regulatory overreach.

Mr. Speaker, this rule provides for consideration of H.R. 1644, legislation that was drafted in response to the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's ongoing rulemaking process that seeks to govern the interaction between surface mining operations and streams. It is commonly referred to as the stream buffer zone rule.

In December 2008, the outgoing Bush administration published its final stream buffer zone rule. This rule was the product of over 5 years of deliberation, extensive scientific research, environmental analyses, public comment, and a concurrence from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Put simply, this rule was developed the right way, with transparency, unbiased research, scientific integrity, stakeholder engagement, and, most importantly, public involvement.

However, shortly after the final 2008 rule was released, several environmental groups filed a lawsuit against the OSM, ultimately leading to a settlement agreement between OSM and the environmental groups.

After numerous missed deadlines, the environmental organizations renewed the litigation, the administration agreed with the complaint. As a result, the court vacated the 2008 rule and OSM subsequently restarted the rulemaking process.

Since that time, the entire process has lacked transparency. Oversight conducted by the House Committee on Natural Resources, of which I am a member, revealed that the settlement agreement's expedited timeframe, coupled with an inexperienced contractor and gross mismanagement of the rulemaking process, resulted in major issues with the administration's rule.

Now, this may sound just a little familiar. It is the very same sue and settle practice that the House addressed just last week with the passage of H.R. 712, the Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act.

The outcome is another example of why sue and settle leads to poor rulemakings and onerous regulations that significantly harm the people, businesses, and jobs they are supposed to be supporting.

Backroom deals between environmental groups and Federal agencies do not lead to sound regulations, but instead circumvent the rulemaking process to serve the interest of a select few, namely, special interests and environmental groups.

For 6 years, OSM has been rewriting this rule, and the ongoing process has now cost the taxpayers over $10 million, though this is only a small fraction of the cost it will have on businesses and hardworking American families.

The stream protection rule will drastically reduce our access to coal, which accounts for nearly half of our country's electricity, leading to higher electricity costs and significant job losses.

According to a study from the National Mining Association, the number of direct mining jobs that could be lost is between 40,000 and 77,000 and the total job losses is between 112,000 and 280,000, a fact that is underscored by the Nation's second largest oil company, Arch Coal, filing for bankruptcy, largely due to the increased cost of Federal regulations. That happened just this week, Mr. Speaker.

For these reasons, it is imperative that we pass H.R. 1644, legislation that delays the rule's implementation, increases scientific transparency for rulemakings affecting mining, directs a transparent third party to evaluate the existing stream buffer zone rule, and reduces duplicative regulation.

This rule also makes in order legislation dealing with an issue that I hear about very often in my congressional district. It strikes the controversial waters of the United States, or WOTUS rule.

S.J. Res. 22 is a resolution of disapproval of the President's WOTUS rule that was passed by the Senate in bipartisan fashion, and it is now time for the House to consider and pass this important measure.

This legislation was crafted in response to the WOTUS rule promulgated by the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers, which redefines and vastly expands the scope of water subject to Federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. By issuing this rule, these agencies have given themselves broad new power over water and land across the United States.

Like many of my constituents, I am very concerned with this massive Federal overreach. It goes far beyond the agencies' statutory authority and could impose significant costs not only on American farmers and small businesses, but on States and local governments. The rule is another Federal power grab that has more to do with controlling land use decisions than protecting access to clean water.

Mr. Speaker, S.J. Res. 22 utilizes the Congressional Review Act to block this harmful regulation, and it is time to send this critical measure to the President's desk. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation and the rule providing for its consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the rule we consider here today provides for the consideration of three bills that are critically important for the future of this country.

□ 1300

We must pass H.R. 1644 and S.J. Res. 22 to protect American families and businesses from the rampant executive overreach that will be the defining achievement of the Obama administration.

Furthermore, the United States must stand with our allies in the Middle East, as well as around the world, in the face of growing Iranian aggression, which threatens not only the stability of the region, but the strength of U.S. alliances and standing in the world.

I stand ready to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that the Obama administration's shortsighted nuclear agreement does not unravel decades of work by the U.S. and our allies to impose meaningful sanctions on the country of Iran. These sanctions have restricted Iran's ability to spread its radical beliefs and inflict unknown damage on its neighbors in the region, and I urge my colleagues to support this rule, as well as the underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong opposition to this rule and the underlying legislation. The rule provides for consideration of three pieces of legislation, and two of these bills are under a completely closed process. In fact, these are the 49th and 50th closed rules in this Congress.

Last year was the most closed session in the history of our country, and I think this year will probably beat last year. I don't think that is anything to be proud of.

This is supposed to be the greatest deliberative body in the world, but the problem is, we don't deliberate very much anymore. We don't pass legislation. Instead, we pass sound bites, and that is what we are doing here today.

This Chamber has become an echo chamber, if you will, for the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee and its priorities, and the people's business gets tossed to the side.

When Speaker RYAN took the gavel, he promised openness and a return to serious legislating. And my colleagues on the Rules Committee, we give them many opportunities to be more generous with granting more opportunities for Members of both sides to be able to offer amendments. And every time we do that, they vote ''no.'' And every time we bring up an open rule, they vote ''no.''

Here we are, with two more bills that will be debated under a completely closed process this week. Things have to change here, and I hope my colleagues in the leadership on the other side will reflect on what the purpose of all of us being here is supposed to be.

I would say it is about trying to find ways to come together and to pass things that will help improve the quality of life for all the people of this country, as well as to ensure our security in this dangerous world.

Mr. Speaker, let me say a few words about H.R. 3662, the Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act. My Republican friends would have us believe that this bill is a serious effort to increase congressional oversight of sanctions relief under the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran deal.

I wish that were true, Mr. Speaker. Such a bill could bring together a substantial number of Members from both parties. I would be even more confident about such a bill if it were crafted with input from the administration about how Congress could be most helpful and effective in monitoring the Iran nuclear deal.

Regrettably, what is coming before the House is another ultra-partisan bill that would shut down the ability of the United States to carry out its own obligations under the Iran deal.

Rather than the world closely monitoring Iran's compliance, this bill would make the United States a target of condemnation for failing to fulfill its commitments. In fact, it would be the United States that is the nation in noncompliance with the Iran nuclear deal.

Now, many of my colleagues who are critics of the Iran nuclear deal have already signaled that they cannot support this bill. House Republicans made no attempt whatsoever to make this bill a bipartisan bill. They made no attempt to draft a bill that might actually be signed by the President and worth the American taxpayers' time. This is political theater at its worst, plain and simple.

This latest House Republican bill is even more dangerous because it plays politics with our national security.

No one here wants to see Iran freed from its commitment not to develop a nuclear weapon, but that is exactly what this bill would do if it ever became law. It would make sure that the United States could not fulfill its part of the bargain, thus killing the nuclear agreement, and Iran would once again be free to pursue building nuclear weapons. That is insane.

How can my Republican friends possibly think that this is a good idea?

I believe that there are Members of Congress in both parties who want to work together with the administration in a bipartisan manner to build on the progress that they have made to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

I do believe there are Democrats and Republicans in Congress who genuinely want to strengthen the ability of the U.S. and the international community to respond effectively to Iran's recent testing of ballistic missiles, hold Iran accountable for their support of militant and terrorist organizations in the Middle East, and secure the freedom of Americans currently imprisoned in Iran.

I also believe that achieving these goals may not require legislation, but strong bipartisan actions that increase U.S. leverage with our international partners and with Iran.

But playing dangerous political games with our national security by bringing legislation like this to the floor, legislation that would undermine and perhaps even kill the nuclear deal with Iran, is not the answer.

Now, luckily for the American people, this bill is not going to go anywhere. Even if it were actually passed by both Chambers of Congress and made its way to the President's desk, it would be vetoed, and I strongly doubt that the Congress would be able to overturn a Presidential veto in support of such a clearly partisan bill.

Last week, Congress voted for the 62nd time to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and soon afterward, that bill was vetoed by the President. That is 62 times that Republicans wasted the American people's time and taxpayer dollars trying to take health care away from millions of families, all to make a political point.

Congress has already voted on the Iran deal. My colleagues who opposed the deal tried to kill it, and they failed. It is now official policy. Are House Republicans going to take us down the same path they did with the Affordable Care Act? Are we also going to vote on this bill 62 times, a bill that we know the President will veto, just so the Republicans can make a political point?

Let's stop wasting the American people's time on such bills. Let's put politics aside and actually work together to responsibly monitor implementation of the Iran deal and find ways to strengthen U.S. leverage in other areas of concern on Iran.

So I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 3662 and reject this rule.

Mr. Speaker, today, the House is also taking up two Republican bills that would have devastating effects on the environment and our Nation's public health. The first piece of legislation, S.J. Res. 22, is the Republican majority's fifth attempt to get rid of the Clean Water Rule. Here we are, having the same discussion once again, wasting the American taxpayers' time and money.

The Clean Water Rule was created in response to the Supreme Court declaring that the Clean Water Act needed to be narrowed and more clearly defined. So the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers did just that—they narrowed the scope and provided for much-needed clarification.

With the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers doing exactly what they were supposed to do, you would think that would be the end of it. The EPA's ability to protect our water from pollution has been narrowed and the industry received the clarification that they wanted.

Unfortunately, my Republican friends are pushing new legislation to further weaken vital environmental protections.

The final bill before us, H.R. 1644, the STREAM Act, is a bill that is going nowhere and is the same bill that Republicans brought up last year, with the only difference being—and this is a major difference, I guess—but the only difference is that they changed the name. Otherwise, it is the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, the sole purpose of this Republican bill is to reverse the rule that the Department of the Interior released last year that regulates the destructive practice of mountaintop removal mining.

It has long been known that mountaintop removal mining heavily pollutes drinking water, destroys wildlife habitats, and puts local communities at greater risk of contracting life-threatening diseases.

Keeping the American people healthy and safe should always be our first priority in Congress. Yet, this bill is more focused on making it easier for big energy companies to continue the destructive and dangerous practice of mountaintop removal and gives no thought whatsoever to the risks it poses to the American families nearby.

Before the recent rule released by the Department of the Interior in July 2015, parts of the regulations for mountaintop mining were more than 30 years old. Updates were clearly long overdue, and the fact that House Republicans are now actively working against the safeguards established by the rule is astounding.

Are Republicans so beholden to big coal companies that they would put the health and safety of our country's families at risk? This bill clearly suggests that the answer is yes.

Mr. Speaker, we are only 2 weeks into the new year, and instead of House Republicans starting the year by working in a bipartisan way to bring serious legislation to the floor, we are, once again, debating political messaging bills that fail to address the most pressing issues we face in a constructive way.

There is so much we need to do, and I believe that there is so much that we can agree on and actually move forward that will get through both Chambers and go to the White House and be signed and become law and actually improve things for the people of this country. That is what we are supposed to be doing here.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve a lot better than this.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I have got several colleagues here that would like to weigh in on all three of these issues. But before I turn the floor over to them, I just wanted to make a comment about the fact that there are two closed rule bills in this.

All of these issues before us today have been thoroughly vetted. They have been through the committee process. They have had ample opportunity for people to weigh in.

In fact, one of the bills is in a structured rule. Actually, we are allowing four amendments. Three of those amendments are from the Democratic side. So I think that there is ample opportunity for all people to make their feelings known on this legislation in front of us.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that transparency, public involvement, and anything that the administration, that this government does, is not a waste of time. In fact, it is our duty to make sure that the public has the ability to see what its government is doing, to make sure it is done in the light of day.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH), my good friend.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule and, certainly, the underlying legislation.

Despite abundantly clear congressional intent to limit Federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act to only navigable waters, the waters of the United States rule will expand EPA's jurisdiction to nearly all areas with any hydrological connection to navigable waters.

This rule relied on—and I want to quote here General Peabody of the Army Corps of Engineers—''inappropriate assumptions with no connection to the data provided, misapplied data, analytical deficiencies, and logical inconsistencies.''

In fact, the Army Corps, the joint author of the rule, was so concerned about the EPA's methods, they wanted their name and logo removed from EPA documents.

Furthermore, it has now come to light that the EPA broke Federal law by engaging in a propaganda campaign to carry out this agenda behind their rule.

Congress has a responsibility to guard against these bureaucratic power grabs by executive agencies. This is why I introduced the companion bill to the underlying legislation immediately after the rule was finalized. The resolution has gained more than 70 cosponsors, with supporters from both sides of the aisle.

Thanks to the expedited procedures established under the Congressional Review Act, when we vote on this legislation tomorrow, the bill will proceed directly to the President's desk.

Tomorrow's vote will also mark the second time legislation has passed out of the House of Representatives to repeal the waters of the U.S. rule with bipartisan support.

My hope is the President will listen to the American people, listen to their concerns, local officials, small-business men and women, and begin pursuing policies which expand economic opportunity, and not stifle innovation with one regulation after another.

□ 1315

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

Mr. Speaker, I just want to respond to something the gentleman from Washington said when he basically made the statement that as long as committees take action, we don't need open rules. That is a whole new approach to the way this place is being run. I thought the Speaker of the House made it very clear he wanted more open rules. The previous Speaker of the House did, too. He didn't do that.

The bottom line is just because a committee took action on it, there are 435 Members of this House, and not everybody is on the same committee. We ought to be able to have a free-flowing debate, and people ought to be able to offer amendments. We ought to deliberate.

I am going to make a prediction that, if we did have an opportunity to truly be a deliberative body, you might get better legislation, and you might get legislation that gets lots of bipartisan support and actually gets signed into law and we get things done. Instead, we are stuck in this pattern where we really don't have regular order. We have order enforced with an iron fist where people are just locked out. It is not just Democrats that are locked out of the process; it is Republicans as well. When you close a rule down completely, it means nobody—nobody—has an opportunity to offer anything.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the portion of the rule that deals with the Iran terrorism bill.

I have voted for every Iran sanctions bill to come to this floor. I helped draft many of them, and I am ready to draft, work on, and vote for Iran sanctions bills in the future even if they are opposed by the administration. Keep in mind, nearly every Iran sanctions bill, which has passed this House floor, became law, and gave us at least some leverage over Iran, was opposed by the then-George W. Bush administration and by this administration.

We need a good process to draft good legislation that will do what President Obama promised we would do, and that is adopt new sanctions designed to change Iran's behavior with regard to its nonnuclear wrongdoing, its support for terrorism, its missile test in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, its human rights record, and its seizure of American hostages.

Unfortunately, this is a flawed bill which is the product of a flawed process. Look at the process: 100 cosponsors, all from one party, with no Democrat on the Foreign Affairs Committee invited to help draft the bill or even invited to cosponsor it.

Now this process is epitomized by a closed rule. The gentleman from Washington offers a new definition of an open rule. An open rule is a closed rule on a bill that has been considered by a committee. That is the new definition of ''open rule.'' I suggest we keep the old definition.

This is a closed rule that prevents people from offering amendments that might have had a better chance of passing on the floor than they would have in committee. A Member should be free to offer amendments both on the floor and in committee if they are a member of the committee; but this is a closed rule, and this process of a closed rule prevents amendments to fix flaws in the bill.

There are at least two. The first is that the bill deprives the President of the authority to delist some 489 entities. It locks them on to the SDN list, but it leaves out 269 other entities, creating two classes of wrongdoing companies and other entities that sponsor and facilitate terrorism for no apparent reason. An entity stays on the list until the President issues a certification, a certification that no President could ever certify. You have to certify that we know that from the beginning of time the entity has not had any dealing with any of dozens of different terrorist organizations. That is a certification designed to be impossible and designed to lock entities in.

I look forward to a bipartisan process. For example, I have a bill that has been cosponsored by the current and immediate prior chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. There are other bills subject to a bipartisan process because we do need new sanctions on Iran to change its nonnuclear wrongdoing. Those sanctions are warranted because Iran has engaged in the missile test in violation of the U.N. Security Council resolution, because its support for terrorism is responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people in Syria and Yemen, and because it used to hold four but now holds five American hostages, not to mention its other human rights records. It is consistent with administration policy that we have sanctions on Iran's nonnuclear behavior.

The negotiations in Vienna, the negotiations on this deal, left out all of Iran's nonnuclear behavior, not because it was intended to give them carte blanche, not because we were accepting their support for terrorism, but because these were to be the subject of other sanctions and other efforts to force a change in Iran's behavior.

Finally, the question is, well, do sanctions work? That is the one thing the opponents and proponents of the deal agreed on. The proponents of the deal said that the sanctions have brought us a very good deal. The opponents of the deal said that more sanctions will get us a better deal. So in a House that was divided on almost every aspect of Iran policy, the one thing we agreed on was that sanctions have the capacity to change Iran's behavior.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from California an additional 1 minute.

Mr. SHERMAN. So the President promised that we would not abandon our efforts with regard to Iran's terrorism and with regard to Iran's hostage taking, and that we would not abandon the four hostages they had then or the additional hostage that they have taken since the deal, and that we would not turn a blind eye to the fact that Iran is the single most important ally of the butcher Assad, who has killed over 200,000 of his own people, not to mention Iran's support for terrorism in Yemen.

Mr. Speaker, we should not fail to do so simply because we have a deal that was exclusively, strictly, and explicitly limited to dealing with Iran's nuclear program. That said, the bill before this House today is a flawed bill that cannot be corrected because of a flawed process. We need a bipartisan process that crafts a policy toward Iran's nonnuclear wrongdoing that unites, if not all of this House, a large majority of this House.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make the point that it is customary, whether Republicans are in control or whether Democrats control, that the CRAs, the Congressional Review Acts, come to the floor under a closed rule. I might also say that, regarding the STREAM Act, all amendments that were germane were made in order. As it comes to the bill pertaining to Iran, that bill was marked up in committee last week. No amendments were offered, and the bill passed on voice vote.

Having made those points, Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the good gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule.

Tonight President Obama will deliver his final State of the Union, where I expect he will celebrate his supposed achievements over the last 7 years. Outside the beltway, and especially in western Pennsylvania, there is little to celebrate about the Obama Presidency. The war on coal has been a central feature of Washington's misguided efforts over the past several years, and it has caused the loss of over 40,000 jobs in the coal industry across the country and economic hardship in coal country.

Later today we will vote on the STREAM Act, which challenges OSM's so-called stream protection rule. I am a cosponsor of this legislation, and I look forward to its passage.

The stream protection rule is yet another block in the wall of regulation that President Obama has been building the last 7 years. It will lead to the loss of thousands of jobs, and it will reduce coal reserves by 41 percent. That amounts to a $20 billion loss to the economy.

Just yesterday we learned of the bankruptcy of yet another coal company. The job losses, firm closures, and disruptions to our communities are real, and they cannot be ignored any longer. This is an attack on cheap, plentiful, and reliable energy, and it will result in more control from Washington of the economy and the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my fellow Members to support the passage of this rule and the associated bills.

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

Mr. Speaker, I again continue to be amazed that the gentleman from Washington defends this process. I don't know how anybody can defend this process, it is so flawed. The end result is, again, bringing bills to the floor that are going nowhere and that are sound bites. They are not serious legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Statement of Administration Policy on all three bills in which the White House says they will veto these bills.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 1644—STREAM ACT

(Rep. Mooney, R–WV, and 34 cosponsors, Jan. 11, 2016)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 1644, which would delay for at least three years updated regulations, known as the Stream Protection Rule, to protect streams

from the effects of destructive surface coal mining practices. Such a needless delay of these important safeguards would impact the communities and economies that depend on clean water and a healthy environment.

The current stream protection requirements governing surface mining activities are more than 30 years old and do not incorporate significant advances in scientific knowledge and mining and reclamation techniques. An arbitrary three year restriction to block the updated modern, science-based regulations would significantly impair the ability of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) to accomplish the mission and responsibilities the Congress laid out in the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, including preserving clean water, human health, and the environment.

H.R. 1644 would prevent the restoration of hundreds of streams, result in deterioration of water quality for thousands of stream miles, and create sustained regulatory uncertainty, as well as public health impacts for downstream communities. In addition, the bill would impose arbitrary requirements and unnecessary processes that would seriously impede OSMRE's ability to use the best available science to protect public health and the environment.

If the President were presented with H.R. 1644, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

S.J. RES. 22—DISAPPROVING EPA/ARMY RULE ON WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Sen. Ernst, R–IA, and 49 cosponsors, Nov. 3, 2015)

The Administration strongly opposes S.J. Res. 22, which would nullify a specified Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Army (Army) final rule clarifying the jurisdictional boundaries of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The agencies' rulemaking, grounded in science and the law, is essential to ensure clean water for future generations, and is responsive to calls for rulemaking from the Congress, industry, and community stakeholders as well as decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. The final rule has been through an extensive public engagement process.

Clean water is vital for the success of the Nation's businesses, agriculture, energy development, and the health of our communities. More than one in three Americans get their drinking water from rivers, lakes, and reservoirs that are at risk of pollution from upstream sources. The protection of wetlands is also vital for hunting and fishing. When Congress passed the CWA in 1972 to restore the Nation's waters, it recognized that to have healthy communities downstream, we need to protect the smaller streams and wetlands upstream.

Clarifying the scope of the CWA helps to protect clean water, safeguard public health, and strengthen the economy. Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006 focused on specific jurisdictional determinations and rejected the analytical approach that the Army Corps of Engineers used for those determinations, but did not invalidate the underlying regulation. This has created ongoing questions and uncertainty about how the regulation is applied consistent with the Court's decisions. The final rule was developed to address this uncertainty and it should remain in place.

If enacted, S.J. Res. 22 would nullify years of work and deny businesses and communities the regulatory certainty needed to invest in projects that rely on clean water. EPA and Army have sought the views of and listened carefully to the public throughout the extensive public engagement process for this rule.

Simply put, S.J. Res. 22 is not an act of good governance. It would sow confusion and invite conflict at a time when our communities and businesses need clarity and certainty around clean water regulation.

If the President were presented with S.J. Res. 22, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 3662—IRAN TERROR FINANCE TRANSPARENCY ACT

(Rep. Russell, R–OK, and 62 cosponsors, Jan. 11, 2016)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 3662, the Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act, which would prevent the United States from implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by tying the Administration's ability to fulfill U.S. commitments under the deal to unrelated, non-nuclear issues.

H.R. 3662 includes provisions that connect the United States' JCPOA commitment to provide sanctions relief by delisting certain Iran-related individuals and entities, including banks, to non-nuclear issues outside of the scope of the JCPOA. In addition, certain provisions would effectively preclude delisting of individuals or entities on Implementation Day of the JCPOA—the day on which the International Atomic Energy Agency verifies that Iran has completed key nuclear-related steps that significantly dismantle and constrain its nuclear program—based on activity that may have taken place and ended long before Implementation Day and involving persons or activity that will no longer be sanctioned post-Implementation Day. By preventing the United States from fulfilling its JCPOA commitments, H.R. 3662 could result in the collapse of a comprehensive diplomatic arrangement that peacefully and verifiably prevents Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Such a collapse would remove the unprecedented constraints on Iran's nuclear program that we achieved in the JCPOA, lead to the unraveling of the international sanctions regime against Iran, and deal a devastating blow to America's credibility as a leader of international diplomacy. This would have ripple effects, jeopardizing the hard work of sustaining a unified coalition to combat Iran's destabilizing activities in the region, calling into question the effectiveness of our sanctions regime and our ability to lead the world on nuclear nonproliferation.

The Administration has consistently made clear that the purpose of the nuclear negotiations, and ultimately the JCPOA, was to address one issue only—the international community's concerns over Iran's nuclear program and to verifiably prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The JCPOA is the mechanism through which the United States was able to garner international support for our sanctions and achieve a diplomatic resolution.

As we address our concerns with Iran's nuclear program through implementation of the JCPOA, the Administration remains clear-eyed and shares the deep concerns of the Congress and the American people about Iran's support for terrorism. Powerful sanctions targeting Iran's support for terrorism, its ballistic missile activities, its human rights abuses, and its destabilizing activities in the region remain in effect. Anyone worldwide who transacts with or supports individuals or entities sanctioned in connection with Iran's support for terrorism or development of WMD and their means of delivery, including missiles—or who does the same with any Iranian individual or entity who remains on Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List—puts themselves at risk of being sanctioned.

The President has made it clear that he will veto any legislation that prevents the successful implementation of the JCPOA. If the President were presented with H.R. 3662, he would veto the bill.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a statement from the Win Without War coalition, 11 million activists across the country in opposition to H.R. 3662.

A STATEMENT FROM DREW PROCTOR, ADVOCACY DIRECTOR OF ''WIN WITHOUT WAR''

The Win Without War coalition, on behalf of our 11 million activists, urges your office to stand strong against all attempts to undermine the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in Congress.

In particular, we urge Representative McGovern to OPPOSE H.R. 3662, the Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act.

H.R. 3662, which would prohibit President Obama from delivering on sanctions relief, has the potential to damage the leadership and credibility of the United States at this critical moment just before the historic agreement is implemented. Furthermore, the timing of the House's vote—between President Obama's State of the Union speech and the deal's implementation date later this month—appears to be a deliberately partisan act designed to undermine the President and weaken his legacy. At a time when much of the Middle East is engulfed in war, the US has rightfully seized this opportunity to solve one of our most pressing national security threats without dropping a single bomb. We must not let political interests trump our national security goals. Huge progress has been made since the Iran deal was announced last July. Just yesterday, Iran reportedly took steps to remove the core of its plutonium reactor and fill it with concrete.

Sincerely,

DREW PROCTOR,
Advocacy Director,
Win Without War.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from 65 environmental organizations representing millions of members in opposition to H.J. Res. 22.

JANUARY 12, 2016.

REPRESENTATIVE: The undersigned organizations, and our millions of members and supporters, oppose the Dirty Water Resolution (S.J. Res. 22). The ''Resolution of Disapproval'' under the Congressional Review Act attacks the Clean Water Rule, the Obama administration's landmark initiative to restore safeguards against pollution and destruction for lakes, streams, wetlands and other water bodies.

The Clean Water Rule restores important safeguards that once existed for a variety of water bodies. Those safeguards were eroded after a pair of Supreme Court decisions and by policies the Bush administration adopted, which left many water bodies inadequately protected or lacking the pollution control requirements of the Clean Water Act. The rule restores prior protections for many critical wetlands, which curb flooding, filter pollution, and provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, including endangered species and wildfowl and fish prized by hunters and anglers.

The Dirty Water Resolution is an extreme action that seeks to kill the Clean Water Rule using the Congressional Review Act, which goes far beyond stopping a disapproved administrative action. The Congressional Review Act says that an agency may not adopt ''a new rule that is substantially the same'' as the disapproved rule, and the breadth of that requirement is very unclear.

In the context of the Clean Water Rule, it could be read to prohibit EPA and the Army Corps from issuing any rule that establishes protections for waters that the Clean Water Rule covers, like lakes, streams, and wetlands. The Dirty Water Resolution radically undermines the agencies' ability to clarify the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act—despite urging from industry associations, conservation groups, members of Congress, state and local leaders, and Supreme Court justices for such a clarification.

By pursuing this anti-clean water resolution, pro-polluter members of the House of Representatives are seeking to kill a commonsense and modest rule containing scientifically-sound and legally-valid protections for the nation's waters, including critical drinlcing water supplies.

Restored clean water protections enjoy broad support. In polling for the American Sustainable Business Council, eighty percent of small business owners—including 91% of Democrats, 73% of Independents and 78% of Republicans—said they supported the then-proposed Clean Water Rule. A strong majority, 71%, also said that clean water protections are necessary to ensure economic growth; only six percent said they were bad for growth. Similarly, a bipartisan research team polled hunters and anglers nationwide and discovered that 83% surveyed thought that the Environmental Protection Agency should apply the rules and standards of the Clean Water Act to smaller, headwater streams and wetlands. Support for this policy was strong across the political spectrum, with 77% of Republicans, 79% of Independents and 97% of Democrats in favor.

We ask that you oppose the Dirty Water Resolution (S.J. Res. 22) because it will undermine protections for our drinking water supplies, flood buffers, and fish and wildlife habitat. This attack on clean water is not only a waste of the House's time but also an excessive and dangerous act that jeopardizes clean water for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Alliance for the Great Lakes, American Rivers, American Whitewater, Amigos Bravos, Arkansas Public Policy Panel, BlueGreen Alliance, Central Minnesota Chapter of Audubon, Clean Water Action, Conservation Minnesota, Earthjustice, Endangered Habitats League, Environment America, Environment California, Environment Colorado, Environment Connecticut, Environment Florida, Environment Georgia, Environment Illinois, Environment Iowa, Environment Maine, Environment Maryland, Environment Massachusetts.

Environment Michigan, Environment Minnesota, Environment Montana, Environment New Hampshire, Environment New Jersey, Environment New Mexico, Environment New York, Environment North Carolina, Environment Oregon, Environment Texas, Environment Virginia, Environment Washington, Freshwater Future, Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Park, Friends of the Mississippi River, Great Lakes Committee—the Izaak Walton League, GreenLatinos, Greenpeace, Gulf Restoration Network, Hoosier Environmental Council, Iowa Environmental Council, Kentucky Waterways Alliance.

League of Conservation Voters, Michigan Wildlife Conservancy, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Minnesota Conservation Federation, Minnesota Environmental Partnership, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Natural Resources Defense Council, Nature Abounds, Ohio Wetlands Association, PennEnvironment, Prairie Rivers Network, Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes, River Network, Save the Dunes, Shaker Lakes Garden Club, Sierra Club, Southern Environmental Law Center, Surfrider Foundation, Tennessee Clean Water Network, Wisconsin Environment, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from eight sportsmen and conservation organizations in strong opposition to S.J. Res. 22.

JANUARY 11, 2016.

Re Hunters and Anglers Strongly Oppose S.J. Res. 22 Invalidating the Final Clean Water Rule

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The undersigned sportsmen and conservation organizations strongly oppose Senate Joint Resolution 22, which the House of Representatives may vote on this week and would invalidate the final Clean Water Rule. This important rule clarifies Clean Water Act jurisdiction in a manner that is both legally and scientifically sound.

This joint resolution is an extraordinary and radical action to overturn a fundamental, once-in-a-generation final rule that is critical to the effective implementation of the 1972 Clean Water Act, and that was adopted following an exhaustive public rulemaking process. The resolution would overturn a rule that finally resolves longstanding confusion and debate, promotes clarity and efficiency for regulatory programs promoting river health, and preserves longstanding protections for farmers, ranchers, and foresters.

By using the Congressional Review Act, this joint resolution not only wipes out the final Clean Water Rule but also prohibits any substantially similar rule in the future. It locks in the current state of jurisdictional confusion and offers no constructive path forward for regulatory clarity or clean water. America's hunters and anglers cannot afford to have Congress undermine effective Clean Water Act safeguards, leaving communities and valuable fish and wildlife habitat at risk indefinitely.

This joint resolution dismisses the voices of the millions of Americans, including businesses that depend on clean water, who support the new rule and are eager to reap its benefits. The agencies engaged in a very transparent and thorough multi-year rulemaking process that included over 400 stakeholder meetings and an extended public comment period that produced over one million comments. Nearly 900,000 members of the public commented in support of the Clean Water Rule. A recent poll found that 83 percent of sportsmen and women think the Clean Water Act should apply to smaller streams and wetlands, as the new rule directs.

The Clean Water Rule clearly restores longstanding protections for millions of wetlands and headwater streams that contribute to the drinking water of 1 in 3 Americans, protect communities from flooding, and provide essential fish and wildlife habitat that supports a robust outdoor recreation economy. The sport fishing industry alone accounts for 828,000 jobs, nearly $50 billion annually in retail sales, and an economic impact of about $115 billion every year that relies on access to clean water. The Clean Water Rule will translate directly to an improved bottom line for America's outdoor industry.

Opponents claiming the rule goes too far and protects water too much have filed a barrage of nearly identical legal challenges in numerous district and appellate courts across the country. On October 9, 2015, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily stayed the Clean Water Rule nationwide. The Clean Water Rule and those who oppose it will have their day in court.

Meanwhile, we want Congress to know that despite these legal challenges, conservationists across the nation are steadfast in our support for the Clean Water Rule. After nearly 15 years of Clean Water Act confusion, further delay is unacceptable to the millions of hunters and anglers eager to have their local waters fully protected again. We are confident that, when the dust settles in the courts, the Clean Water Rule will withstand challenges saying it protects our water too much.

The Clean Water Act has always been about restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. It is bedrock support for America's more than 40 million hunters and anglers and for the 117 million Americans whose drinking water depends on healthy headwater streams.

We thank all of the members of Congress who stand with America's sportsmen and women to block attempts to derail the rule, and ask you to reject S.J. Res. 22 and any other legislative action against the rule that may follow this year.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society, American Fly Fishing Trade Association, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, International Federation of Fly Fishers, Izaak Walton League of America, National Wildlife Federation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Trout Unlimited.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from nine public interest, environmental, and labor organizations strongly opposing H.R. 1644.

JANUARY 11, 2016.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of our millions of members and supporters we strongly urge you to oppose the stream pollution bill, H.R. 1644, a bill expected on the House floor the week of January 11, 2016. This bill would put costly and unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles in the already overburdened regulatory process with the sole intent of ensuring that coal companies can continue to destroy streams with coal wastes.

The present rules protecting such streams date to 1983. After the Department of Interior took several years to develop the proposed Stream Protection Rule, this bill requires a new study, this time by the National Academy of Sciences, on the effectiveness of the current decades-old surface mining regulation. The bill carves out two years for the completion of that study and then bars DOI from updating the rule for an additional year after that. In the meantime, communities will continue to shoulder the burden of water pollution and mining abuses. The intent of these new delays is clear: let the mining companies continue unimpeded with sacrificing the streams and health of the communities that surround their mines.

Another section of the bill adds new procedural hurdles before DOI can act under the surface mining law. Today, the Secretary and the heads of all rulemaking agencies regularly make available all the information relied upon concurrently with the proposed or final rule. Doing so enables stakeholders to weigh in during the public comment period on the basis for the proposal. This bill requires DOI to publish all scientific data used in a proposed rule 90 days before publication. It is unclear what the intent of this redundant provision is other than to congest the regulatory system with even more process and delay. If the Agency fails to meet this new paperwork burden, the goal of the authors is met—the protections must be delayed even further.

Unfortunately, these types of delay tactics are becoming increasingly common across

the regulatory spectrum as polluters attempt to dodge their responsibilities. Thus, H.R. 1644 continues a dangerous trend of undermining public health and environmental protections under the guise of transparency. We urge you to vote against this legislation, both to protect mining communities and to our reject attempts to delay and frustrate improved regulatory protections.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Effective Government, Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists, Economic Policy Institute, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Public Citizen, United Auto Workers, United States Public Interest Research Group.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Union of Concerned Scientists in strong opposition to H.R. 1644.

UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS,
September 9, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The Union of Concerned Scientists, with 450,000 members and supporters throughout the country, strongly opposes The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 1644, the STREAM ACT. H.R. 1644, as amended, would require the public disclosure of any and all information used to promulgate rules, and even policy guidance, relating to the Surface Mining and Control Act.

As we highlighted in *Science*, this proposal is just another example of what's becoming an old and tired song: an attempt to cloak an effort to block common-sense regulation in the guise of transparency. Furthermore, as we noted in a letter sent to the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year opposing H.R. 1030, the Secret Science Reform Act, this type of proposal represents a solution in search of a problem and greatly impedes the agency's responsibility to protect public health and the environment.

The amended version improves the original bill by exempting certain types of data from public disclosure. However, the language is so vague, it will make it very difficult for scientists doing federally-funded research to know whether or not the data they have spent years collecting may be prematurely disclosed before they can publish their own studies. At the very least, this discourages scientists from doing any crucial research that may be required to be publicly disclosed.

Worse, by linking agency rulemaking to public disclosure, this bill risks the timely implementation of regulations and guidance documents that protect the public health and safety and our environment. Agency rules will be delayed if any piece of underlying data used to inform rules or guidance documents is not publicly disclosed 90 days before the proposed rule or guidance is published. This is flawed because the data is not owned by the Department of Interior and the release of the data is under the researcher's control. For each day the data is delayed, the comment period is extended by a day. If the delay lasts longer than six months, the rule must be withdrawn.

These restrictions apply even to emergency rules, unless a delay ''will pose an imminent and severe threat to human life.'' Notably missing here however is the environment. For example, if a stream is polluted at a level that doesn't pose an immediate risk but may pose a long-term risk, under this proposal, the environmental pollution could not be stopped until it might be too late.

This proposal offers special interests a new way to game the system, by challenging the comprehensiveness of any data that the Department of Interior submits to fulfill the bill's requirements. Who decides when the data includes ''all the data?'' How much data, for example, must be released to justify an economic assessment, or an environmental analysis or a guidance document?

Unanswered, too, is the question whether a regulation or guidance document based on exempt information is considered valid for purposes of this bill. Could the use of exempt information itself be grounds for a challenge?

This bill would also expend taxpayer dollars by requiring the Department of Interior to spend $2 million on a study to evaluate the ''effectiveness'' of 1983 regulation to protect perennial and intermittent streams through the use of stream buffer zones. But the goal of the study is not to actually help the Department of Interior become a better custodian of our environment.

The real goal is to impose a sweeping moratorium on all regulations related to stream buffer zones for the time it takes the National Academy of Sciences to complete the ''comprehensive study'' plus another year for review. Since the bill anticipates funding for the NAS in both 2016 and 2017, Interior regulations would be blocked for at least three years. If the study is never funded though, the rules would be indefinitely delayed.

We recommend that you oppose Representative Mooney's amendment to H.R. 1644, as well as the underlying bill. The proposal would inhibit the Department of Interior's ability to carry out its science and evidence-based responsibility to protect human health and the environment. We strongly urge you not to report this proposal out of committee.

Sincerely,

ANDREW A. ROSENBERG, PH.D.,
Director, Center for Science and Democracy, Union of Concerned Scientists.

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from the great State of Washington (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER).

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Mr. Speaker, for 20 years, Republican and Democratic administrations, alike, have effectively regulated navigable waters—which is the official term—under the Clean Water Act to protect both our environment and private property, but the Obama administration is trying to change all of that. The Obama Administration's new definition will give the EPA authority over every pond or seasonal stream, drainage ditch, or puddle in the United States—every single one. Every piece of land where water falls from the heavens, the EPA is claiming control over.

What does that mean if you want to put a deck on your house or move your driveway or build a shed or something similar? It means you are going to have to apply to the Federal Government for a permit.

What do those permits look like? They take upwards of 788 days to obtain, and they cost upwards of $270,000 to get per permit, per puddle, per ditch, or per stream that you want to amend.

So I hope you are either really rich and have a ton of time on your hands or you don't want to ever change anything because this is almost impossible.

I would call this new change a solution in search of a problem, but it is a solution that is going to create a problem. There is no evidence that this is going to give us stronger environmental protections, that we are going to have cleaner water, or that we are even going to have a benefit. What is really going to happen is the EPA is going to be kingmaker; and you and I, as Americans, are going to be forced to grovel at their feet, begging for permits on our own land.

This really impacts those of us in the West tremendously. Every American should sit up and pay attention because this impacts everybody, including cities and counties.

I hope you don't need a new hospital in your area or you don't need a grocery store or perhaps your city needs to expand or grow or change, because this effectively says that one agency, headed by very political and liberal—at this point, very liberal—ideologues will get to make that decision, and they are not going to give us the benefit. That is the scary thing here.

So I look forward to joining with Republicans and commonsense Democrats, because believe it or not, just like in years past, Republicans and Democrats are both opposed to this, to put this block in place and to move forward.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just simply say that there is a difference between Democrats and Republicans when it comes to the environment, protecting the health and well-being of the people of this country, especially from industry. I think we, on the Democratic side, have consistently been on the side of protecting people, and my friends on the other side have been consistently on the side of industry, no matter what it means to people.

We see what is going on in Flint, Michigan, right now and the terrible water crisis that is happening there and the Republican Governor who is part of what appears to be a coverup at the expense of those citizens. It really is quite astonishing.

□ 1330

Again, this bill is going nowhere. It is going to be vetoed by the White House. So we can go through this charade.

I would just conclude right now, at least this portion of my speech here, by saying that, as I said in the beginning, if, in fact, my friends on the other side of the aisle want to get serious about legislating, there are areas of agreement on these environmental issues, and certainly on this issue regarding Iran, where Democrats and Republicans can come together. But for whatever reason, I think my Republican friends have no interest in serious legislating. I think that is regrettable because what we are doing here is wasting taxpayer money and wasting the people's time here in this Congress. We could be doing other things that could actually be moving this country forward.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) for yielding.

In my capacity as a member of the House Committee on Financial Services' Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing and as a businessperson with over three decades of experience in both international affairs and banking, I have carefully considered the testimony of leading foreign policy experts cautioning against America blindly putting its faith in a country that has never done anything to make them worthy of that trust.

The nuclear agreement has only emboldened the Iranian regime. And why wouldn't it? When one sees the recent results of President Clinton's agreement with North Korea and this administration's lack of resolve and realism, why not?

I remind this body, Secretary Kerry, and the President of the warning issued to the House of Commons by Winston Churchill: ''An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile hoping it will eat him last.''

The Iranians have kidnapped another American, taken deliveries of missile technology from Russia, conducted missile tests in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, and ramped up the actions and rhetoric against our Arab allies. All of this is disturbing. This is all before Iran has even received a dime of up to $100 billion in expected sanctions relief.

When he announced the nuclear agreement, the President said: ''American sanctions on Iran for its support of terrorism, its human rights abuses, its ballistic missile program, will continue to be fully enforced.''

The bill discussed in this rule, H.R. 3662, guarantees that. This bill removes the politicization of the listed entities in the nuclear agreement and forces this President to live up to his own rhetoric.

I am proud to support this critical piece of legislation. I call on all Members to support the rule and final passage of the bill and help guarantee the safety of the American people and our allies around the world from one of our most credible threats to our national security.

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

I would just say to the gentleman that, if this were a serious effort to do something in response to Iran's behavior, this would be a bipartisan effort, but it isn't. It is clear what this is. This is a way to basically try to embarrass the President, I guess. That seems to be the motivation behind almost everything that is brought to this House floor.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we ought to be doing serious business here, and we are not. One of the things that we have been trying to do on our side is to bring to the floor legislation and amendments to deal with the terrible situation with regard to gun violence in our country. We are rebuffed at every moment. We can't bring anything to this floor with regard to guns, I guess because the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee doesn't want to tick off the National Rifle Association.

Be that as it may, I want to urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question. If we do, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up bipartisan legislation—this is actually Democrats and Republicans who support this—that would close a glaring loophole in our gun laws allowing suspected terrorists to legally buy firearms. This bill would bar the sale of firearms and explosives to those on the FBI's terrorist watch list.

Mr. Speaker, amidst gun violence in communities across our country and global acts of terrorism, it is time for Congress to act and keep guns out of the hands of suspected terrorists.

I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD along with extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, for the life of me, I can't understand why somehow it is okay to bar suspected terrorists from flying on airplanes, but somehow it is this terrible infringement on their rights to say that they can't go out and buy a firearm. It makes absolutely no sense. I don't think the American people—whether you are Democrat or Republican or Independent—can figure out why people are so resistant to that here in this Congress.

Here is a novel idea. bring it to the floor. Allow us to have an up-or-down vote, not just a procedural vote, but a real up-or-down vote on this, and I am willing to bet that it will probably pass with a bipartisan vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, if it embarrasses the President to be held accountable for the very words that come out of his mouth, I guess there is not much we can do about that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Washington for yielding me the time.

I guess if we want to advance policy around here, the rhetoric coming from across the aisle about it being a waste of time to legislate and put these ideas out in front of the American people and hold the President accountable for the runaway efforts by his administration and his agencies, then we are just not hearing an honest effort on the other side.

We have half-baked regulations that will damage sectors of our economy in this 262 pages of revised rules that are coming down from the Department of the Interior. Since 1983, the stream buffer zone rule has been a rule that has struck a pretty good balance between protecting water resources and mining. Adding 262 new pages effectively bans all mining within 100 feet of anything that they might define as a stream, which is going to have very detrimental effects on energy and our ability to conduct business in this Nation.

The new rule would lead to the loss of thousands of jobs, damage our Nation's ability to produce critical minerals, construction materials, and domestic energy, something that we have had an advantage on up until recently.

While Interior claims to have spent 6 years studying this rule, it managed to completely ignore the views of the States impacted by the rule. I think we need to have more local input and support to H.R. 1644 and hold the administration accountable for what it does.

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), my good friend.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule and passage of S.J. Res. 22, which provides congressional disapproval on EPA's extreme overreach with their waters of the U.S. rule.

Last June, the EPA published its final orders of the U.S. rule that would virtually give them authority over any place water flows or accumulates. This would include driveways, ditches, manmade ponds, and even our watered lawns.

Currently, private and public entities spend an average of $271,000 and wait an average of 788 days to obtain permits from the EPA for projects currently under its jurisdiction. Expanding EPA's authority in this unprecedented way would be extremely devastating to landowners, especially farmers, and make devastating statistics even worse.

With this bill, Congress would nullify this ridiculous rule and continue to provide Americans with personal control over their property. Property is not an asset that can be taken control of on the whim of a government agency. Property rights are an essential natural right of every American, and this fact has been embedded in our country's DNA since its beginning.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule and S.J. Res. 22 so we can prevent this terrible law from infringing on the natural rights of all Americans.

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

I have heard a couple of speakers now talk on this, and I think some of the confusion might be cleared up if they actually read the rule.

The gentlewoman from Washington who spoke earlier talked about that this would regulate puddles. Well, the

clean water rule does not regulate puddles. In fact, numerous comments were submitted to EPA asking the Agency specifically to exclude puddles. I have got good news for you: the final rules does just that, and the clean water rule does not regulate most ditches either. We might as well get those facts on the table.

I would urge my colleagues on the other side that maybe they ought to read the rule before they come up with a bill like the one they came up with.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what else to say, other than the fact that this process stinks. Again, two closed rules and a structured rule on the third bill.

We have a controversial bill on Iran that is one of the most partisan pieces of legislation on foreign policy that has been brought to this floor by my Republican friends. It is really frustrating because I think there is a lot of common ground on holding Iran accountable where Democrats and Republicans could come together and actually craft something that had, if not unanimous support, almost unanimous support. I think that would be a powerful signal to send not only to Iran, but to the rest of the world. But instead of going down that road, my Republican friends decided to squander that opportunity and come up with a political sound bite.

The same goes for the two environmental bills that are being brought before this House. They are going nowhere, but they are nice sound bites, and they may please a particular special interest, but this is not serious legislating.

I am going to say to my colleagues again, I know you are going on your retreat this week, and maybe there ought to be a side meeting that some of my friends have about what it is that they think we ought to be doing here in this Chamber and what it is that they think that their job ought to be. I would suggest that it has to be about more than just political sound bites and messaging bills.

There is a lot that we need to get done. That requires us working together. I won't get everything I want and you may not get everything you want, but we need to figure out a way to make this place work because it is not working. There is a reason why the approval rating of Congress is like in the negative numbers. It is because people see consistently nothing but political sound bites and messaging bills come to the floor and get voted on and we debate them passionately, but they go nowhere. I think people would like us all better, Democrats and Republicans, if we actually accomplished something.

I hope you go on your retreat and you kind of reflect on that, and maybe you will come back the week after with a new outlook. Maybe all of these promises from the Speaker of the House and the previous Speaker of the House about a more open process about regular order will be more than words when you come back.

I would finally say again that I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the previous question so we can bring up this commonsense bipartisan bill to basically prevent those who are on the terrorist watch list from being sold guns.

Again, I, for the life of me, don't understand why it is so controversial, but in this House of Representatives it is.

Vote ''no'' on the previous question. Vote ''no'' on this closed rule, and reject this closed process.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I appreciate the good gentleman's wishes for a good retreat for the Republicans this coming next few days, and I look forward to finding opportunities to work together with his side of the aisle on many important things facing our Nation.

I just would remind them, too, that there have been plenty of opportunities for all Members of this body to have input on these pieces of legislation before us through committee, here on the floor, in Rules. I think following regular order is proving exactly what we wanted it to do to give people that opportunity. I am very happy that we have been able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good, straightforward rule that we are considering today allowing for consideration of three very important pieces of legislation that I think will protect our national security interests abroad and hold the administration accountable for sanctions lifted under the Iran nuclear agreement. It will ensure that mining communities and hardworking families are not crushed by another crippling Federal regulation, and it will help protect our rural western communities by providing much-needed relief from the burdensome waters of the United States rule.

□ 1345

Although we may have different viewpoints and differences of opinion, I believe this rule and the underlying bills are strong measures that are important to our country's future.

I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 583 as well as the underlying bills.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 583 OFFERED BY MR. MCGOVERN

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 6. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1076) to increase public safety by permitting the Attorney General to deny the transfer of a firearm or the issuance of firearms or explosives licenses to a known or suspected dangerous terrorist. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 7. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 1076.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule

[a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 233, nays 173, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 36]

YEAS—233

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—173

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

NOT VOTING—27

Barletta
Bost
Bridenstine
Cárdenas
Comstock
Culberson
Delaney
Duncan (SC)
Eshoo
Grayson
Hinojosa
Hurt (VA)
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kind
Messer
Palazzo
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Schrader
Smith (WA)
Stutzman
Thompson (MS)
Weber (TX)
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (FL)

□ 1406

Mr. MACARTHUR changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 36, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. HURT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for roll call vote No. 36 on Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 583—The combined rule providing for consideration of H.R. 1644, H.R. 3662, and S.J. Res. 22. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Stated against:

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I was not present during rollcall vote number 36 on January 12, 2016. I would like to reflect that on rollcall vote number 36, I would have voted "no."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 239, noes 183, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 37]

AYES—239

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis

MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—183

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

NOT VOTING—11

Barletta
Conyers
Delaney
Duncan (SC)
Kennedy
Kind
Meadows
Palazzo
Smith (WA)
Westmoreland
Williams

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1429

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING TRANSPARENT REGULATORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS IN MINING ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 1644.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 583 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1644.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1431

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1644) to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure transparency in the development of environmental regulations, and for other purposes, with Mr. PAULSEN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1644, the Supporting Transparent Regulatory and Environmental Actions in Mining Act, or the STREAM Act for short.

The STREAM Act has three goals. First, it establishes a requirement for scientific transparency and integrity in any rulemaking conducted by the Office of Surface Mining—we will be calling that OSM during our debate—under the authority of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Some people call it SMCRA.

In the past, the Office of Surface Mining, or OSM, has sought to promulgate rules based on internal studies that are not made public. The first section of H.R. 1644, the STREAM Act, ensures transparency by requiring OSM to publish all scientific products it relies on in the rulemaking process.

For federally funded scientific products, the STREAM Act requires OSM to also publish raw data. If a scientific product is withheld from the public for more than 6 months, then the rule, environmental analysis, or economic assessment it supports will be withdrawn.

The second goal is to require an independent third-party assessment of the existing 1983 rule—which we are operating under right now—to determine if any deficiencies exist. The purpose of the independent study is to mitigate the polarization of this issue.

As such, the STREAM Act requires the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Interstate Mining Compact Commission, to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a study of the 1983 stream buffer zone rule.

Mr. Chairman, this study will examine the effectiveness of the existing 1983 rule by the National Academy of Sciences and make recommendations for improving the rule, if necessary.

The Secretary is prohibited from issuing any regulations addressing stream buffer zones or stream protection until 1 year after the completion of the study and is required to take into consideration the findings or recommendations of the study.

This element of the STREAM Act is important because it ensures that the 24 States with primacy over surface mining will have input on the study. Unfortunately, beginning in 2011, OSM completely shut the States out of the rulemaking process, even though OSM had signed memoranda of understanding with 10 cooperating agency States in 2010 and one other State signing on as a commentator.

According to OSM, ''States permit and regulate 97 percent of the Nation's coal production. States and tribes also abate well over 90 percent of the abandoned mine lands problems.'' That is in the words of OSM.

The expertise for understanding the stream protection rule and other regulations promulgated under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act lies with the States, not with OSM. Yet, the States were completely cut out of the rulemaking process.

The third goal, finally, of H.R. 1644 is to inhibit OSM's regulatory overreach by curtailing regulatory action that would duplicate, enforce, or determine compliance with laws that are outside of OSM's jurisdiction.

An express concern related to the ongoing stream buffer zone rule rewrite is

that OSM has sought to interpret and enforce the Clean Water Act, which is outside of its authority, by establishing a new set of water quality monitoring, evaluation standards, and procedures. In fact, the draft rule amends 475 existing rules promulgated under SMCRA, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.

OSM used the rulemaking process to rewrite the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 and went well outside of Congress' intent in writing that law.

Also—and this is amazingly shortsighted for our economic and energy future as a country—the draft rule released in July 2015 would freeze or sterilize more than 60 percent of the Nation's coal reserves.

If the draft rule, as written, is finalized, the administration will expose the U.S. taxpayer to takings litigation. This has happened before. An example would be the Whitney Benefits case in Wyoming that involved a regulatory taking of coal reserves that underlie alluvial material.

Passage of the STREAM Act will halt this destructive rulemaking process and provide an avenue for a collaborative approach to address deficiencies in the existing rule, if any, with the primacy States. It will save and protect the American taxpayer.

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the STREAM Act, or H.R. 1644, which is simply the latest attempt by the majority to prevent the implementation of new, commonsense rules to protect people and the environment from the destructive impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining.

Mountaintop removal mining is a serious environmental and health threat. It occurs throughout Appalachia. Countries literally blast the tops off of mountains, scoop out the coal, and dump what used to be the mountaintop into the valleys below.

In the process, landscapes are scarred, wildlife habitat is destroyed, mountain streams are buried, fish are killed, and the people living in the valleys suffer.

The impact on the landscapes, as you can see from this picture here, is obvious. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to look at this photo of a mountaintop removal mine and understand the catastrophic impact to the environment. The impacts, however, to people are not as obvious to the naked eye, but they are just as severe.

Several years ago there was an article titled ''Mountaintop Mining Consequences,'' in the journal Science. As we all know, Science is one of the most preeminent scientific journals in the world.

In that paper, a dozen scientists from 10 institutions reported that mountaintop mining with valley filling ''revealed serious environmental impacts that mitigation practices cannot successfully address.''

They went on to write that ''water emerges from the base of valley fills containing a variety of solutes toxic or damaging to biota,'' and that ''recovery of biodiversity in mining waste-impacted streams has not been documented.'' Again, that is a direct quote.

But let's also talk about the impacts upon people. They write, ''Adult hospitalizations for chronic pulmonary disorders and hypertension are elevated as a function of county-level coal production, as are rates of mortality; lung cancer; and chronic heart, lung, and kidney disease.''

These are serious issues. They deserve a serious response. The current administration proposed such a response in July of last year with a new rule to govern mountaintop removal mining. Sadly, the majority is falling back on the same political playbook they have used time and time again: attack, obstruct, and delay.

What do I mean by that? As it was pointed out, the development of the stream buffer zone, which is what we are talking about, took place under the Reagan administration in 1983, in which the President and the administration proposed a buffer around streams to protect the valleys around it.

It was just the beginning. It gave the Office of Surface Mining oversight over the management, knowing that there are really some problems in there still to be worked out later in terms of how you regulate when this is done primarily by the States. This new buffer requirement that you have got to give these streams 100 feet on each side went on after 1983.

On December 18, 2008, at the very last moment—at midnight—in President Bush's term, he introduced a new stream buffer rule in which he basically eviscerated the old and gave many more exemptions and, as I quoted, put in a new rule in 2008 that said that not only did it loosen protection, it allowed for the dumping of this residue from mining into the streams if avoiding disturbance of the stream is not potentially or reasonably possible. So what it said is that you can dump. If you can't figure out what else to do, you can dump.

Immediately that was challenged in the courts. By 2014, the Federal courts overturned Bush's stream buffer rule. That is where we were by 2014. It was overturned by the courts even though it was never fully implemented to change the Reagan rule.

Then what happened right after that, in February 2014, the majority party then said, ''Let's put up the loosening of the buffer rule by having now put the Bush rule into legislation.''

Well, that was voted down. That came out of this House, but never was voted upon and never got to the President's desk.

Then what happened in the omnibus bill is they decided to change from direct opposition by weakening the rule to delaying the rule. They said, ''Well, let's put in a 1-year delay.'' This December that was one of the riders in the appropriations omnibus, but that was taken out at the last minute.

Then we held a hearing in Natural Resources on this new bill that is before us, H.R. 1644, which occurred, as we all know, in May of 2015. We held a hearing on this stream buffer rule to delay the new rule that was going to be coming out in 3 years. But we had the delay in it. We held that hearing 2 months before the rule was even proposed.

So we are delaying a rule that was first proposed months before we even actually saw what we were delaying in that rule. Then what happens is that we are now here to vote on a bill that delays the action for 3 years.

□ 1445

It is really all about delay. It is not about the policy, because the policy, we would give at least a chance to work with this new stream protection rule if we were really dealing with the policy and seeing what needs to be improved upon where we are. We are going back to delaying it, the new implementation.

Why did it take from 2008 until now to really come up with a new stream protection rule?

Well, in large part that was due to the majority party's multiyear investigation into the rule. We had various subpoenas and tens of thousands of pages of documents, but in the end we found no political misconduct. All we did was to delay the implementation of a new rule from even coming out and costing the taxpayers money.

There were political shenanigans going on in the rule, even though they found no real political shenanigans going on. However, we had 12 hearings to deal with political shenanigans. The administration's proposed rule comes out in July. It is now January, over 7 months.

How many hearings have we heard on the proposed rule? How many? I think the answer is zero. So we have never discussed the proposed rule. We are now voting to delay it, without ever discussing what it is, and it is just completely irresponsible to be now voting on something that stops a rule in its tracks that we have never had time to discuss.

Now, we know that this bill isn't going to go anywhere. Even if the Senate was to pass it, the President has already issued a veto threat.

So instead of this bad rerun, where the majority now is trying to evade and block this rule for the fourth time, maybe we should take a look at some of these environmental consequences and health impacts of mountaintop removal mining; look at the proposed rule and try to work with the administration to really come up with something that protects communities, instead of just attacking and, if that doesn't work, delaying.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) who has done an excellent job on the committee representing the folks of West Virginia.

Mr. MOONEY from West Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman LAMBORN and Chairman BISHOP for their leadership in getting this bill to the floor, and my friend, BILL JOHNSON, for his continued support on this issue.

It is imperative that we pass our bill, H.R. 1644, the Supporting Transparent Regulatory and Environmental Actions in Mining Act, also known as the STREAM Act.

My bill delays the implementation of the Obama administration's stream protection rule. When the rewrite of the rule was first proposed, the Office of Surface Mining described it as a ''minor'' regulation that would only impact one coal region. They could not be more wrong.

This rule contains sweeping changes that modify 475 existing rules and is over 2,500 pages in length. Taken together, these changes will destroy up to 77,000 coal mining jobs nationwide, including up to 52,000 in the Appalachian region.

This would be devastating to States, like my home State of West Virginia, that have already been hit hard by President Obama's continuous war on coal. Between 5,000 and 10,000 jobs in western mining States will be lost, between 5,000 and 14,000 jobs will be lost in the interior States, and between 30,000 and 50,000 jobs in the Appalachian region will be lost due to this new stream protection rule.

These new regulations would be catastrophic to the hardworking American families that depend on coal to keep their energy costs low. In my State, 90 percent of power is generated by coal-fired plants.

One recent study showed that if the Obama administration successfully implements its radical environmental policies, the average American family will experience a $1,707-a-year increase in their home energy costs by the year 2025.

The average American family earned $53,657 last year. The average family in West Virginia earned $41,059, which is $12,598 under the national average. This home energy cost increase will be detrimental for all Americans, but especially for West Virginians.

When I campaigned to represent the people of the Second Congressional District of West Virginia, I promised that I would do all I could to fight for the coal industry and the hardworking men and women of our State. You have to understand that these jobs in West Virginia are good-paying jobs. These are jobs that families rely on to put food on the table and provide for the health and safety of their families.

This STREAM Act is completely unnecessary. Going after these jobs is callous and wrong.

West Virginia and our country need the STREAM Act to pass the House and the Senate and be signed into law. I urge my colleagues in the House to vote for this important bill today.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, not long ago, the Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN, said that he wanted to make the House an ''ideas factory.'' But with this bill today, it is clear that the only items being produced by the House are cookie-cutters, because we have done this before, again and again and again.

House Republicans have made it their mission to kill the stream protection rule and protect the ability of coal companies to dump their mining waste wherever they want. They didn't see the rule until last July, but that hasn't kept them from a 5-year crusade to prioritize mining company profits over the health and welfare of nearby communities, wildlife, and the environment.

First, they carried out a multiyear investigation into this rule, holding no less than 12 hearings and demanding tens of thousands of pages of documents, and ultimately coming up with nothing. Then they passed a bill last Congress to block the rule. Actually, they liked it so much, they passed the bill twice. Those bills, however, went nowhere.

This Congress, they included a rider on the appropriations bill to block this rule and voted down my amendment to strip the rider out. The rider was eventually removed before the bill became law.

This bill will suffer the same fate. It will not become law. President Obama has said he would rightly veto this bill, and there are not nearly enough votes to override that veto.

So why are we wasting this Chamber's time on this meaningless cookie-cutter legislation when we could be facing the real energy crises confronting the Nation, such as admitting that climate change is real and helping coal mining regions make a smooth transition off dirty fuel?

But if we want to talk about the stream protection rule and the devastating impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining, we would have a hearing on it in the Natural Resources Committee, and I would welcome such a hearing.

But, as my colleague and friend from California has pointed out, despite the 12 hearings the majority held on this rule before they ever read it, they have not held one since it was published. It is almost as if their minds were made up about the rule before it even came out. That doesn't sound much like an idea factory to me, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), a member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for the time to speak regarding this important legislation, which I believe would help relieve the overregulation that we have seen in recent years in the coal industry.

The coal mining industry has supported countless jobs in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District for generations and continues to do so. In addition to jobs, coal also helps provide millions of Americans with affordable and reliable energy.

However, overregulation, such as the stream buffer rule, has taken a big toll on our region. Layoffs have affected miners and companies across Pennsylvania, as these job creators continue to face unprecedented regulatory challenges.

Reports have indicated that the rewrite of the stream buffer zone rule from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement would lead to the elimination of 7,000 mining jobs and cause economic harm in 22 States.

With the rewritten regulations proposed, this bill introduces a bit of common sense, Mr. Chairman. It seeks to make sure that the regulation is based on proven science, requires a study on the strength of existing stream buffer rules, and, finally, seeks to end duplicative rulemaking. This is the least we can do to help limit the strain and provide some certainty for coal companies and, quite frankly, families who make their living in that industry where so many jobs are in the communities that we serve.

As a cosponsor of this legislation, I strongly support it, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on final passage.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH).

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

In recent weeks, we have learned about the water contamination problems in Flint, Michigan. By now, many of us have seen angry mothers and fathers on local television there, holding up water that looks like this, demanding a response from government officials.

I think we all support the steps that the State and Federal Government are now taking to ensure that the water in Flint is safe for families to drink. But what if the legislation we are debating right now prevented government officials from taking that action? There would obviously be an outcry from Members on both sides of the aisle, and the bill would likely be defeated, as it should be.

I am here on the floor today to say that this bill does, in fact, block government officials from protecting the water supply, not for the people of Flint, but for families in Appalachia and other coal mining communities.

This water isn't from Flint, Michigan. It is from a well near a mountaintop removal site in eastern Kentucky. This orange water is what comes out of

taps in much of Appalachia, where water is contaminated by toxic mine waste from the reckless practice of mountaintop removal mining.

I have talked to teachers in eastern Kentucky who tell me that when the children in their classes draw their environment, they draw the water orange because that is what they see. How tragic is that?

I have had the opportunity to fly over mountaintop removal sites and the areas around them, and the water looks a lot different than it should, a lot of colors that come out of Crayola boxes.

Explosives used in the MTR process pollute the air, and the exposed rock and particulate matter allow heavy metals and toxins to leach into and poison the water. The situation is made even worse by coal companies who are allowed to dump mining waste directly into waterways.

These actions, and the consequences of mountaintop removal, have created a public health crisis, with families living near or downstream of these mining sites experiencing higher rates of cancer, heart disease, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, birth defects, and infant mortality.

More than 2,000 miles of Appalachian streams have been poisoned since mountaintop removal began about 40 years ago. The Obama administration is trying to respond to that crisis with the commonsense, scientifically sound stream buffer rule. This proposed rule would take some important, although modest, steps to limit mountaintop removal practices and protect the water supply in mining communities.

This bill would stop those efforts. It allows coal companies to continue to destroy mountains, pollute water supplies, and endanger the health of families living in the surrounding communities.

Whether in Flint, Michigan, or eastern Kentucky, all families deserve water that is clean and safe and a government that cares and responds when their health is in jeopardy.

I, therefore, urge my colleagues to oppose this dangerous measure.

Mr. LAMBORN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to recognize a Member in just a second. But in response to Mr. YARMUTH, I would just like to point out that the Office of Surface Mining has left States out of the discussions. States like Kentucky are not allowed to collaborate in this process, and that is unfortunate, because I think Kentucky and other States have something to contribute to this dialogue and this issue. So that is what the STREAM Act that we are going to vote on in a little bit would accomplish.

□ 1500

It brings the States back into the equation.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON). He has been a stalwart defender of the coal industry and the future that coal has in the energy and economy of our country.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. I thank the chairman for those kind words.

Mr. Chairman, this is an extremely important topic, and I couldn't agree more with what the gentleman has just said.

This is largely an overreach by a Federal agency stepping all over the rights of the States to regulate their own use of their natural resources.

So, for that reason, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1644, the STREAM Act, legislation that requires OSM to extend its new stream buffer rule while the National Academy of Sciences studies how current OSM rules affect the industry.

Mr. Chairman, OSM's rule will cost jobs, increase electricity prices, and jeopardize grid reliability, along with usurping states' rights. Stop and think about it for a second. Shouldn't Federal agencies understand what that all means before enacting a rule like this?

The Supreme Court certainly does. The Supreme Court has already told the EPA, for example, in one instance: You have got to consider the economic impacts of the rulemaking that you are doing.

According to recent studies, OSM's proposed rule will have several very negative impacts. Let's talk about how it is going to cost jobs. As many as 80,000 people could lose their jobs. Now, OSM said it is only 7,000, but a recent study says that it could be upwards of 80,000 people.

OSM denies this job loss because they say these jobs will be replaced by jobs created to comply with the rule. Something tells me that those supposed new jobs are not going to be in places where mining is going on, in places like eastern and southeastern Ohio.

You are talking about entire communities rolling up the sidewalks. It is going to raise electricity prices and affect the energy grid reliability.

Roughly 64 percent of Ohio's energy comes from coal. Ohio's electricity prices are currently below the national average. In total, 22 States rely on coal as their primary fuel source.

This is going to usurp states' rights. State regulators who perform 97 percent of regulatory activities are completely left out of this rulemaking process. In fact, all but two cooperating agency States have terminated their agreement because of OSM's actions.

Look, this administration and this rule reflect a callous disregard for American coal, American coal miners, their families, the businesses that rely on the energy, and the industry as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge my colleagues to put politics aside. This is about an industry. It is about people's lives. I urge my colleagues to support the STREAM Act.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the Member from Virginia (Mr. BEYER).

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the STREAM Act. We should not willfully delay the stream protection rule. I have seen firsthand the impacts of coal mining, both positive and negative. I spent 9 years visiting the coal counties in Virginia: Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Wise, Russell, and others.

When times are good, there are good incomes and nice cars. When times are hard, times like today, when we are not mining much coal mostly because of the abundance of natural gas, then things are pretty sad.

When I was Lieutenant Governor of Virginia during the 1990s, mountaintop removal became the most prevalent coal mining technique in central Appalachia. Surely, coal can have a positive impact on local economies. But we also have to look at the impact it has on the environment and the health of these same communities.

My good friend, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, has said that these are about the lives of people. Absolutely right. And we have shown callous disregard for the health of the people who live in these communities.

The citizens of these same Virginia coal counties have by far the worst health outcomes of anybody in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The cost-benefit analysis, yes, but we are not doing anything to stop coal companies from mining coal or even mountaintop removal. We are just demanding that it be done responsibly.

It takes tons of rocks and soil to expose underlying coal seams, but these are placed in valleys, headwater streams filled with all this displaced material. This can have significant impacts on water quality.

West Virginia University—not one of those liberal universities in New England—a West Virginia study in 2012 found that mountaintop coal mining has adverse impacts on surface and groundwater quality. The Congressional Research Service, nonpartisan, said, since 1992, almost 1,200 miles of streams were buried by surface coal mining practices.

The cumulative effects of such surface coal mining operations include, number one, deforestation, which has been linked to harming the aquatic community; two, accelerated sediment and nutrient transport; and, three, increased algae production.

Surface mining has also been responsible for most of the huge flooding in central Appalachia because, when you disturb natural streambeds, cover them with mine spoils, destroy the vegetation, all the topography is different.

Virginia Tech has been working with the coal industry for over 30 years to mitigate these effects, to reclaim the streams and lands that have been disturbed, and a lot of progress has been made. But we can and should do all that we can to protect our critical headwater and small streams before the impacts occur.

Water monitoring found that Kelly Branch Mine in Wise County, Virginia,

dumped toxic pollutant selenium into streams at levels far above the State water quality standards and without a permit to allow such pollution.

As a result of a citizen suit, Southern Coal Corp. has since agreed to do the environmental cleanup, but we shouldn't need the lawsuits which too often lead to the bankruptcies of the coal companies.

Lawsuits like this make it unsurprising that a group of researchers from West Virginia University—again—and Washington State University published a study in 2011 on the association between exposure to mountaintop removal mining and the increased rate of birth defects in central Appalachia.

This again gets back to callous disregard for the people who live in central Appalachia. These people have been paying for the externalized costs of mountaintop removal for far too long, and local communities have been suffering life-threatening health problems and a damaged ecosystem.

This is why, with Congressman LOWENTHAL and Congresswoman ESTY, we offered an amendment to ensure that this bill paid attention to the negative health impacts. Unfortunately, the amendment was not made in order. But we can't continue to ignore this.

Adjusted for every other factor, overwhelming scientific evidence links the practice of surface coal mining with elevated rates of serious health problems, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, and pulmonary disease, and overall mortality rates are about 20 percent higher in the coalfields than the national average.

The ecological integrity of the streams is an indicator of the human cancer mortality rates. So the folks that live near these streams are much more likely to die and die young.

This bill destroys the proposed protection for the people who live in southwest Virginia and coalfields across the country.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote against the STREAM Act. The people of Appalachia deserve better.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, in response to a statement that was just made, let me point out that Johns Hopkins researchers—maybe one of the leading medical institutions in our country—found that ''no increased risk of birth defects was observed from births from mountaintop mining counties after adjustment for or stratification by hospital of birth.''

So there are other issues going on that do affect the health in these areas. But you can't blame it on mountaintop mining, at least not according to Johns Hopkins.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS), who is a valuable member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, if you have been listening to this debate thus far, you would believe that we are only talking about mountaintop mining.

Well, I want to assure you the bill that I support that is on the floor today is also trying to protect non-mountaintop mining because the rules that have been proposed by the Obama administration apply to all coal miners.

They apply to non-mountaintop mining as well, including mining in my State of Wyoming and the mining that can occur in the State of Montana, to my north, that has enormous undeveloped coal reserves.

My State of Wyoming has been the number one coal-producing State in this Nation since 1986, for 30 years. The reclamation of those mines is state of the art.

If you go to the top of the tipples at those mines and look around, you cannot tell, if you are an untrained eye, whether the land has been mined and reclaimed or undisturbed and unmined.

It is because the quality of reclamation that is required by the State of Wyoming is so state of the art that the water is clean, the land is reclaimed, the wildlife returns. In fact, the wildlife prefers to graze on the land that has been reclaimed, as opposed to the land that has not been mined.

States have proven that they can regulate and return properties to a condition that Americans can be proud of and know that we will be safe. Yet, the States have been shut out of this regulatory process.

Legislation which we are discussing today, the STREAM Act, would allow and restore States their rightful place in this discussion.

Where the expertise lies is in the States. They are the ones that should be included in the crafting of any Federal legislation and, in my view, should be left to the States where the expertise lies and where the differences between mining on non-mountain property and a mountain property can be properly addressed.

Applying this stream buffer rule, which the administration proposes, to non-mountaintop mines is absurd. I would further assert that the expertise to deal with mountaintop mining lies in the States where that mining is currently occurring.

I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. LAMBORN. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. LUMMIS. I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. LAMBORN. I have seen some of the operations in the great State of Wyoming. Isn't it true that the reclaimed and restored land does not have the invasive species that we have unfortunately seen in this country in recent decades?

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. CURBELO of Florida). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. LAMBORN. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

So without the invasive species in the restored land, you could almost say, couldn't you, that the land is better than it was before?

Mrs. LUMMIS. Reclaiming my time, the answer is yes, for several reasons. It is because the mix of grasses that are used to reseed the land that has been mined and reclaimed is a mix of grasses that provides for the health that allows for grasses that don't naturally clump, grasses that spread out, to be on the reclaimed land.

So when it rains, you don't have the kind of running off of the topsoil that would occur if the grasses are the type of grasses that tend to clump, instead of cover the ground uniformly.

So that is one of the reasons why the reclaimed land actually is a better trap for water. As we know, when water seeps into the ground, the ground naturally filters the water. So it allows for less runoff of topsoil and allows for the rain to seep into the ground.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has again expired.

Mr. LAMBORN. I yield the gentlewoman from Wyoming an additional 30 seconds.

Mrs. LUMMIS. The soil itself is a natural filter for this water. These are the kind of things that States' experts know, and their expertise should be inserted into any rulemaking process.

That is part of the reason that I support the STREAM Act. I support my colleagues from the East and appreciate their attention to this important piece of legislation.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chair, I would like to talk in response to some of the points raised by my esteemed colleagues from the other side about the doom and gloom of job loss numbers that they presented. I believe 70,000 jobs will be lost with the proposed rule or we just heard also possibly 80,000 direct mining jobs might be lost.

These are, indeed, frightening numbers. Unfortunately, they are not credible and not based upon any kind of evidence. Those estimates which we are hearing come from a study that was paid for by the National Mining Association, and those numbers are the same, that 70- or 80,000, as the total number of coal mining jobs currently in the United States, according to the Energy Information Administration.

□ 1515

In fact, the National Mining Association study that we have heard about projects up to 52,000 coal mining job losses in Appalachia as a result of the administration's proposed rule. There are less than 50,000 coal miners in that entire region today, so apparently this rule creates jobs before it costs jobs.

We shouldn't be surprised that the industry would come up with such inflated numbers. After all, they don't need to be accurate. They just need to scare people, much in the same way as the American public was told that the Affordable Care Act is going to destroy an untold number of jobs, except that

we have now added 14 million private sector jobs since that act was signed into law.

Today we should be extremely skeptical of industry scare tactics. Actually, the Regulatory Impact Analysis for the stream protection rule found, in fact, not 70,000, not 80,000, but there would be a net loss of only 10 jobs. This is a small price to pay for cleaner water and healthier communities.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In response to my good friend and colleague Representative LOWENTHAL, I would like to say that just in today's Wall Street Journal, Arch Coal revealed that it has declared bankruptcy. They are one of the top coal producers in this country. I would say that the loss of jobs and this administration's war on coal is actually a staggering and frightening phenomenon, and that is why we need the STREAM Act.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS).

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. I thank the chairman.

I rise today in support of the pending legislation, H.R. 1644, the STREAM Act.

Appalachia is suffering. Years of burdensome regulations from this administration have had a devastating impact on coal. West Virginia miners, families, and businesses are paying the price.

Since 2012, according to The Wall Street Journal, 27 coal mining companies in Appalachia have filed for bankruptcy. In just the past 4 years, we have seen 7,000 coal miners lose their jobs in West Virginia. Why? Because each and every day, President Obama's EPA and the Office of Surface Mining are regulating coal mines out of business and putting miners on the unemployment line.

Coal miners are the heart and soul of communities in West Virginia, and the significant layoffs we are experiencing are simply heartbreaking. The President, the EPA, and the OSM continue to ignore the economic pain they are inflicting.

The stream buffer zone rule, which the STREAM Act would halt, is yet another example of unnecessary regulation, one that will increase energy costs for American families and businesses.

The OSM's new stream buffer zone rule will lead to thousands more job losses in West Virginia and across the Nation. An independent study found it would eliminate at least 40,000 direct coal mining jobs on top of the 42,000 indirect jobs and other jobs that have been lost just since 2011. Even OSM's own analysis estimates that this rule would result in the loss of thousands of jobs. That does not include the thousands of jobs that depend on coal indirectly: our Nation's small businesses, equipment manufacturers, transportation, and others.

Mr. Chairman, this is unacceptable. It is also the reason why I helped secure a provision in the omnibus that mandates that OSM work with the States. I support the STREAM Act, and I encourage its passage.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 8½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Colorado has 9½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I would like to respond to my colleague's comments about the lack of any health impacts of mountaintop mining, quoting a study from Johns Hopkins University about the lack of any identifiable birth defects that are correlated with coal mining or mountaintop mining.

I would like to again read from the Science article of January 8, 2010, called ''Mountaintop Mining Consequences,'' a collaborative effort of scientists from the University of Maryland; from Duke University; from the University of Minnesota; from West Virginia University; from Wake Forest University; from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio; from the University of California at Berkeley; from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and from the same Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. They found their results on the potential for human health impacts were this: adult hospitalizations for chronic pulmonary disorders and hypertension are elevated as a function of county level coal production, as are rates of mortality, lung cancer, and chronic heart, lung, and kidney diseases. That is what the scientists have found that are the result of a potential for human health impacts.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I strongly support H.R. 1644. I think it is really important that sometimes we actually talk to people who work in coal country, people who live in coal country, people who have generationally been part of coal mining.

Too often I come to this floor in America's House and I hear all these different things that are going on. If you want to talk about health, let's talk about the health of our community. Let's talk about the tens of thousands of jobs that will be lost because of more regulations.

We know that commodity prices will fluctuate. The one thing we know for sure is that regulation will not. It will forever put a price tag on this product that will make it impossible for it to compete on the open market. Yet we will sit here and we will talk about things that really aren't true, and we will say it in a manner that we say this is so bad, this product is so horrible, do you realize what it is doing? And my answer is, yes, I do. It employees tens of thousands of Americans.

These are not, by the way, Republican jobs. These are Democrat jobs for the most part. These are American jobs. These are red, white, and blue jobs. This is about a product that has been the workforce of American energy. This makes it possible for America to compete anywhere in the world because of low energy costs.

I would just ask my friends, while it may become a political issue and it may seem like it is a great talking point, you need to walk in those communities. You need to go into those schools. You need to go into those towns. You need to go into those homes. You need to go into those mines. You need to look into the faces and the eyes of the people who bring this tremendous product out of the ground and tell them what they have been doing generationally is horrible for the country. You need to tell them that the way they have been making a living, the way they have been putting a roof over the heads of their children, the way they have been putting food on the table for their kids, the way they have been putting clothes on their backs, and the way they have been preparing for their future is bad; you have acted terribly in doing this, and we need ought to spank you.

Really minor adjustments—475 modifications. That is not minor; that is major. That makes the cost of this product go off the charts. It doesn't matter that it changes anything. This is one promise the President kept.

When he was a candidate running for this office, he said: If you want to continue to make power, make electricity, by using coal-fired power plants, you can do that, but I will bankrupt you.

He has kept that promise. Promise made, promise kept. He has turned his back on over a quarter of a million people who depend on coal for their livelihood. He has turned his back on an America that is looking to take advantage of gifts that were given to us by God—natural resources.

We have not turned our back on health; we have not turned our back on the future of our children; but what we also will not do is we will not turn our back on onerous regulations that do nothing to make it better for our people.

All we are asking for is to take a really good look at this. The stream protection rule, that doesn't make sense. The Clean Power Plan didn't make sense. It makes sense to some because it will put them out of business to say: All right. Fine. We need to do this to really hurt these folks.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LAMBORN. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. It really comes down to this. We are at a crossroads in this country. We have to present really bold visions of where we

think the country should be going. We need to talk about policies that are going to make America stronger. We need to talk about policies that put Americans back to work. We need to talk about policies that the American people can look at and say: Do you know what? There is a clear difference. There is a new day coming for America. There is a new way to run the government. There is a new way to look at regulations and understand that these aren't helping; they are hurting.

I would just ask all of my colleagues very strongly to support H.R. 1644. Do the right thing for America. Forget about whether to wear a red shirt or a blue shirt. Think about the red, white, and blue that we stand for every day.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just like to respond to some of the attacks from the other side that are supporting the STREAM Act that the administration's stream protection rule is really an attempt to destroy jobs, it is really part of, as one of my colleagues has said, the war on coal. But nothing could be further from the truth. What we are talking about are commonsense protections for communities.

Contrary to the Republican chorus that there is a war on coal, let me read to you, Members, that the Energy Information Administration estimates that U.S. coal production for 2014 was up 14 million short tons from 2013, and that this production growth is going to continue through 2030. While coal exports are predicted to drop in the short term, they are going to reach historic high grounds around 2030.

We are not talking about destroying these communities. We are talking about allowing these communities to thrive, to be healthy, to protect the valleys, to protect the streams, to protect the ecology, to protect the public health, and to allow us to have mountaintop mining, but safe and healthy mountaintop mining. That is what we are talking about.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague, Mr. LAMBORN.

This is a very important issue. I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. MOONEY, for sponsoring this piece of legislation that not only impacts his home State of West Virginia and the other coal-producing States in the Midwest, but also my home State of Illinois.

Coal production in my home State is a significant driver in our State's economy, particularly the part of the State that I represent. I would not be here today, Mr. Chairman, without what coal has meant to my hometown of Taylorville in my home county of Christian County.

I saw in the mid-nineties what a signature on a piece of paper right here in Washington, D.C., can do to destroy a local economy. In Illinois alone, today, coal jobs employ nearly 5,000 workers. Just a few short years ago, that was many more. The industry contributes $2 billion to our State's economy.

Unfortunately, this proposed stream protection rule is another example of this Obama administration waging war on coal. By their own estimates, OSM claims this rule would kill 7,000 coal jobs. That is 2,000 more than exist in the State of Illinois today. Through independent analysis, it shows job losses may be even more in the tens of thousands.

This rule is not only going to hurt coal miners, but also those in my district and others that work at coal-fired power plants. It is going to hurt consumers. It is going to hurt the poorest of the poor in this country, who are going to have to pay higher rates when base load generation facilities that burn coal go offline.

□ 1530

These coal-fired power plants, Mr. Chairman, provide some of the best paying jobs in my district. Where are they going to go to find work when this administration's war on coal takes their jobs away?

I have advocated for important language in working with my colleagues Mr. MOONEY, Mr. LAMBORN, BILL JOHNSON from Ohio, JIM RENACCI, and others. We want to make sure that we have the States sign off on this OSM stream protection rule before the Federal Government can come in and take those coal mining jobs away.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that this administration's war on coal isn't going to stop today. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this legislation.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to close as soon as the opposing side has closed.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I would like to read a few lines from a letter that was sent from a coalition of 35 national and local groups which are strongly opposed to this bill.

They write:

''The proposed stream protection rule is essential to protect the waters in mining regions and to ensure that communities will have viable economies after the resource is extracted and mining ceases.''

They go on to point out that mountaintop removal mining is ''responsible for the destruction of over 500 mountains and approximately 2,000 miles of stream channels across central Appalachia. This form of coal mining devastates both the thriving natural ecosystems of the Appalachian Mountains as well as entire communities of residents who have lived on their homesteads for generations.''

They conclude:

''Please oppose the STREAM Act, and allow the proposed stream protection rule to proceed without congressional interference so that communities living in the shadows of mining sites can have safe water resources.''

I also have a letter of opposition from the United Auto Workers and eight other organizations, which state:

''This bill would put costly and unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles into the already overburdened regulatory process with the sole intent of ensuring that coal companies can continue to destroy streams and coal wastes. We urge you to vote against this legislation both to protect mining communities and to reject attempts to delay and frustrate improved regulatory protections.''

Mr. Chairman, I urge the opposition to H.R. 1644.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In my closing remarks, I would like to highlight the findings of an economic impact analysis of the draft stream buffer zone rule, released in 2015, issued against the Obama administration regulation. The study was done by the ENVIRON International Corporation.

ENVIRON found that 64 percent of the Nation's coal reserves would be sterilized, or frozen, resulting in an annual loss in value that ranges between $14 billion to $29 billion.

The proposed rule hits longwall mining particularly hard, causing a decrease of 47 to 85 percent in recoverable longwall coal reserves. Longwall mining is considered the safest, most efficient, and most profitable type of underground mining.

Sterilizing so much of the Nation's coal reserves will have a significant impact on employment, ranging from a loss of 40,000 to about 77,000 direct jobs and 112,000 to 280,000 indirect jobs from those businesses and industries that provide goods and services to the mining sector.

These jobs are high-paying, family-wage jobs, with excellent benefits, including health care. The economic impact to the coal-producing States and counties will be staggering.

The STREAM Act instills sanity into the Office of Surface Mining's rulemaking process by requiring transparency in the scientific products used by OSM in any rulemaking that they have. It narrowly focuses the stream buffer zone rule to actual stream buffer zones and not 474 other regulations.

It also allows States with the expertise in regulating the Nation's coal mines to participate in the assessment of the effectiveness of the existing rule. Finally, it reins in OSM's overreach into areas outside of its statutory jurisdiction.

Mr. Chairman, there are two great ironies in this whole war on coal by the administration. Actually, it is a war on the American people. It is a war on working families because it not only costs high-paying jobs, but it drives up

the cost of energy. When you drive up the cost of energy, that takes money out of people's pockets, and they have less money left over to take care of their families and to provide for their futures.

If the war on coal by this administration were successful, not only would you have those negative impacts, but many of the environmentalists would just create another war.

There is already one major group that says, ''Oh, we don't even like natural gas,'' which is being touted as the replacement for coal. They don't even like that.

There will be some other reason to which they will find objection with regard to whatever takes coal's place, would that day ever come.

When you run the numbers, the environmental impact of getting rid of coal completely for electrical generation would have a negligible impact on any future impact on the global climate.

Let's pass the STREAM Act as it protects jobs, it protects rural communities, and it protects the American taxpayer. I ask that my colleagues support this important piece of legislation and vote for its final passage.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the STREAM Act, which is a dangerous and unnecessary bill that would delay the finalization of the Department of Interior's Stream Protection Rule. This critical rule will improve methods for monitoring and preventing damage to surface and groundwater from mountaintop removal coal mining.

Surface mining in the steep slopes of Appalachia has disrupted the biological integrity of an area about the size of Delaware, buried approximately 2,000 miles of streams with mining waste, and contaminated downstream areas with toxic elements. Because of this dangerous practice, people have been drinking the byproducts of coal waste from mountaintop removal for more than two decades. Rather than clean and clear water running out of their faucets, the people of Appalachia are left with orange or black liquid instead.

The health problems caused by exposure to these chemicals and heavy metals include cancers, organ failure, and learning disabilities. Not only that, but there are multiple cases of children suffering from asthma, headaches, nausea, and other symptoms likely due to toxic contamination from coal dust. This is environmental injustice.

The people of Appalachia should have the right to send their children to a school not threatened by billions of gallons of coal slurry; the right to preserve the streams and valleys that have been part of their way of life; and the right to protect their own land, no matter how much coal might be underneath.

I have consistently introduced legislation, the Clean Water Protection Act, which would put a stop to mountaintop removal mining, and I plan to reintroduce the bill in the beginning of this year. I urge my colleagues to oppose the legislation before us today that will only perpetuate the dangerous practice of mountaintop removal mining.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute, recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources, printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 1644

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 ''Supporting Transparent Regulatory and Environmental Actions in Mining Act'' or the ''STREAM Act''.

SEC. 2. PUBLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTS FOR RULES AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS, AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENTS.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Title V of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 530. PUBLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTS FOR RULES AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSES, AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENTS.

''(a) REQUIREMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make publicly available 90 days before the publication of any draft, proposed, supplemental, final, or emergency rule under this Act, or any related environmental analysis, economic assessment, policy, or guidance, each scientific product the Secretary relied on in developing the rule, environmental analysis, economic assessment, policy, or guidance.

''(2) FEDERALLY FUNDED SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTS.—For those scientific products receiving Federal funds in part, or in full, the Secretary shall also make publicly available the raw data used for the federally funded scientific product.

''(b) COMPLIANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Failure to make publicly available any scientific product 90 days before the publication of—

''(A) any draft, proposed, or supplemental rule, environmental analysis, economic assessment, policy or guidance shall extend by one day the comment period for each day such scientific product is not made available; or

''(B) any final or emergency rule shall delay the effective date of the final or emergency rule by 60 days plus each day the scientific product is withheld.

''(2) DELAY LONGER THAN 6 MONTHS.—If the Secretary fails to make publicly available any scientific product for longer than 6 months, the Secretary shall withdraw the rule, environmental analysis, economic assessment, policy, or guidance.

''(3) EXCEPTION.—This subsection shall not apply if a delay in the publication of a rule will pose an imminent and severe threat to human life.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.—The term 'publicly available' means published on the Internet via a publicly accessible website under the Secretary's control.

''(2) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.—The term 'environmental analysis' means environmental impact statements and environmental assessments prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

''(3) SCIENTIFIC PRODUCT.—The term 'scientific product' means any product that—

''(A) employs the scientific method for inventorying, monitoring, experimenting, studying, researching, or modeling purposes; and

''(B) is relied upon by the Secretary in the development of any rule, environmental analysis, economic assessment, policy, or guidance.

''(4) RAW DATA.—The term 'raw data'—

''(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), means any computational process, or quantitative or qualitative data, that is relied on in a scientific product to support a finding or observation; and

''(B) does not include such data or processes—

''(i) that are protected by copyright;

''(ii) that contain personally identifiable information, sensitive intellectual property, trade secrets, or business-sensitive information; or

''(iii) to the extent that such data and processes are covered by the provisions of part C of title XI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320d et seq.), regulations promulgated pursuant to section 264(c) of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. 1320d–2 note), and the provisions of subtitle D of title XIII of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (42 U.S.C. 17921 et seq.).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to such title the following:

''Sec. 530. Publication of scientific products for rules and related environmental analyses, and economic assessments.''.

SEC. 3. STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CERTAIN RULE.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Title VII of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1291 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 722. STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CERTAIN RULE.

''(a) STUDY.—No later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the STREAM Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Interstate Mining Compact Commission and its State members, shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Sciences, for execution by the Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, to conduct a comprehensive study on the regulatory effectiveness of the 'Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Operations Permanent Regulatory Program; Stream Buffer Zones and Fish, Wildlife, and Related Environmental Values' Final Rule published June 30, 1983 (48 Fed. Reg. 30312), and amended September 30, 1983 (48 Fed. Reg. 44777), in protecting perennial and intermittent streams through the use of stream buffer zones. If the study determines the existence of regulatory inefficiencies, then the study shall include suggestions and recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of the rule.

''(b) RESULTS OF THE STUDY.—Not later than 2 years after execution of the arrangements under subsection (a), the Board on Earth Sciences and Resources shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, appropriate Federal agencies, and the Governor of each of the States represented on the Interstate Mining Compact Commission the results of the study conducted under subsection (a).

''(c) FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior $1,000,000 for fiscal year 2016 and $1,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 for the purposes of this section.

''(d) PROHIBITION ON NEW REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall not issue any final or other regulations pertaining to the proposed rule entitled 'Stream Protection Rule' (80 Fed. Reg. 44436) or relating to stream buffer zones, until one year after the Secretary has submitted the results of

the study in accordance with subsection (b). If the Secretary proposes any such regulations after such submission, the Secretary shall take into consideration the findings of the study.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to such title the following:

''Sec. 720. Subsidence.
''Sec. 721. Research.
''Sec. 722. Study of the effectiveness of certain rule.''.

SEC. 4. COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER FEDERAL LAWS.

Section 702 of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1291) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsection (d) and (e), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

''(c) COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER FEDERAL LAWS.—Nothing in this Act authorizes the Secretary to take any action by rule, regulation, notice, policy, guidance, or order that duplicates, implements, interprets, enforces, or determines any action taken under an Act referred to in subsection (a) or any regulation or rule promulgated thereunder.''.

The Acting CHAIR. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in House Report 114–395. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. LAMBORN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 114–395.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 5, line 17, strike ''and''.

Page 5, line 20, strike the period and insert ''; and''.

Page 5, after line 20, insert the following:

''(C) is not protected under copyright laws.''.

Page 9, line 3, strike ''1291'' and insert ''1292''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 583, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I believe that this amendment is really technical in nature. It does two things.

First, we ensure that the legislation does not infringe on copyright laws.

According to the largest private publishers of scientific research, government-funded studies will be made publicly available ''where the government has funded the publication of a private sector, peer-reviewed article or where the author of the article is a government employee . . . we do not dispute that any such article couldn't be made publicly available.''

We are addressing that concern that was raised during the markup of this bill.

Second, we identified a technical error in a U.S. Code citation and corrected it.

I ask for a ''yes'' vote on this amendment.

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, this amendment makes a small change to section 2 to make the bill somewhat more palatable to scientific publishers.

So I will not oppose it, but it does nothing to actually improve the bill itself nor the requirement surrounding the advance publication of scientific data.

Today we received a letter from the Union of Concerned Scientists that says they are strongly opposed to H.R. 1644.

The scientists write: ''This proposal is just another attempt of what is becoming an old and tired song, an attempt to cloak an effort to block commonsense regulations in the guise of transparency.''

They continue: ''The amended version improves the original bill by exempting certain types of data from public disclosure. However, the language is so vague it will make it very difficult for scientists doing federally funded research to know whether or not the data they have spent years collecting may be prematurely disclosed before they can publish their own studies. At the very least, this discourages scientists from doing any crucial research that may be required to be publicly disclosed.''

They conclude: ''If passed, H.R. 1644 would inhibit the Department of the Interior's ability to carry out its science- and evidence-based responsibility to protect human health and the environment. We strongly recommend a 'no' vote on H.R. 1644.''

I agree with the scientists on this one.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for not opposing this amendment, and I ask that we vote ''yes'' on it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. KILDEE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 114–395.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 5, line 3, before the period, insert ''or improve drinking water quality''.

Page 8, line 16, before the period, insert '', unless such a rule will improve drinking water quality''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 583, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, first of all, the underlying bill is an attempt to delay the implementation of the stream protection rule, an important rule that protects our Nation's rivers, our streams, and the nearby communities from the effects of mountaintop removal coal mining.

My amendment would not allow any rule that improves drinking water quality to be delayed. Ensuring that we protect our streams and rivers—often important sources of drinking water—is of vital importance.

Listen, I know firsthand something about what happens when regulations are not strong enough to protect drinking water.

Today, in my hometown of Flint, safeguards for better drinking water could have prevented the entire city and upwards of 10,000 children under the age of 6 from being exposed to dangerous levels of lead.

Lead is a deadly neurotoxin that is especially harmful to young children. It can permanently lower the IQ, increase disruptive behavior, and stunt neurological development.

These children in my hometown, many of whom already have great hurdles to overcome because of the misfortune of the ZIP code into which they were born—communities of very high poverty—now must endure another blow to their futures due to the decisions that were outside of their control and the lack of effective protection of their drinking water.

No other community should ever face that same danger, the danger of having their children literally poisoned by unsafe, contaminated drinking water. My amendment will ensure important protections for other communities.

Look, I have seen my community live through this. They continue to live through it. We should be doing everything we can not to weaken protections for drinking water, but to strengthen them to prevent this from ever happening anywhere else.

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

□ 1545

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chair, my heart goes out to my friend and colleague from Flint, Michigan. I share in the difficulties that they are suffering now in that city because of the water supply. I know that his intention is to do everything he can—and I appreciate his work—to help the people of his district, especially when it comes to water supply. I appreciate that.

I do have to point out that the issue that was raised there is not a mining issue. It is from other sources. It is pollution from pulp and paper mills, and it is not a mining issue.

Getting back to this amendment, I do have to point out that already under the law, permitted mines must already adhere to safe drinking water standards and are very heavily regulated by the EPA. The problem with the OSM, Office of Surface Mining, is that they are taking over—it is bureaucratic mission creep—they are taking over some of the EPA functions. Among other good things that the STREAM Act does is it prevents OSM from going down that road, and it leaves clean water issues under the jurisdiction of the EPA.

So we just need to make sure that the government agencies stick to what they know best. The STREAM Act does that. Water quality is really not an issue when it comes to nonmine issues.

I would ask for opposition to this bill.

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, let me first thank the gentleman for his kind words and his concern over my hometown. It is an extraordinarily difficult situation.

Sadly, it is actually the creation of a series of decisions by our State government to switch from the freshest, cleanest water on the planet, the Great Lakes, to the Flint River in order to save a few dollars, and then the failure of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to enforce even the minor protections that it has available to it.

The reason I am offering this amendment and the reason that I offer it on this particular piece of legislation is that, in my hometown, it was led and it was a bad set of decisions made by an emergency financial manager. In another community, it may be another source.

My view—and the reason I offer this amendment—is that we ought to do everything within our power in this Congress to make sure that we protect our environment and particularly protect drinking water. I believe my amendment would do that. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. CARTWRIGHT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 114–395.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. 5. ABANDONED MINE LAND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION.

Title IV of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1231, et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 416. ABANDONED MINE LAND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION.

''Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, amounts that would otherwise be provided under title IV to States certified under section 411(a) shall, subject to appropriations, be distributed to the States and Indian tribes for the purpose of promoting the economic revitalization, diversification, and development in economically distressed communities adversely affected by discharge from abandoned mine lands.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 583, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Chair, my amendment seeks to return abandoned mine lands funding to its originally intended focus, which is to support the communities that are struggling due to their legacy of mining.

This funding, roughly $600 million over 10 years, will assist struggling coal communities in diversifying their economies, increasing human capital development, and stimulating economic growth. The funding for this investment in mining communities comes from States that have been certified by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement as having already reclaimed their abandoned mines.

These States are, therefore, receiving money from a program dedicated to helping communities deal with the impact of mining, but the Federal Government has certified that they have already dealt with those impacts. In fact, one State took $10 million of this funding to renovate a basketball arena.

Meanwhile, States in Appalachia are facing the combined calamity of a collapsing coal industry and the environmental legacy of over a century of mining.

In Scranton, Pennsylvania, for example, that legacy includes 65 million gallons of acid mine runoff every day. Every day, there are 65 million gallons of acid mine runoff flowing into the river. Across northeastern Pennsylvania, there are thousands of miles of streams impacted by mine drainage, many of which are totally devoid of aquatic life.

On top of these environmental impacts, the decreased demand for Appalachian coal has devastated communities and workers who have built their lives and built their families around the coal industry. This amendment is for them and to help rejuvenate these small communities across Appalachia and in other regions.

Nearly all the biggest coal companies in the United States are teetering on the brink of collapse. Several have been removed from the New York Stock Exchange due to their valuations falling too low. Just yesterday, Arch Coal, one of the biggest coal companies in the country, filed for bankruptcy.

For the families that depend on these jobs, these benefits, and these pensions, we have to act. We cannot be dispassionate bystanders as the rug is pulled out from under these communities. They deserve our support.

Now, this amendment recognizes the fact that coal helped to build this country, coal spurred the industrial revolution and powered us through two world wars. The communities of Appalachia that proudly dug the coal that powered America through the 20th century have earned the support they need to diversify their local economies, and that is what this amendment works toward.

The sponsors of the underlying bill, the STREAM Act, purport to be concerned about jobs in the Appalachian regions. If that is their concern, then they should also support my amendment, which will create jobs in the communities that need them most and continue to have to spend money on reclaiming abandoned mines.

For that reason, I urge my colleagues—and especially those of you who represent mining areas, as I do—to vote ''yes'' on this amendment to revitalize historic mining communities.

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

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the Cartwright amendment to the STREAM Act.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Montana is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chair, we in the coal-producing States in the West do pay the majority of AML fees every year, a reminder that Montana and Wyoming have more coal than anyone else in the world. Yet, this language would rip away funding of the AML from our coal-certified States like Montana, but also the tribes. The great Crow Nation depends on these funds.

How can you justify ripping and robbing certified States that pay the majority of the AML funds and tribes away? What does it do? It rips away money that is used for restoration and protects small communities.

Montana has been in the business of mining for over 100 years. We have over

6,700 known abandoned mines and mill sites across our State, and we have worked hard to reclaim many of these areas. Yet, removing the funds from those small communities poses a threat.

Governor Bullock, a Democrat, has also expressed his deep concerns about ending these payments and asked all of the Montana delegation, which there are three of us, to help safeguard this valuable program for the good of all Montanans and the great Crow Nation.

This amendment is disguised as a solution. It doesn't offer a solution. The underlying idea of it is to kill the coal industry. We have seen time and time again excessive overreach, not based on scientific data, but based on an agenda; and the agenda is to kill coal.

In Montana, we love coal. In Wyoming, our neighbor to the south, we understand that coal drives our economy. It helps fund our schools, our bridges, our roads, and our community.

I stand by Montana and I stand by the great Crow Nation and urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS).

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Chairman, this is absolutely illustrative of the old adage: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. If it stops moving, subsidize it.

So here is the deal: This country started mining a lot of coal, so the Federal Government taxed it in 1977 through SMCRA, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. They put a big tax on coal by the ton, not the Btus, by the ton.

Then the coal companies and the coal industry kept moving, and now they want to regulate it. In fact, this administration wants to regulate it out of existence and has said so. Rules are being proposed to regulate the coal industry out of existence. So that is the keep-moving part. Well, they are being very successful at regulating the coal industry out of existence.

Now, we are to step three. If it stops moving, subsidize it. That is what the amendment we are discussing would do. It is saying the coal industry is on its knees, not acknowledging that they are the ones that put it there. Then they are saying: So let's take money for all of those coal jobs that are being lost due to their policies and let's subsidize it. Let's give them economic development money. Further, let's give it to the administration in Washington to sprinkle about to whom they think it should go to, rather than letting the States that are producing this coal have a fraction of the money that is being produced from their States. This is the Federal Government's mentality run amok.

This is something that Ronald Reagan talked about when he said: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. If it stops moving, subsidize it.

These people don't want subsidies. They want their jobs. They want their communities. They don't want subsidies from the Federal Government.

That said, the omnibus bill that we just passed last month had $90 million for economic development in areas that are losing jobs due to coal policies. For crying out loud, we have lost our minds.

I urge you to oppose the Cartwright amendment.

Mr. ZINKE. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Chair, with all due respect—and I do have ample respect for my colleague from Wyoming—I will say this: Taxing it is not the issue here. Regulating it is not the issue here. Subsidizing it is not the issue here. We are talking about money that has already been allocated. In fact, Wyoming itself is slated to get $53.8 million. The point here is that this is money that is going to States that are already certified as having properly finished their mine reclamation.

The proposal of this amendment is to take that money—it is not new tax, it is not new regulation, it is not a new subsidy—it is just take that money and spread it out among the States that are still reclaiming their mines, including northeastern Pennsylvania and all of Pennsylvania. We are talking about taking it from the four States that have been certified by the Federal Government as having completed their mine reclamation and spreading it out among the States that have not done so completely at this point and continue to work on it.

Further, this is money that is not being taken from the tribes. I am not sure where that idea came from. It is money that is given to the States, not the tribes. Therefore, it makes sense to send it to the communities where the mines are still causing trouble and are still being reclaimed.

Mr. Chair, I urge a ''yes'' vote on the Cartwright amendment to H.R. 1644.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania will be postponed.

□ 1600

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. SEWELL OF ALABAMA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in House Report 114–395.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 5, line 3, before the period insert ''or cause or significantly contribute to the development of negative chronic or long-term health conditions''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 583, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, my amendment is simple and straightforward. Moreover, I do not believe it conflicts with the intent of this legislation.

Alabama has a long and rich history of coal production that provides my constituents and Americans across the country with affordable and reliable energy as well as good-paying jobs.

As a representative of Alabama, I am a strong supporter of an all-of-the-above energy strategy. I support the development and use of renewable energy like wind and solar as well as the traditional sources of energy like coal. Coal is very important in my State.

However, I also believe that it is Congress' responsibility to ensure that energy is produced in a way that does not adversely impact the long-term safety or health of my constituents. That is why I have offered this amendment to H.R. 1644.

This amendment makes an important addition to the exception clause in section 2 of the bill. It simply ensures that rules will not be delayed if such a delay would cause or significantly contribute to the development of a negative, chronic, or long-term health condition.

We have an obligation as representatives of the people to ensure that regulations are not only sensible but also pragmatic. They must also not be threatened by the policies and regulations, those things that directly affect the public health. I believe all of my colleagues share this belief. I know that my Republican colleagues share my concern for public health.

The legislation already includes an exception clause that says a rule cannot be delayed if it would pose an imminent and severe threat to human life. I strongly support this clause, but it is not enough to simply protect the public from imminent and severe health effects.

Cancer and lung disease are illnesses that are chronic and often not developed except over years. We should also ensure that the public's long-term health and well-being is protected.

This is a commonsense amendment that will protect the public health. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, although this is a very well-intended amendment, the purpose of the section of the bill affected by this amendment is already to ensure that good science is used in the development of the rules by making the scientific products on which the rule is based publicly available for review and already provides for an emergency exemption if the delay in the publication of a rule during this public review will pose ''an imminent and severe threat to human life.'' An imminent and severe threat to human life, that is already addressed in the text of the bill. Mr. Chairman, I believe that this is unnecessary.

We also have protection under the existing Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, SMCRA. It is to ''establish a nationwide program to protect society and the environment from the adverse effects of surface coal mining operations.''

The law and the proposed bill that is before us today already are designed to help protect human health and the environment. So although this is a well-intended amendment, it is unnecessary, given this background.

Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I think that the plain reading of the bill, the bill itself, talks about imminent and imminent threat. It doesn't necessarily deal with long-term effect.

My commonsense amendment would just make sure that any rules that actually affect public health that is chronic in nature and long term would also be covered with the exception.

I say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I am from a pro-coal State, but I also think it is really important to be pro-public health. I ask my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the Sewell amendment.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Alabama will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in House Report 114–395 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 2 by Mr. KILDEE of Michigan.

Amendment No. 3 by Mr. CARTWRIGHT of Pennsylvania.

Amendment No. 4 by Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. KILDEE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 189, noes 223, not voting 21, as follows:

[Roll No. 38]

AYES—189

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

NOES—223

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—21

Beatty
DeLauro
Duncan (SC)
Huelskamp
Huffman
Hurd (TX)
Jackson Lee
Kennedy
Kind
Kuster
Larson (CT)
Palazzo
Ratcliffe
Schrader
Serrano
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Stivers
Stutzman
Westmoreland
Williams

□ 1628

Messrs. ROGERS of Alabama, LATTA, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Messrs. MASSIE and WITTMAN changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. TROTT, GUTIÉRREZ, and HUIZENGA of Michigan changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Chair, on rollcall No. 38, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. CARTWRIGHT

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. SIMPSON). The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 203, noes 219, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 39]

AYES—203

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

NOES—219

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barton
Bass
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—11

Duncan (SC)
Granger
Grothman
Kennedy
Kind
Kuster
Palazzo
Roskam
Smith (WA)
Westmoreland
Williams

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1633

Messrs. DOLD and GALLEGO changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. SEWELL OF ALABAMA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 190, noes 235, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 40]

AYES—190

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gibson
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kildee
Kilmer
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Poliquin
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader

Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—235

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—8

Ashford
Duncan (SC)
Kennedy
Kind
Palazzo
Smith (WA)
Westmoreland
Williams

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1636

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska) having assumed the chair, Mr. SIMPSON, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1644) to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure transparency in the development of environmental regulations, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 583, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on the amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole?

If not, the question is on the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. KILDEE. I am opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Kildee moves to recommit the bill H.R. 1644 to the Committee on Natural Resources with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

Page 5, strike line 3 and insert ''either an imminent or long-term threat to human life or increase the incidence or prevalence of lung cancer, heart or kidney disease, birth defects, or heavy metal contamination in communities in the vicinities of mountaintop removal coal mining projects.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, this final amendment to the bill will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage as amended.

The bill is yet another attempt to delay the issuance of new and updated regulations to protect our streams, our rivers, and our communities from mountaintop coal mining. These safeguards are important for protecting the health and safety of the drinking water in communities and of children living near mountaintop removal coal mining.

Mr. Speaker, my motion would prevent the stream protection rule from being delayed if there is an increase in the incidence or prevalence of lung cancer, heart or kidney disease, birth defects, or heavy metal contamination in these communities.

We cannot allow the underlying bill to further delay important protections of public health. I know, firsthand, what happens when protections are not strong enough to prevent heavy metals, mainly lead, from contaminating drinking water. I have seen thousands of kids in my hometown of Flint, Michigan, poisoned by lead-contaminated water.

Let me repeat: Today, in the 21st century, thousands of children being poisoned by lead in their drinking water due to the lack of effective enforcement.

For 14 months, in my hometown of Flint, children, citizens have been exposed to drinking water with very high levels of lead. These kids, especially, will face consequences.

This is not a problem without victims. Children will face cognitive difficulties, developmental problems, behavioral issues, all because in Michigan our Governor appointed an emergency financial manager to take over the city of Flint, and without any concern for health or the welfare of the people who live there, simply to save a few dollars, switched the city of Flint, not by the city itself, but the State of Michigan switched the city of Flint from Lake Huron to the Flint River as its primary drinking water source.

That highly corrosive river water led to lead leaching into the water system and, for 14 months, going into the bodies of people in my hometown, into children, all because of ineffective, lackluster enforcement of protections built into the law.

□ 1645

These kids in my hometown have a right to expect that the water coming through the faucet is safe for them to drink, and the Department of Environmental Quality in Michigan was warned—warned—by the EPA, warned by a researcher from Virginia Tech who came to Flint to study the water, and warned by a local pediatrician who saw elevated lead levels in the children's blood in Flint, Michigan.

What was the State's response? To try to discredit those claims that there were elevated lead levels, to actually—believe it or not—tell the people of the city of Flint that those researchers are wrong and they should just relax. That is what they were told. Relax.

This is the 21st century. We ought to have in place adequate protections to

make sure that drinking water is safe. What has been the response, even now in my own hometown in the State of Michigan? There have been some news conferences, but from July, when the State was first made aware of this, until today, the State has yet to step in to even supply bottled water, relying on the generosity of corporations, of labor unions, and of citizens, neighbors helping neighbors.

Unfortunately, I think they see this more as a public relations problem than as a public health emergency. This is what happens when we don't recognize the importance of regulation to protect public health. This is what happens when we weaken protections for drinking water for our environment and for our land.

Is this really what we want to do? Or don't we have an obligation to do everything in our power to protect the people back home, to protect children from this terrible, terrible kind of contamination?

The steps that we are taking today that are on the floor of the House will simply be one more step to weaken those sorts of protections. My motion to recommit would correct that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to please join me. Protect our people, protect our land, and protect our kids. Join me in supporting this motion.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I urge us to reject this motion. It is only going to delay passage of this excellent piece of legislation. We just rejected a very similar amendment moments ago, and that was a substantive amendment. This is a procedural—not even a substantive—amendment.

The bill does three great things, and that is why we need to pass the bill. It promotes transparency and scientific integrity. It requires an independent third-party review of the proposed OSM, Office of Surface Mining Bureau, rule. And it prevents OSM from regulatory overreach. So for those three important reasons, we should pass this bill.

When it comes to health in particular, let me read a sentence from the text of the bill: ''This subsection shall not apply if a delay in the publication of a rule will pose an imminent and severe threat to human life.''

So we do already address health. It is covered in the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a rejection of the motion to recommit and the passage of H.R. 1644.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of the bill, if ordered; and the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 757.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 186, noes 237, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 41]

AYES—186

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

NOES—237

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—10

Duncan (SC)
Fitzpatrick
Kennedy
Kind
Palazzo
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Smith (WA)
Westmoreland
Williams

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1653

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 235, noes 188, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 42]

AYES—235

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—188

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

NOT VOTING—10

Cárdenas
Cleaver
Duncan (SC)
Kennedy
Kind
Palazzo
Smith (WA)
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1659

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2016

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 757) to improve the enforcement of sanctions against the Government of North Korea, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 2, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 43]

YEAS—418

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
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
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (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
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kildee
Kilmer
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
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)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
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
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
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
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—2

Amash
Massie

NOT VOTING—13

Conyers
Duncan (SC)
Gibson
Hartzler
Kennedy
Kind
Palazzo
Shimkus
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Westmoreland
Williams

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1706

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet tonight in joint session to hear an address by the President of the United States, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to his left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of purporting to reserve seats prior to the joint session by placement of placards or personal items will not be allowed. Chamber Security may remove these items from the seats. Members may reserve their seats only by physical presence following the security sweep of the Chamber.

All Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in still photography or audio or video recording in the Chamber. Taking unofficial photographs detracts from the dignity of the proceedings and presents security and privacy challenges for the House.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 8:35 p.m. for the purpose of receiving in joint session the President of the United States.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2033

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS PURSUANT TO HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 102 TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 8 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms, Ms. Kathleen Joyce, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The joint session will come to order.

The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the Chamber:

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY);

The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE);

The gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS);

The gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN);

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER);

The gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS);

The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL); and

The gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN);

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE);

The Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO);

The Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER);

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER);

The Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY);

The Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);

The Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER);

The Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW); and

The Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR).

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Hersey Kyota, the Ambassador of the Republic of Palau.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 9 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m., the Sergeant at Arms, the Honorable Paul

D. Irving, announced the President of the United States.

The President of the United States, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The PRESIDENT. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans:

Tonight marks the eighth year I have come here to report on the State of the Union, and for this final one, I am going to try to make it a little shorter. I know some of you are antsy to get back to Iowa. I have been there. I will be shaking hands afterwards if you want some tips.

I understand that because it is an election season, expectations for what we will achieve this year are low. But, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the constructive approach that you and other leaders took at the end of last year to pass a budget and make tax cuts permanent for working families. So I hope we can work together this year on some bipartisan priorities like criminal justice reform and helping people who are battling prescription drug abuse and heroin abuse. So who knows, we might surprise the cynics again.

But tonight, I want to go easy on the traditional list of proposals for the year ahead. Don't worry, I have got plenty, from helping students learn to write computer code to personalizing medical treatments for patients. And I will keep pushing for progress on the work that I believe still needs to be done: fixing a broken immigration system, protecting our kids from gun violence, equal pay for equal work, paid leave, and raising the minimum wage. All these things still matter to hardworking families. They are still the right thing to do, and I won't let up until they get done.

But for my final address to this Chamber, I don't want to just talk about next year. I want to focus on the next 5 years, the next 10 years, and beyond. I want to focus on our future.

We live in a time of extraordinary change—change that is reshaping the way we live, the way we work, our planet, and our place in the world. It is change that promises amazing medical breakthroughs, but also economic disruptions that strain working families. It promises education for girls in the most remote villages, but also connects terrorists plotting an ocean away. It is change that can broaden opportunity or widen inequality. And whether we like it or not, the pace of this change will only accelerate.

America has been through big changes before: wars and depression, the influx of new immigrants, workers fighting for a fair deal, and movements to expand civil rights. Each time, there have been those who told us to fear the future, who claimed we could slam the brakes on change, who promised to restore past glory if we just got some group or idea that was threatening America under control; and each time, we overcame those fears. We did not, in the words of Lincoln, adhere to the ''dogmas of the quiet past.'' Instead, we thought anew and acted anew. We made change work for us, always extending America's promise outward to the next frontier, to more people. Because we did, because we saw opportunity where others saw peril, we emerged stronger and better than before.

What was true then can be true now. Our unique strengths as a nation—our optimism and work ethic, our spirit of discovery, our diversity, and our commitment to rule of law—these things give us everything we need to ensure prosperity and security for generations to come.

In fact, it is in that spirit that we have made progress these past 7 years. That is how we recovered from the worst economic crisis in generations. That is how we reformed our healthcare system and reinvented our energy sector. That is how we delivered more care and benefits to our troops coming home and our veterans, and that is how we how we secured the freedom in every State to marry the person we love.

But such progress is not inevitable. It is the result of choices we make together, and we face such choices right now. Will we respond to the changes of our time with fear, turning inward as a nation and turning against each other as a people? Or will we face the future with confidence in who we are, in what we stand for, and the incredible things that we can do together?

So let's talk about the future and four big questions that I believe we as a country have to answer, regardless of who the next President is or who controls the next Congress.

First, how do we give everyone a fair shot at opportunity and security in this new economy?

Second, how do we make technology work for us and not against us, especially when it comes to solving urgent challenges like climate change?

Third, how do we keep America safe and lead the world without becoming its policeman?

And finally, how can we make our politics reflect what is best in us and not what is worst?

Let me start with the economy and a basic fact: the United States of America, right now, has the strongest, most durable economy in the world.

We are in the middle of the longest streak of private sector job creation in history: more than 14 million new jobs, the strongest 2 years of job growth since the 1990s, an unemployment rate cut in half. Our auto industry just had its best year ever. That is just part of a manufacturing surge that has created nearly 900,000 new jobs in the past 6 years. We have done all this while cutting our deficits by almost three-quarters.

Anyone claiming that America's economy is in decline is peddling fiction. Now, what is true and the reason that a lot of Americans feel anxious is that the economy has been changing in profound ways, changes that started long before the Great Recession hit and changes that have not let up. Today technology doesn't just replace jobs on the assembly line, but any job where work can be automated. Companies in a global economy can locate anywhere, and they face tougher competition. As a result, workers have less leverage for a raise, companies have less loyalty to their communities, and more and more wealth and income is concentrated at the very top.

All these trends have squeezed workers, even when they have jobs, even when the economy is growing. It has made it harder for a hardworking family to pull itself out of poverty, harder for young people to start their careers, and tougher for workers to retire when they want to. Although none of these trends are unique to America, they do offend our uniquely American belief that everybody who works hard should get a fair shot.

For the past 7 years, our goal has been a growing economy that also works better for everybody. We have made progress. But we need to make more. Despite all the political arguments that we have had these past few years, there are actually some areas where Americans broadly agree.

We agree that real opportunity requires every American to get the education and training they need to land a good-paying job. The bipartisan reform of No Child Left Behind was an important start, and together we have increased early childhood education, lifted high school graduation rates to new highs, and boosted graduates in fields like engineering.

In the coming years, we should build on that progress by providing pre-K for all, offering every student the hands-on computer science and math classes that make them job-ready on day one, and we should recruit and support more great teachers for our kids.

We have to make college affordable for every American because no hardworking student should be stuck in the red. We have already reduced student loan payments to 10 percent of a borrower's income, and that is good. But now we have actually got to cut the cost of college.

Providing 2 years of community college at no cost for every responsible student is one of the best ways to do that, and I am going to keep fighting to get that started this year. It is the right thing to do.

But a great education isn't all we need in this new economy. We also need benefits and protections that provide a basic measure of security. It is not too much of a stretch to say that some of the only people in America

who are going to work the same job in the same place with a health and retirement package for 30 years are sitting in this Chamber.

For everyone else, especially folks in their 40s and 50s, saving for retirement or bouncing back from job loss has gotten a lot tougher. Americans understand that, at some point in their careers in this new economy, they may have to retool and they may have to retrain. But they shouldn't lose what they have already worked so hard to build in the process.

That is why Social Security and Medicare are more important than ever. We shouldn't weaken them. We should strengthen them. For Americans short of retirement, basic benefits should be just as mobile as everything else is today.

That, by the way, is what the Affordable Care Act is all about. It is about filling the gaps in employer-based care so that, when you lose a job or you go back to school or you strike out and launch that new business, you will still have coverage.

Nearly 18 million people have gained coverage so far. In the process, healthcare inflation is slow. Our businesses have created jobs every single month since it became law.

Now, I am guessing we won't agree on health care anytime soon. But there should be other ways parties can work together to improve economic security. Say a hardworking American loses his job. We shouldn't just make sure that he can get unemployment insurance; we should make sure that program encourages him to retrain for a business that is ready to hire him. If that new job doesn't pay as much, there should be a system of wage insurance in place so that he can still pay his bills. Even if he is going from job to job, he should still be able to save for retirement and take his savings with him. That is the way we make the new economy work better for everybody.

I also know Speaker RYAN has talked about his interest in tackling poverty. America is about giving everybody willing to work a chance, a hand up. I would welcome a serious discussion about strategies we can all support, like expanding tax cuts for low-income workers who don't have children.

But there are some areas where we just have to be honest. It has been difficult to find agreement over the last 7 years. A lot of them fall under the category of what role the government should play in making sure the system is not rigged in favor of the wealthiest and biggest corporations. It is an honest disagreement, and the American people have a choice to make.

I believe a thriving private sector is the lifeblood of our economy. I think there are outdated regulations that need to be changed and there is red tape that needs to be cut.

But, after years now of record corporate profits, working families won't get more opportunity or bigger paychecks just by letting big banks or Big Oil or hedge funds make their own rules at everybody else's expense. Middle class families are not going to feel more secure because we allow attacks on collective bargaining to go unanswered.

Food stamp recipients did not cause the financial crisis. Recklessness on Wall Street did. Immigrants aren't the principal reason wages haven't gone up. Those decisions were made in the boardrooms that, all too often, put quarterly earnings over long-term returns. It is sure not the average family watching tonight that avoids paying taxes through offshore accounts.

The point is, I believe that in this new economy workers and startups and small businesses need more of a voice, not less. The rules should work for them. I am not alone in this. This year, I plan to lift up the many businesses which have figured out that doing right by their workers or their customers or their communities ends up being good for their shareholders, and I want to spread those best practices across America. That is a part of a brighter future.

In fact, it turns out many of our best corporate citizens are also our most creative. This brings me to the second big question we as a country have to answer: How do we reignite that spirit of innovation to meet our biggest challenges?

Sixty years ago, when the Russians beat us into space, we didn't deny Sputnik was up there. We didn't argue about the science or shrink our research and development budget. We built a space program almost overnight, and, 12 years later, we were walking on the Moon.

That spirit of discovery is in our DNA. America is Thomas Edison and the Wright Brothers and George Washington Carver. America is Grace Hopper and Katherine Johnson and Sally Ride. America is every immigrant and entrepreneur from Boston to Austin to Silicon Valley, racing to shape a better future. That is who we are, and over the past 7 years we have nurtured that spirit.

We have protected an open Internet and have taken bold new steps to get more students and low-income Americans online. We have launched next-generation manufacturing hubs and online tools that give an entrepreneur everything that he or she needs to start a business in a single day.

But we can do so much more. Last year, Vice President BIDEN said that with a new moonshot, America can cure cancer. Last month, he worked with this Congress to give scientists at the National Institutes of Health the strongest resources that they have had in over a decade.

So, tonight, I am announcing a new national effort to get it done; and because he has gone to the mat for all of us on so many issues over the past 40 years, I am putting JOE in charge of mission control. For the loved ones we have all lost, for the families that we can still save, let's make America the country that cures cancer once and for all.

What do you say, JOE? Let's make it happen.

Medical research is critical. We need the same level of commitment when it comes to developing clean energy sources. Look, if anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You will be pretty lonely because you will be debating our military, most of America's business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community, and 200 nations around the world which agree it is a problem and intend to solve it.

But even if the planet wasn't at stake, even if 2014 wasn't the warmest year on record—until 2015 turned out to be even hotter—why would we want to pass up the chance for American businesses to produce and sell the energy of the future?

Listen, 7 years ago, we made the single biggest investment in clean energy in our history. Here are the results: in fields from Iowa to Texas, wind power is now cheaper than dirtier conventional power. On rooftops from Arizona to New York, solar is saving Americans tens of millions of dollars a year on their energy bills and employs more Americans than coal in jobs that pay better than average.

We are taking steps to give homeowners the freedom to generate and store their own energy, something, by the way, that environmentalists and tea partiers have teamed up to support. Meanwhile, we have cut our imports of foreign oil by nearly 60 percent and cut carbon pollution more than any other country on Earth.

Gas under two bucks a gallon ain't bad either.

Now we have got to accelerate the transition away from old, dirtier energy sources. Rather than subsidize the past, we should invest in the future, especially in communities that rely on fossil fuels. We do them no favor when we don't show them where the trends are going.

That is why I am going to push to change the way we manage our oil and coal resources, so that they better reflect the costs they impose on taxpayers and our planet. That way, we put money back into those communities and put tens of thousands of Americans to work in building a 21st century transportation system.

None of this is going to happen overnight, and, yes, there are plenty of entrenched interests who want to protect the status quo. But the jobs we will create, the money we will save, and the planet we will preserve, that is the kind of future our kids and our grandkids deserve, and it is within our grasp.

Climate change is just one of many issues where our security is linked to the rest of the world. That is why the third big question that we have to answer together is how to keep America

safe and strong without either isolating ourselves or trying to nation-build everywhere there is a problem.

I told you earlier all of the talk of America's economic decline is political hot air. Well, so is all the rhetoric you hear about our enemies getting stronger and America getting weaker. Let me tell you something. The United States of America is the most powerful nation on Earth—period. It is not even close. We spend more on our military than the next eight nations combined.

Our troops are the finest fighting force in the history of the world. No nation attacks us directly or our allies because they know that is the path to ruin. Surveys show our standing around the world is higher than when I was elected to this office; and when it comes to every important international issue, people of the world do not look to Beijing or Moscow to lead. They call us. So it is useful to level set here, because when we don't, we don't make good decisions.

Now, as someone who begins every day with an intelligence briefing, I know this is a dangerous time, but that is not primarily because of some looming superpower out there, and it is certainly not because of diminished American strength. In today's world, we are threatened less by evil empires and more by failing states.

The Middle East is going through a transformation that will play out for a generation, rooted in conflicts that date back millennia. Economic headwinds are blowing in from a Chinese economy that is in significant transition. Even as their economy severely contracts, Russia is pouring resources in to prop up Ukraine and Syria, client states that they saw slipping away from their orbit. The international system we built after World War II is now struggling to keep pace with this new reality.

It is up to us, the United States of America, to help remake that system. And to do that well, it means that we have got to set priorities.

Priority number one is protecting the American people and going after terrorist networks. Both al Qaeda and, now, ISIL pose a direct threat to our people because in today's world, even a handful of terrorists who place no value on human life, including their own, can do a lot of damage. They use the Internet to poison the minds of individuals inside our country. Their actions undermine and destabilize our allies. We have to take them out.

But as we focus on destroying ISIL, over-the-top claims that this is world war III just play into their hands. Masses of fighters on the back of pickup trucks, twisted souls plotting in apartments or garages, they pose an enormous danger to civilians. They have to be stopped, but they do not threaten our national existence. That is the story ISIL wants to tell. That is the kind of propaganda they use to recruit. We don't need to build them up to show that we are serious, and we sure don't need to push away vital allies in this fight by echoing the lie that ISIL is somehow representative of one of the world's largest religions. We just need to call them what they are: killers and fanatics who have to be rooted out, hunted down, and destroyed. That is exactly what we are doing.

For more than a year, America has led a coalition of more than 60 countries to cut off ISIL's financing, disrupt their plots, stop the flow of terrorist fighters, and stamp out their vicious ideology. With nearly 10,000 airstrikes, we are taking out their leadership, their oil, their training camps, and their weapons. We are training, arming, and supporting forces who are steadily reclaiming territory in Iraq and Syria.

If this Congress is serious about winning this war and wants to send a message to our troops and the world, authorize the use of military force against ISIL. Take a vote.

But the American people should know that, with or without congressional action, ISIL will learn the same lessons as terrorists before them. If you doubt America's commitment—or mine—to see that justice is done, just ask Osama bin Laden. Ask the leader of al Qaeda in Yemen who was taken out last year, or the perpetrator of the Benghazi attacks who sits in a prison cell. When you come after Americans, we go after you. It may take time, but we have long memories, and our reach has no limit.

Our foreign policy has to be focused on the threat from ISIL and al Qaeda, but it can't stop there. For even without ISIL, even without al Qaeda, instability will continue for decades in many parts of the world: in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, in parts of Pakistan, in parts of Central America, in Africa and Asia. Some of these places may become safe havens for new terrorist networks. Others will just fall victim to ethnic conflict or famine, feeding the next wave of refugees.

The world will look to us to help solve these problems, and our answer needs to be more than tough talk or calls to carpet bomb civilians. That may work as a TV sound bite, but it doesn't pass muster on the world stage.

We also can't try to take over and rebuild every country that falls into crisis, even if it is done with the best of intentions. That is not leadership. That is a recipe for quagmire, spilling American blood and treasure that ultimately will weaken us. It is the lesson of Vietnam; it is the lesson of Iraq; and we should have learned it by now.

Fortunately, there is a smarter approach, a patient and disciplined strategy that uses every element of our national power. It says America will always act—alone, if necessary—to protect our people and our allies.

But on issues of global concern, we will mobilize the world to work with us and make sure other countries pull their own weight. That is our approach to conflicts like Syria, where we are partnering with local forces and leading international efforts to help that broken society pursue a lasting peace.

That is why we built a global coalition with sanctions and principled diplomacy to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. As we speak, Iran has rolled back its nuclear program, shipped out its uranium stockpile, and the world has avoided another war.

That is how we stopped the spread of Ebola in West Africa. Our military, our doctors, our development workers, they were heroic. They set up the platform that then allowed other countries to join in behind us and stamp out that epidemic. Hundreds of thousands, maybe a couple million, lives were saved.

That is how we forged a Trans-Pacific Partnership to open markets, protect workers and the environment, and advance American leadership in Asia. It cuts 18,000 taxes on products made in America, which will then support more good jobs here in America.

With TPP, China does not set the rules in that region. We do. You want to show our strength in this new century? Approve this agreement. Give us the tools to enforce it. It is the right thing to do.

Let me give you another example. Fifty years of isolating Cuba had failed to promote democracy. It set us back in Latin America. That is why we restored diplomatic relations, opened the door to travel and commerce, and positioned ourselves to improve the lives of the Cuban people. So if you want to consolidate our leadership and credibility in the hemisphere, recognize that the cold war is over. Lift the embargo.

The point is American leadership in the 21st century is not a choice between ignoring the rest of the world, except when we kill terrorists, or occupying and rebuilding whatever society is unraveling. Leadership means a wise application of military power and rallying the world behind causes that are right. It means seeing our foreign assistance as a part of our national security, not something separate, not charity.

When we lead nearly 200 nations to the most ambitious agreement in history to fight climate change, yes, that helps vulnerable countries, but it also protects our kids. When we help Ukraine defend its democracy or Colombia resolve a decades-long war, that strengthens the international order we depend on. When we help African countries feed their people and care for the sick, it is the right thing to do, and it prevents the next pandemic from reaching our shores.

Right now we are on track to end the scourge of HIV/AIDS. That is within our grasp. And we have the chance to accomplish the same thing with malaria, something I will be pushing this Congress to fund this year.

That is American strength. That is American leadership. That kind of leadership depends on the power of our

example. That is why I will keep working to shut down the prison at Guantanamo. It is expensive. It is unnecessary. It only serves as a recruitment brochure for our enemies. There is a better way.

That is why we need to reject any politics that targets people because of race or religion. Let me just say this: This is not a matter of political correctness. This is a matter of understanding just what it is that makes us strong. The world respects us not just for our arsenal. It respects us for our diversity and our openness and the way we respect every faith.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, told this body from the very spot that I am standing tonight that ''to imitate the hatred and violence of tyrants and murderers is the best way to take their place.''

When politicians insult Muslims, whether abroad or our fellow citizens, when a mosque is vandalized, or a kid is called names, that doesn't make us safer. That is not telling it like it is. It is just wrong. It diminishes us in the eyes of the world. It makes it harder to achieve our goals. It betrays who we are as a country.

''We the People.'' Our Constitution begins with those three simple words, words we have come to recognize mean all the people, not just some, words that insist we rise and fall together, that that is how we might perfect our Union.

That brings me to the fourth, and maybe the most important, thing I want to say tonight. The future we want, all of us want—opportunity and security for our families; a rising standard of living; a sustainable, peaceful planet for our kids—all that is within our reach. But it will only happen if we work together. It will only happen if we can have rational, constructive debates. It will only happen if we fix our politics.

A better politics doesn't mean we have to agree on everything. This is a big country with different regions, different attitudes, different interests. That is one of our strengths, too.

Our Founders distributed power between States and branches of government and expected us to argue, just as they did, fiercely over the size and shape of government, over commerce and foreign relations, over the meaning of liberty and the imperatives of security.

But democracy does require basic bonds of trust between its citizens. It doesn't work if we think the people who disagree with us are all motivated by malice. It doesn't work if we think that our political opponents are unpatriotic or are trying to weaken America. Democracy grinds to a halt without a willingness to compromise or when even basic facts are contested or when we listen only to those who agree with us.

Our public life withers when only the most extreme voices get all the attention. Most of all, democracy breaks down when the average person feels their voice doesn't matter, that the system is rigged in favor of the rich or the powerful or some special interest.

Too many Americans feel that way right now. It is one of the few regrets of my Presidency, that the rancor and suspicion between the parties has gotten worse instead of better. I have no doubt a President with the gifts of Lincoln or Roosevelt might have better bridged the divide, and I guarantee I will keep trying to be better so long as I hold this office.

But, my fellow Americans, this cannot be my task—or any President's—alone. There are a whole lot of folks in this Chamber, good people who would like to see more cooperation, would like to see a more elevated debate in Washington, but feel trapped by the imperatives of getting elected, by the noise coming out of your base.

I know. You have told me. It is the worst kept secret in Washington. And a lot of you aren't enjoying being trapped in that kind of rancor. But that means, if we want a better politics—and I am addressing the American people now—it is not enough to just change a Congressman or change a Senator or even change a President. We have to change the system to reflect our better selves.

We have got to end the practice of drawing our congressional districts so that politicians can pick their voters, and not the other way around. Let a bipartisan group do it.

I believe we have got to reduce the influence of money in our politics so that a handful of families and hidden interests can't bankroll our elections. If our existing approach to campaign finance reform can't pass muster in the courts, we need to work together to find a real solution, because it is a problem. And most of you don't like raising money. I know. I have done it.

We have got to make it easier to vote, not harder. We need to modernize it for the way we live now. This is America. We want to make it easier for people to participate. Over the course of this year, I intend to travel the country to push for reforms that do just that.

But I can't do these things on my own. Changes in our political process, in not just who gets elected, but how they get elected, that will only happen when the American people demand it. It depends on you. That is what is meant by a government of, by, and for the people.

What I am suggesting is hard. It is a lot easier to be cynical, to accept that change is not possible and politics is hopeless and the problem is all the folks who are elected don't care, and to believe that our voices and our actions don't matter.

But if we give up now, then we forsake a better future. Those with money and power will gain greater control over the decisions that could send a young soldier to war, allow another economic disaster, or roll back the equal rights and voting rights that generations of Americans have fought, even died, to secure.

And then, as frustration grows, there will be voices urging us to fall back into our respective tribes, to scapegoat fellow citizens who don't look like us, pray like us, vote like we do, or share the same background. We can't afford to go down that path. It won't deliver the economy we want, it will not produce the security we want, but most of all, it contradicts everything that makes us the envy of the world.

So, my fellow Americans, whatever you may believe, whether you prefer one party or no party, whether you supported my agenda or fought as hard as you could against it, our collective future depends on your willingness to uphold your duties as a citizen. To vote. To speak out. To stand up for others, especially the weak, especially the vulnerable, knowing that each of us is only here because somebody, somewhere stood up for us.

We need every American to stay active in our public life, and not just during election time, so that our public life reflects the goodness and the decency that I see in the American people every single day.

It is not easy. Our brand of democracy is hard. But I can promise that a little over a year from now, when I no longer hold this office, I will be right there with you as a citizen, inspired by those voices of fairness and vision, of grit and good humor and kindness that have helped America travel so far, voices that help us see ourselves not first and foremost as Black or White or Asian or Latino, not as gay or straight, immigrant or native born, not Democrat or Republican, but as Americans first, bound by a common creed, voices Dr. King believed would have the final word, voices of unarmed truth and unconditional love.

And they are out there, those voices. They don't get a lot of attention. They don't seek a lot of fanfare. But they are busy doing the work this country needs doing.

I see them everywhere I travel in this incredible country of ours. I see you, the American people. And in your daily acts of citizenship, I see our future unfolding.

I see it in the worker on the assembly line who clocked extra shifts to keep his company open and the boss who pays him higher wages instead of laying him off.

I see it in the DREAMer who stays up late at night to finish her science project, and the teacher who comes in early, maybe with some extra supplies that she bought, because she knows that that young girl might someday cure a disease.

I see it in the American who served his time and made bad mistakes as a child, but now is dreaming of starting over, and I see it in the business owner who gives him that second chance; the protester determined to prove that justice matters, and the young cop walking the beat, treating everybody with

respect, doing the brave, quiet work of keeping us safe.

I see it in the soldier who gives almost everything to save his brothers, the nurse who tends to him till he can run a marathon, and the community that lines up to cheer him on.

It is the son who finds the courage to come out as who he is, and the father whose love for that son overrides everything he has been taught.

I see it in the elderly woman who will wait in line to cast her vote as long as she has to, the new citizen who casts his vote for the first time, the volunteers at the polls who believe every vote should count, because each of them, in different ways, knows how much that precious right is worth.

That is the America I know. That is the country we love. Clear-eyed. Big-hearted. Undaunted by challenge. Optimistic that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.

That is what makes me so hopeful about our future. I believe in change because I believe in you, the American people. And that is why I stand here as confident as I have ever been that the state of our Union is strong.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

At 10 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m., the President of the United States, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The members of the President's Cabinet; the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court; the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

The SPEAKER. The Chair declares the joint session of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 10 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m., the joint session of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the message of the President be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered printed.

The motion was agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, January 13, 2016, 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:

4001. A letter from the Regulatory Review Group, Commodity Credit Corporation, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Payment Limitation and Payment Eligibility; Actively Engaged in Farming (RIN: 0560-AI31) received January 5, 2016, 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.

4002. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Taxes-Foreign Contracts in Afghanistan (DFARS Case 2014-D003) [Docket No.: DARS-2014-0046] (RIN: 0750-AI26) received January 5, 2016, 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.

4003. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Trade Agreements Thresholds (DFARS Case 2016-D003) [Docket No.: DARS-2015-0066] (RIN: 0750-AI79) received January 5, 2016, 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.

4004. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Network Penetration Reporting and Contracting for Cloud Services (DFARS Case 2013-D018) [Docket No.: DARS-2015-0039] (RIN: 0750-AI61) received January 5, 2016, 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.

4005. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's final rule — Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z) Adjustment to Asset-Size Exemption Threshold received December 30, 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.

4006. A letter from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's final rule — Home Mortgage Disclosure (Regulation C) Amendment Adjustment to Asset-Size Exemption Threshold received December 30, 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.

4007. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Treatment of Financial Assets Transferred in Connection With a Securitization or Participation (RIN: 3064-AE32) received December 29, 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.

4008. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Technical Amendments: FHFA Address and Zip Code Change (RIN: 2590-AA79) received January 5, 2016, 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.

4009. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Suspended Counterparty Program (RIN: 2590-AA60) received January 5, 2016, 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.

4010. A letter from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's joint final rule — Community Reinvestment Act Regulations [Docket ID: OCC-2015-0025] (RIN: 1557-AE01) received January 6, 2016, 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.

4011. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedures for Commercial Prerinse Spray Valves [Docket No.: EERE-2014-BT-TP-0055] (RIN: 1904-AD41) received January 6, 2016, 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.

4012. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedures for Small, Large, and Very Large Air-Cooled Commercial Package Air Conditioning and Heating Equipment [Docket No.: EERE-2015-BT-TP-0015] (RIN: 1904-AD54) received January 6, 2016, 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.

4013. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) received January 6, 2016, 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.

4014. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Hepatitis C Virus ''Lookback'' Requirements Based on Review of Historical Testing Records; Technical Amendment [Docket No.: FDA-1999-N-0114 (formerly 1999N-2337)] (RIN: 0910-AB76) received January 7, 2016, 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.

4015. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Alabama: Nonattainment New Source Review [EPA-R04-OAR-2012-0079; FRL-9940-89-Region 4] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4016. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Infrastructure and Interstate Transport State Implementation Plan for the 2010 Sulfur Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standards [EPA-R06-OAR-2013-0388; FRL-9940-86-Region 6] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4017. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Mississippi; Memphis, TN-MS-AR Emissions Statements for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard [EPA-R04-OAR-2015-0247; FRL-9940-87-Region 4] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4018. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Nebraska; Sewage Sludge Incinerators [EPA-R07-OAR-2015-0733; FRL-9941-06-Region 7] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4019. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval of Missouri's Air Quality Implementation Plans; Early Progress Plan of the St. Louis Nonattainment Area for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard [EPA-R07-OAR-2015-0587; FRL-9941-01-Region 7] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4020. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval of Missouri's Air Quality Implementation Plans; Reporting Emission Data, Emission Fees and Process Information [EPA-R07-OAR-2015-0790; FRL-9941-03-Region 7] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4021. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval of Nebraska's Air Quality State Implementation Plans (SIP); Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard in Regards to Section 110(a)(2)(D)(i)(I) — Prongs 1 and 2 [EPA-R07-OAR-2015-0710; FRL-9941-04-Region 7] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4022. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Designation of Areas for Air Quality Planning Purposes; California; South Coast; Reclassification as Serious Nonattainment for the 2006 PM2.5 NAAQS [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0204; FRL-9940-84-Region 9] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4023. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Third-Party Provision of Primary Frequency Response Service [Docket No.: RM15-2-000; Order No.: 819] received January 6, 2016, 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.

4024. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Russian Sanctions: Addition of Certain Persons to the Entity List [Docket No.: 150825778-5999-01] (RIN: 0694-AG64) received January 5, 2016, 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 Foreign Affairs.

4025. A letter from the Special Counsel, U.S. Office of Special Counsel, transmitting the Office's Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2015, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a); (104 Stat. 2849); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4026. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Process for Divestiture of Excess Quota Shares in the Individual Fishing Quota Fishery [Docket No.: 150721634-5999-02] (RIN: 0648-BF11) received January 7, 2016, 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.

4027. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfin Sole for Vessels Participating in the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XE312) received January 7, 2016, 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.

4028. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Requirement to File Direct-Pay Fee Agreements with the Office of the General Counsel (RIN: 2900-AP28) received December 29, 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 Veterans' Affairs.

4029. A letter from the Federal Register Certifying Officer, Office of the Chief Counsel, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Offset of tax refund payments to collect past-due support (RIN: 1510-AA10) received December 29, 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 Ways and Means.

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. 3584. A bill to authorize, streamline, and identify efficiencies within the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–396). 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. HUDSON (for himself, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. RUIZ, and Mr. WESTERMAN):

H.R. 4365. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with regard to the provision of emergency medical services; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. VALADAO:

H.R. 4366. A bill to affirm an agreement between the United States and Westlands Water District dated September 15, 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. PITTS:

H.R. 4367. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to end the increased Federal funding for Medicaid expansion with respect to inmates; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PITTS (for himself and Mr. GUTHRIE):

H.R. 4368. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to clarify the treatment of lottery winnings and other lump sum income for purposes of income eligibility under the Medicaid program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CALVERT (for himself, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. COOK, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. AGUILAR, and Mr. TAKANO):

H.R. 4369. A bill to authorize the use of passenger facility charges at an airport previously associated with the airport at which the charges are collected; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. BORDALLO (for herself, Mr. TAKAI, and Mr. SABLAN):

H.R. 4370. A bill to comprehensively address the challenges of providing public services to citizens of the Freely Associated States in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Financial Services, Foreign Affairs, and Natural Resources, 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. BUCK:

H.R. 4371. A bill to amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, Foreign Affairs, Oversight and Government Reform, Natural Resources, the Judiciary, Homeland Security, Transportation and Infrastructure, Education and the Workforce, Agriculture, the Budget, and 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. COLLINS of New York (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. REED, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. KING of New York, Ms. MENG, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. NADLER, Mr. TONKO, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SERRANO, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. HANNA,

Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. KATKO, and Ms. STEFANIK):

H.R. 4372. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15 Rochester Street, Bergen, New York, as the Barry G. Miller Post Office; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 4373. A bill to improve the safety of individuals by taking measures to end drunk driving; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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 Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself and Mr. TONKO):

H.R. 4374. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve mental and behavioral health services on college and university campuses; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. ZINKE:

H.R. 4375. A bill to amend the Real ID Act of 2005 to repeal provisions requiring uniform State driver's licenses and State identification cards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

168. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Minnesota, relative to Resolution No. 5, 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.

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. HUDSON:

H.R. 4365.

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

Per the Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution, Congress shall have the power to regulate Commerce with foreign nations and among the several states.

By Mr. VALADAO:

H.R. 4366.

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

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

By Mr. PITTS:

H.R. 4367.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, which states that Congress shall have the power ''to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states . . .''

By Mr. PITTS:

H.R. 4368.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, which states that Congress shall have the power ''to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states . . .''

By Mr. CALVERT:

H.R. 4369.

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

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 and clause 18.

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 4370.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BUCK:

H.R. 4371.

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

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law . . . .''

In addition, clause 1, section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution of the United States which states: ''The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts, and provide for the common Defense and General Welfare of the United States . . .''

Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. COLLINS of New York:

H.R. 4372.

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

Article 1 Section 8

By Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 4373.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:

H.R. 4374.

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

Article I, Section 8: The Congress shall have the power to collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and the general welfare of the United States.

By Mr. ZINKE:

H.R. 4375.

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

Article I, Section 8, clause 18

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 204: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 317: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 500: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 524: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 546: Mr. FARR and Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 612: Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 814: Mr. MULLIN and Mr. EMMER of Minnesota.
H.R. 911: Mr. NEWHOUSE and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 923: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. PEARCE, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BRAT, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 953: Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 986: Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 1076: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 1089: Mr. MCDERMOTT and Mr. HECK of Washington.
H.R. 1148: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 1153: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 1197: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 1301: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1343: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 1397: Mr. DELANEY, Mr. POSEY, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 1427: Mr. YOHO.
H.R. 1550: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1571: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 1655: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1671: Mr. WOODALL and Mr. DESANTIS.
H.R. 1761: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 1818: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 1854: Mr. SCALISE and Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 2209: Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 2226: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 2254: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H.R. 2285: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 2302: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts and Ms. EDWARDS.
H.R. 2304: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 2367: Ms. TITUS, Mr. VELA, and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 2380: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2411: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 2493: Mr. AGUILAR.
H.R. 2521: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 2602: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2656: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 2663: Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 2666: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 2817: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 2980: Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 3029: Ms. JUDY CHU of California and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 3061: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 3080: Mr. LUCAS, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. KLINE, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. COOK, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. SIMPSON.
H.R. 3099: Mrs. DINGELL and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 3136: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 3209: Mr. KLINE.
H.R. 3226: Mr. TED LIEU of California and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3266: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 3268: Mr. PETERSON, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. BASS, and Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California.
H.R. 3323: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 3406: Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 3542: Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 3575: Mr. ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 3639: Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 3640: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 3666: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 3676: Mr. NORCROSS.
H.R. 3677: Mr. NORCROSS and Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 3713: Mr. KLINE, Mr. EMMER of Minnesota, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 3714: Mrs. HARTZLER and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 3860: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.
H.R. 3861: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 3886: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 3917: Mr. SWALWELL of California and Mr. COOK.

H.R. 3956: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 3982: Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 3998: Mr. SIRES, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 4007: Mr. ROHRABACHER.
H.R. 4018: Mrs. LOVE.
H.R. 4078: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 4113: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 4126: Mr. DESANTIS.
H.R. 4144: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 4148: Ms. MENG and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 4210: Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. EMMER of Minnesota.
H.R. 4247: Mr. VALADAO.
H.R. 4251: Mr. BENISHEK and Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 4257: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.
H.R. 4262: Mr. GRIFFITH.
H.R. 4263: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 4278: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 4279: Mr. COOK and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 4281: Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. SWALWELL of California, and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 4298: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 4319: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 4321: Mr. CRAMER, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. SALMON, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. BRAT, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mr. MCKINLEY.
H.R. 4336: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. LOBIONDO, Ms. ESTY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 4342: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. MULVANEY, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 4348: Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 4354: Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 4362: Mr. PEARCE.
H.J. Res. 52: Mr. HECK of Washington.
H.J. Res. 74: Mr. PALAZZO.
H. Con. Res. 50: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 75: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Mr. JOYCE.
H. Con. Res. 89: Mr. HUDSON, Mr. FLORES, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. BABIN, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. WILLIAMS.
H. Con. Res. 96: Mr. FLEMING.
H. Res. 209: Mr. FLEMING.
H. Res. 220: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H. Res. 343: Mr. PERRY, Mr. GOODLATTE, and Mr. CHABOT.
H. Res. 393: Miss RICE of New York.
H. Res. 394: Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Res. 469: Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Res. 494: Mr. BRAT.
H. Res. 500: Mr. FLEMING.
H. Res. 551: Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H. Res. 561: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H. Res. 567: Mr. VARGAS and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H. Res. 569: Mr. PAYNE, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mr. RUSH.
H. Res. 571: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. LATTA, Mr. MARINO, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, and Mr. NUGENT.
H. Res. 575: Mr. SERRANO, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. GRAYSON.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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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.

Everlasting God, our light and salvation, You remain our strength and shield. Today, we claim Your great and precious promises as You sustain us with Your presence. Thank You for promising to supply our needs and to lead us toward abundant living.

Continue to sustain our Senators with Your eternal presence. Remind them that Your hand is on the helm of human affairs and that You still guide Your world. Renew their strength as You provide them with the courage to carry on. May they refuse to do anything which could bring them regret, remorse, and shame.

We pray in Your strong 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.

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, tonight we will welcome the President of the United States for the State of the Union Address. It is his final address, and it gives us cause for reflection.

Many of us recall the moment in Boston when a State senator became a national star. His rhetorical gift was undeniable. It was a soaring elocution bathed in confetti that promised a new and more inclusive beginning. It inspired many. It propelled Barack Obama to the highest office in the land.

Americans assumed the campaigning would eventually come to a close and the serious work of governing would eventually commence, but it is now many years later, and the Obama for President campaign never really ended. Speeches still substitute for substance. Straw men still stand in for serious debate. Slogans still surrogate for governing.

We have been promised even more campaigning tonight, this time for the candidate President Obama would like to see succeed him. It leads Americans to wonder: When is the serious work of governing ever going to begin? Governing isn't easy. Governing often requires serious engagement with the Congress the American people elected, not the one the President wishes they had elected.

Here is a simple fact. ''You don't make change through slogans.'' That is something President Obama once said. I wish he had taken his own advice because here is what we know as we enter the twilight of his Presidency. He has presided over a sluggish and uneven economic recovery that is failing too many of our citizens.

Health premiums and deductibles have continued to shoot ever higher. Wages have flatlined for too many. Inequality has grown. Manufacturing has shrunk. Poverty seems to entrench. The middle class has continued to collapse, to the point where it no longer even constitutes a majority of our country.

The Obama administration says it wants to help the middle class, but its policies often tell a different story. We have seen the negative impact ObamaCare has had on so many middle-class families. We have also seen this administration declare a war on coal families who just want to get ahead.

I have invited a Kentucky miner from Pikeville, Howard Abshire, as my State of the Union guest tonight. He has watched as the Obama administration's heartless approach has helped contribute to devastation in his community and to the loss of thousands of jobs in Kentucky, one of which was his own job.

Here is what his message has been to President Obama. Howard Abshire said: ''We're hurting [and] we need help,'' but ''we don't want to be bailed out, we want to work.''

Many Kentuckians feel the very same way. Many Americans feel similarly too. Today only 20 percent of our citizens think things are headed in the right direction in their country. Nearly three-quarters want the next President to take a totally different approach from the current one. These are the simple facts, and they present the President with a choice.

President Obama can try to blame others for it. He can try to convince Americans they are wrong to feel the way they do or he can take responsibility and chart a new course. Americans are losing faith in the future. They are losing hope that their children can lead a better life. They watch as challenges continue to mount around the world—like those from ISIL, Iran, Russia, Al Qaeda, an ever-aggressive China, North Korea, and of course the Taliban—while this administration seems to have no plan to deal with any of it.

This hurt in our country and the failing approach from the White House should be disheartening to all of us. Perhaps the worst part is, it didn't have to be like this. It really didn't have to be like this. I believe that when the American people elect divided government, they are not telling us to do nothing. They are telling us to work together in the areas where we

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

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can agree so we can make progress for our country.

This Congress has racked up a growing list of bipartisan accomplishments for the American people over the past year. Some thought the major reforms we passed in areas such as education, transportation, Medicare, and tax relief were all impossible in the current political climate. We proved those pundits wrong. We showed how significant bipartisan accomplishments can be achieved when good policy is the goal.

Perhaps we have inspired the President to finally try his hand at bipartisan achievement as well. We will see tonight when he delivers his last State of the Union Address. If he proposes real plans to do things such as defeat ISIL, grow economic opportunity, and strengthen the middle class—plans actually designed to pass this Congress, not just provide talking points for the next campaign—we will know he is ready to join us in meeting the challenges of tomorrow because Republicans aren't afraid of the future, and we don't think President Obama should be either. We want him to join us in recognizing the challenges of today while working for the solutions of tomorrow. It is true that we as a nation have a lot of challenges to confront. The pain and the worry in our country is real, it is palpable, but none of it is insurmountable.

That is the hopeful message I expect Governor Haley to deliver tonight. I expect her to contrast a failing Presidency that is stuck in the past with a Republican Party that is oriented to the future. Nikki Haley knows the American dream. She has lived the American dream. She believes in the continuing promise of our country, and she understands the importance of opportunity and upward mobility for our middle class. When Governor Haley talks about hope and change, she means it because she has actually worked to deliver it.

There is nothing wrong with inspirational speeches. We all need to be inspired, especially in trying times such as these. Soaring rhetoric matched with the right policies and hard work to actually achieve them is usually good for our country—just ask Ronald Reagan or Jack Kemp. Empty eloquence wrapped in leftwing ideas of yesterday that hurt the middle class—it is time to leave that behind. It is time to look to the future. We will see tonight if President Obama is ready to do so and move beyond the failed policies of the past.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if this were a card game, which it is not, I guess what I would do is trump what the Republican leader has said. My friend lives in a world that doesn't exist. Let's talk about this person named Barack Obama. What has happened under his time in office, his 7 years, in spite of the unheard of, unrecognizable Senate that the Republicans have created—cloture had to be filed more than 500 times because they set out to block everything he wanted—in spite of that, the state of the Union now reflects the last 7 years. We have 14 million private sector jobs that have been created. During the Obama years, the economy has grown. The private sector created jobs for 70 straight months—the longest stretch in the history of our country. Unemployment is at 5 percent. When Barack Obama took office, in some States it was as much as 14 percent.

During the years of Barack Obama, 17 million uninsured Americans have gained access to health care—17 million—and the number is climbing. Renewable energy production has increased significantly. You drive across America today and you see wind farms in the middle part of this country, and farmers make more money from producing energy on their farms than they do harvesting corn and soybeans because of what the President suggested and what we legislated in the so-called stimulus bill.

Solar, wind, and geothermal has increased significantly, and it will continue to grow more because they have tax incentives now for as long as 7 additional years. You know what else we have done—not enough. The wealthiest Americans who don't mind paying more than their fair share—the only people in America today who believe that these rich people shouldn't pay a little more are the Republicans in Congress, not Republicans around the country, so we made sure the wealthiest pay a little bit more.

We have secured permanent tax relief that will help lift 16 million lower income, middle-income families out of poverty. The auto industry was on the brink of destruction. General Motors, this icon of American industry, was begging for help. Chrysler Motors was begging for help. The Republicans said no. We Democrats said yes. We were right. Republicans were wrong. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been created in the auto industry. Last year more American cars and trucks were sold than any time in the history of our country. Why? Because of Barack Obama's leadership.

Osama bin Laden is gone. He has been killed, and we destroyed and degraded terrorist organizations in our Nation. We have more to do. Of course we do.

There have been historic agreements on climate change. We have stopped Iran from getting access to nuclear weapons. Within the last few days, Iran has shipped 12 tons of uranium out of Iran because of Barack Obama. While we have a lot more to do for America on behalf of the American people, we can't ignore the progress that has been made.

My friend talks about the new Senate, and there is a new Senate because there is a constructive minority. We Democrats have been willing to work with them. The issues that we have been able to pass with rare exception have been issues that we should have passed years ago but we couldn't because Republicans filibustered and obstructed everything we tried to do.

I repeat: We have a lot more to do for the American people. It is a wonderful country, and I am so pleased with the progress we have made during the 7 years of Barack Obama.

Mr. President, I see no one on the floor. Please state 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 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first hour equally divided, and with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

The Senator from Missouri.

FLOODING IN MISSOURI

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to talk for a few minutes at the beginning of my remarks about what the response to the flooding has been in our State of Missouri. I was in St. Louis County with Congresswoman WAGNER on Saturday. I was in St. Charles County the week before that. I was in Cape Girardeau following up on the work Congressman SMITH has done there. I was in St. Genevieve, Perryville, Cassville, and Monette. If you know anything about the geography of our State, those places are spread pretty far apart, but we had a flooding situation that was almost totally generated in our State—different from the floods we normally deal with—and the communities reacted with very little time in an impressive way. The Corps of Engineers was also there to help. The National Guard was there to do what they needed to do. Now we see FEMA and the SBA stepping in to see who qualifies for assistance.

There was loss of life. More often than not, the loss of life occurred when somebody drove around a sign that said ''Don't pass this sign'' and then got caught in a situation they didn't anticipate or thought was less than it turned out to be. Some families clearly are grieving that loss of life. We had five international soldiers who lost their lives near Fort Leonard Wood.

Maybe the whole idea of a low-water bridge that you and I would be used to was something they hadn't thought about.

We had three interstate highways close—Interstate 55, Interstate 70, and Interstate 44. They were not all closed at exactly the same time but within somewhere between a 24- to 36-hour timeframe. We will have to look at that to be sure people don't lose access to where their kids are, where their jobs are, and where their health care is. The economic impact of that Interstate System that comes together in so many ways in Missouri shutting down is something that clearly, once we get beyond the immediacy of dealing with the flood itself, we need to look at and see how we can prevent that problem from happening again. I don't know of a time when any two of those highways were closed at the same time before, but I know Interstate 70 and Interstate 44 were closed at the same time, and it had a real impact economically on people traveling east to west or economic things happening east to west anywhere in the country.

HEALTH CARE RESEARCH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I was also able to talk about some good news. I am not sure how much good news we are going to hear over the next few days, but certainly there is the good news of stepping up and looking at health care research and the impact it can have in the country. There are things that are beginning to happen in mental health and things that we are trying to do to respond to prescription drug abuse and opioid abuse in all areas.

In health care research, the National Institutes of Health hadn't received an increase in their research funding since 2003. There was an effort made right before that to make a substantial increase. The fact that the Congress and the administration stopped research funding had always been frustrating, but we were able to see an increase this year for the first time in 12 years. That meant we had to create a priority. For too many people in government, when there is a discussion about funding priorities, a lot of our colleagues hear that and think that means we have to fund anything anybody has ever convinced the government we are interested in. Being interested in something doesn't make it a priority; it just makes it something that, if everything was going along the right way, maybe this is something to look at. But in funding NIH at a new level, we totally eliminated 18 programs, zeroed them out. We didn't eliminate the authorization for them, but we eliminated the money to run those 18 programs. Congress and eventually the President accepted the argument that for the greater good, these 18 programs did not need to continue. The President asked for 23 new programs that also did not receive funding, but that allowed us to make a commitment and to set priorities.

Why set a priority? The first funding increase in 12 years was 6.6 percent. We went from spending $30 billion on health care research last year to $32 billion this year. Hopefully this is a first step toward trying to solve health care problems.

There are many changing developments in health care, from smartphone technology, to individual medicine, to knowing more about the human genome. How did we find out about the human genome? We found that out through NIH research. If we hadn't had NIH research, it is likely that the human genome would still be a mystery to us. It had been a mystery on the planet until just a few years ago. The reason that happened was the National Institutes of Health and the Congress decided it would be helpful to figure out how all of us are different from each other, which also means trying to figure out a different approach to curing diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and heart disease.

What difference does it make? Why is it a priority to spend taxpayers' money in this way? One reason is the clear impact health care research is having every day on individuals and families who no longer are dealing with problems they would have been dealing with 10 years ago. Moving forward, let's see if we can find ways to meet the challenges for families and caregivers. Let's see what we can do there.

Generally, for taxpayers, even if you aren't the individual beneficiary, estimates are that the Medicare system will be absolutely overwhelmed between now and 2050 by things such as Alzheimer's and cancer. If we can figure out a cure or delay onset of Alzheimer's by 5 or 7 years on average, the impact on the cost of that devastating disease—both the real cost to taxpayers and the emotional and psychological costs to everybody involved—will be overwhelming.

The Medicare system won't be able to withstand the projections of how much money will be spent if we don't find ways to deal with these new challenges. As people get older, Alzheimer's and cancer are more likely to end life than heart disease and stroke. That doesn't mean we don't need to be focused on neurological research or on heart research. All of those things are important, and a relatively small investment by the Federal Government on health care to try do something about that matters.

It is generally understood that health care will dramatically change in the next 10 or 20 years. Where the research is done is likely to be where the jobs and economic impact of that research occurs.

I don't want to be going to the Chinese 10 years from now saying: Will you tell us how your investment in research has paid off? We are better at this than anybody else in the world, and we need to continue to be better. There are reasons for us to be better.

I do visit some of the places where this research is being done. I was at the Siteman Cancer Center on the campus of Washington University, one of the premier cancer focus centers in the country. Washington University is where one-third of all research was done to understand the human genome.

I have met with the Alzheimer's Association and the American Cancer Association.

I met with the family of a young man who lost his fight with cancer before he was 10 years old. His mom and dad formed the Super Sam Foundation to encourage other families and to encourage research. They were there with his sister representing the Super Sam Foundation.

The Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment Disorders at the University of Missouri is another place where we are looking to see what we can do to intervene earlier and help solve problems. The new chancellor at the university, Hank Foley, was with me, as was the director of that center, Dr. Stephen Kanne. They are doing good work and will continue to do so.

In Kansas City, I met with an organization, MRIGlobal, that is doing incredible work in the field of environmental and cancer research and is making a big difference. The head of that company, Thomas Sack, was there as we were talking about what they were doing and what they hoped to do.

My hometown of Springfield is also the home location of the Alzheimer's Association Missouri Chapter. I had a chance to talk with them.

I also met with the people from the Alzheimer's Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association, and I then went on to Southeast Missouri State University, another autism center that is working to figure out how we can deal with autism disorders, including early detection.

I visited Truman State University in Kirksville, where I had the opportunity to learn more about the university's efforts to create an interprofessional autism clinic. I was able to hear stories about how frustrated young researchers have been with just a 6.6-percent increase—the first increase in 12 years. During that 12 years, the buying power of the research dollar went down by 20 percent. We restored a little of that 20 percent.

The Federal Government has been involved in research at least since the founding of the Department of Agriculture in 1862. Whether it is health care research or ag research or environmental research or energy research, there is a level of that research which should and will be done by the private sector, but there is another level of research by the Federal Government that benefits everybody by sharing the results of that research.

In mental health, there is a lot of excitement in Missouri and around the

country about the potential of being one of the pilot States in excellence of mental health. Senator STABENOW from Michigan and I introduced legislation a few years ago that would combine—that would treat behavioral health, treat mental health just like all other health. This is another way to save money, because of that mental health situation.

By the way, the National Institutes of Health says that one out of four adult Americans has a diagnosable and almost always treatable mental health issue. If that mental health issue is being treated, whatever your other health issues are, they are likely to be treated in a much more effective way.

We are looking for more choices to deal with the issues suffered by our Vietnam veterans to our youngest veterans, giving them more options and more choices.

Eight States are going to be doing that and 24 States have applied. Senator STABENOW and I will be talking more about what happens and what we might do to encourage those other 16 States.

The President says he wants to spend more money on mental health. It really doesn't matter how you share your mental health information or what your provider last told you or how many mental health care providers you have if there is no place to go and if there are no access points to treat behavioral health like all other health issues, and that is what excellence in mental health does for patients.

I will close with one final area. I think there has been a lot of response to understanding and addressing the opioid epidemic and the drug issue. Deaths from prescription opioids and other pain-related drugs quadrupled between 1999 and 2013, claiming more than 145,000 lives over the past 10 years, but a substantial portion of those deaths occurred over the last couple of years. These overdoses cost the economy an estimated $20 billion in medical costs and lost work productivity. Some people die from overdosing, and many other people have to be treated by their health care provider. There is a personal loss to those individuals who become addicted to prescription drugs.

I mentioned that I had a chance to talk to the Missouri General Assembly last week, and I talked about how our veterans are often the victims just because of the serious injuries they sustain and the painkilling drugs they are given to help deal with the pain of those injuries. But that then leads to an addiction to that drug and other drugs.

Approximately three out of four new heroin users abused prescription drugs before switching to heroin. We have made a new commitment to this issue with new programs that are targeted to combat opioid abuse at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration with almost three times the investment that the country made before. This is truly becoming an epidemic, and we need to deal with that epidemic sooner rather than later.

Many of our Members and their States have talked effectively about fighting heroin and drug addiction but also about dealing with the transition from taking drugs that they were prescribed to drugs that they shouldn't have. We are looking at new opportunities there. The new Republican-led Senate is looking at how to deal with these opportunities in new ways. I hope we haven't made those successes for the spending year we are in now a one-time only event but a new commitment to try to solve the problems early so that society and the programs which taxpayers fund aren't overwhelmed by those problems later.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Missouri, Mr. BLUNT, addressing some of the issues that the Republican majority has attempted to accomplish, including the advances made over the last year, which I think will lay a foundation for the future and for further successes in the coming year.

Tonight President Obama will come to Congress to deliver his final State of the Union Address, which raises this question: What is the state of our Union? The truth is that while the strength and spirit of the American people remain a beacon of hope for our future, our country is facing a number of serious challenges. Global unrest has grown over the course of the President's administration, most notably with the rise of ISIS, one of the most brutal terrorist groups in existence.

On President Obama's watch, we have experienced the worst economic recovery since the Eisenhower administration, with stagnant wages and millions dropping out of the labor force. American families are seeing their dreams for the future erode as they struggle under ever-increasing government burdens and a lack of economic opportunity.

Any serious discussion of the state of our Union needs to address these challenges and offer solutions. That is the kind of speech that I wish we were going to hear tonight, but unfortunately all indicators suggest that is not the kind of speech the President plans to give. Instead, the President apparently intends to take a victory lap despite the fact that the American people clearly don't think there is much to celebrate. A recent New York Times/CBS News poll found that 68 percent of the American people think our country is on the wrong track, and most Americans believe the next generation will be worse off, not better off.

In a preview of the President's speech, the White House notes: ''We have made extraordinary progress on the path to a stronger country and a brighter future.'' That is not how the American people are feeling, and it doesn't reflect the reality of the President's administration.

The President plans to talk about his supposed economic successes tonight. While our economy has recovered to a certain extent since the recession, it has never fully rebounded. Wage growth continues to lag. December marked the 77th straight month in which year-over-year hourly wage growth was at or below 2½ percent. Underemployment also continues to be a problem with millions of Americans continuing to work part-time jobs because they can't find full-time work. Almost 5 years after the recession ended, the percentage of Americans working full time has still not returned to prerecession levels.

While the most commonly mentioned unemployment rate is 5 percent, the U–6 unemployment rate, which measures the number of both unemployed workers and underemployed workers, is 9.9 percent. Of the unemployed, those who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more, or those considered long-term unemployed, make up 26 percent. Labor force participation remains near record lows. In short, stagnation has become the new normal for the economy under the Obama administration and economic opportunities for families have been few and far between.

In addition to the lack of economic opportunity, families have had to shoulder new burdens thanks to the Obama administration. Chief among those burdens, of course, is ObamaCare, the President's disastrous health care law, which has failed to reduce the cost of health care, ripped away millions of Americans' preferred health care plans, forced families onto insurance plans they don't want and can't afford, reduced patients' access to doctors and hospitals, increased taxes, and wasted literally billions of taxpayer dollars.

Then there are the burdensome regulations the Obama administration has imposed, which have made it more challenging for businesses, large and small, to grow and create jobs.

The Obama Environmental Protection Agency, in particular, has done more than its fair share to make things difficult for Americans. During the course of the Obama administration, this Agency has implemented one damaging rule after another, from a massive national backdoor energy tax that would hurt poor and working families the most to a new rule that would subject ponds and puddles in Americans' backyards to a complex array of expensive and burdensome regulatory requirements.

Again and again, I have heard from South Dakota farm and ranch families, homeowners and small businesses about the difficulties they are facing thanks to the Obama EPA's massive regulations.

If the President's record on the economy and middle-class opportunity is

bad, his record on foreign policy is even worse. A White House preview of the State of the Union touts the President's work to ''redefine American leadership for the 21st century.'' During the President's last year in office the White House says: ''We can show the world what is possible when America truly leads.''

Republicans couldn't agree more that America should truly lead. The problem is that the President's first 7 years in office have generally been distinguished by a lack of leadership. Back in June, former President and fellow Democrat Jimmy Carter described President Obama's successes on the world stage as ''minimal.'' He said: ''On the world stage, just to be as objective about it as I can, I can't think of many nations in the world where we have a better relationship now than we did when he took over.'' Again, that was a quote from former Democratic President Jimmy Carter. Well, neither can I.

The White House claims that the President ended two wars. Yet it neglects to mention that since the United States withdrew from Iraq, large sections of the country have gone into chaos thanks to ISIS. The President's failure to enforce his redline in Syria when President Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons on his own people and the President's lack of a strategy to defeat ISIS have contributed to a massive refugee crisis with no easy solution. Meanwhile, Assad remains in power, and ISIS continues to thrive.

With the terrorist attacks in Paris, ISIS officially expanded its theater of operations beyond the Middle East. As we witnessed in the case of the San Bernardino shooting, as long as ISIS continues to exist, its demented ideology will inspire disturbed individuals to commit acts of terror. The United States is in desperate need of a comprehensive strategy to confront the threat posed by ISIS. Yet the President has so far made no move to develop one.

On another foreign policy front, the President has repeatedly touted his nuclear deal with Iran as one of the major foreign policy achievements of his Presidency. Yet the agreement he signed actually improves Iran's long-term prospects for developing a bomb. In a clear violation of U.N. restrictions, Iran tested a ballistic missile, demonstrating once again that it has in no way curbed its aggressive behavior. Elsewhere, Russian aggression has increased on the President's watch. North Korea recently conducted yet another nuclear test.

The Obama administration has left the American people with a host of problems at home and abroad, but once again, it sounds like President Obama's State of the Union Address will fail to offer any substantial solutions. More than that, it sounds as if the President will largely ignore the problems, and that is unfortunate.

The President is missing an opportunity to offer substantial solutions before turning the problems of his administration over to his successors. I don't want to give credence to those Obama administration accusations that the Republicans are all ''doom and gloom.'' As I said, I believe the strength and spirit of the American people mean that the future of America is always bright. But realizing that future requires understanding and developing solutions to the problems facing our Nation, and that is something the President has been unwilling to do.

Republicans have worked hard over the past year to make our economy stronger, our government more efficient and accountable, and our Nation and our world safer and more secure. But there is a lot more work that needs to be done, and we need a partner in the White House who is willing to meet us half way. We hope the President will use the last year of his Presidency to work with us as we seek to address the challenges that are facing the American people.

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. 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.

FUNDING FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a few months ago my colleague from Missouri, Senator BLUNT, took the floor and spoke to two issues we have in common. I will speak to one of them in a moment—the flooding in the Midwest—but I wish to also address another one that he raised.

Senator BLUNT is in an extraordinary position, having been given an opportunity to handle the appropriations bill for the Department of Health and Human Services. Within the Health and Human Services appropriations bill is funding for most of the biomedical research by the Federal Government.

I have spoken to Senator BLUNT over the past year and even before about my strong feelings on this subject. I feel, as most Americans do, that our investment in biomedical research is a wise investment, potentially sparing people from disease and death that could follow an illness but also making an investment in America's innovative economy, creating opportunities for jobs and for expanded research and new products and pharmaceuticals. Senator BLUNT took that challenge to heart, and when he was faced with the appropriations bill for this Department, he made a special effort when it came to medical research. I am so happy that he did.

It was only a few years ago that we had automatic, across-the-board cuts called sequestration. It was devastating. As a net result of that, many of the youngest and most promising researchers gave up on the field because they didn't think there was a commitment from Congress, from the President, and from the government to continue to expand biomedical research. We saw the median age of researchers climbing because younger researchers looked for other jobs. That is a horrible waste of talent and a squandering of an opportunity, I am sure, to find ways to make life more bearable and to cure diseases across America.

Several years ago, when I visited the NIH, the head of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Francis Collins, told me that if we could have 5 percent real growth in biomedical research at the NIH for 10 years, he could light up the scoreboard. We were on the cusp of so many discoveries that this was an opportunity, if the investment were made, to really have some medical breakthroughs. I took that to heart and introduced a bill called the American Cures Act, and I am sure Senator BLUNT and many of my colleagues are tired of hearing about it. The notion is 10 percent by Congress; 5 percent real growth each year when it comes to the NIH.

As it turns out, this year we are knocking on the door of doing just that with the investment that was made by the appropriations bill. This investment is almost $42 billion in biomedical research, $32 billion in the National Institutes of Health, a 6.6-percent increase over last year; $7 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a 4.5-percent increase over fiscal year 2015.

There are two other areas of research opportunities in biomedical research: the Veterans Medical and Prosthetics Research Program and the Department of Defense Health Program. That is an appropriations bill I have something to do with, working with the chairman, Senator COCHRAN. Both of those programs received a 7-percent increase over the previous fiscal year. These increases at NIH, CDC, Veterans, and Defense are a real turnaround. They bring to an end a decades-long downward trend when it comes to biomedical research.

Senator BLUNT has said—and I have, too—this shouldn't be a one-hit wonder. We have to repeat that this year when it comes to the appropriations for the next fiscal year beginning October 1. We have to make sure we make our promise and keep it when it comes to biomedical research. If we do it, I know this level of funding is going to result in dramatic, positive developments.

There are so many areas we need help with. I can think of a few that are obvious, including Alzheimer's. An American is diagnosed with Alzheimer's once every 67 seconds. When my staff told me that, I didn't believe it. I said: Go back, recalculate, and tell me the real number. It turns out they were right. Once every 67 seconds, a person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Last year we spent over $200 billion in Medicare and Medicaid for Alzheimer's care. That is just a fraction of the total cost. Think about what individual families spent, what private insurance sources spent, the charitable care that was given to Alzheimer's patients. So when we talk about increasing the NIH budget by $2 billion for 1 year, it is a tiny fraction. It is 1 percent of the amount we are spending on Alzheimer's.

If we could find a way to detect Alzheimer's earlier, delay its onset, reduce the period of time of suffering, or perhaps even find a cure, God willing, it would have a dramatic, positive impact on so many lives and families and on our bottom-line Federal budget. Take that argument about Alzheimer's and apply it as well to cancer. How many of our families and friends are suffering and fighting cancer right now? My wife and I were struck over the holidays by how many of our close friends are battling cancer at this moment. We know they are looking for hope. They are looking for drugs. They are looking for something that will break through and give them a chance at life. That is why I believe this biomedical research is so critical.

Let me add one postscript. Stopping with these agencies is not enough. I recently visited the Department of Energy. The new Secretary there, Ernest Moniz, and I were talking about biomedical research. He said that when it comes to the technology for imaging that is making such a difference in the world, it isn't just in biomedicine; it is in engineering and science as well, in the Department of Science, within the Department of Energy. So let's not be shortsighted. Let's have an open mind about innovation and creation.

Last week I was in Peoria, IL, an area I am proud to represent. I went to visit OSF Hospital there. I went to what is known as the Jump Center. We don't forget that name very easily. What they have done in the Jump Center is they have combined the University of Illinois Medical School and the University of Illinois Engineering Department in a common effort to bring new engineering and new technology to medicine and medical breakthroughs. What they are doing there is amazing—first, training doctors and medical professionals to do their job effectively without mistakes. That, of course, is the ultimate outcome we are looking for. Over their shoulders are engineers and technicians who are looking at these doctors doing their work, finding new applications for computers and engineering technology that can make their work easier and more effective.

They showed me a model of the human heart. It was a heart of an infant with serious heart problems. This model they gave me was the actual human heart reproduced of an infant who was facing surgery. They took the MRIs and the CAT scans, put them into a 3D copier, and produced this little heart that you could hold in your hand. They were able to give that heart to the surgeon to look at before the surgery, and they opened it so that the surgeon could look inside that heart model—a model which tracked the reality of that infant—and know before the surgery what he would find.

It meant less time on the heart-lung machine, a more likely positive recovery. It was the use of technology in engineering to move us forward and to give that little baby a fighting chance. So I thank Senator BLUNT. I want to especially thank my colleague Senator PATTY MURRAY. She has been a terrific leader in this field, both on the appropriations and authorizing committees, and also Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER.

I think we have all come to conclude that regardless of how much time we have in the Senate, we should leave a mark that makes a difference. When it comes to biomedical research, this year's budget, which Senator BLUNT referred to, will make a difference. Now, let's make sure it is not a one-hit wonder. Let's make sure we do it again in next year's budget as well.

FLOODING IN THE MIDWEST

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would also like to speak for a moment about the flooding situation in the Midwest, and, of course, in my colleagues' neighboring State of Missouri.

Last month, right in the midst of the holidays, rain storms swept through my State, covering it with 7 inches of rainfall in a very short period of time. The heavy rainfall caused water levels on the rivers to reach record highs. We were surprised. We expect this in the spring, not in December. Communities had to evacuate their homes for their own safety. Sadly, these storms were so severe they flooded roadways, claiming the lives of 10 people whose vehicles were swept away by the floods. Many of them did not realize how high the water actually was in these flash floods or how fast it was moving. They got caught in dangerous waters.

Two areas that were some of the worst impacted were Alexander and Randolph Counties on the Mississippi River—Monroe County, I might add as well. Last Wednesday I went to visit two towns in these areas, Olive Branch and Evansville, to talk to the residents. In Olive Branch I met with Alexander County board vice-chair Lamar Houston and spoke with State representative Brandon Phelps. Both have been working diligently to help the community recover.

I have some photographs which I think will tell the story. This a photograph from Olive Branch. You can see water completely surrounding the home and covering the nearby areas. The levee that protects the communities of Olive Branch, Hodges Park, and Unity was breached and overtopped by a record crest at the Mississippi River. These overtops caused miles of flood damage, impacting ag lands as well as homes and businesses.

Before flooding occurred, local law enforcement and emergency responders tried to evacuate everybody as quickly as possible. Thankfully, a lot of people heeded the call and went to find shelter with family and friends, but many residents I spoke with in these towns were still concerned about being able to recover from the flood and the damage.

One man from Olive Branch, Bruce Ford, said his auto repair shop was engulfed by water. He worries he could be out of business for months. Bruce is working night and day to clean out the debris and to move his equipment back in. He was not sure when his shop would be ready to open. Even worse, if the levee breaches again this spring, which it might, he worries that he will not have the means to fix it all over again in just a few months.

In Evansville—and this photo is taken in that area; this was taken on New Year's Eve crossing the Mississippi River at St. Louis. It shows the devastation on the Illinois side. As you can see, these buildings are nearly completely submerged in water, and for many areas around St. Louis the damage you see here is typical. When I went to visit Evansville, about an hour south from here, I met with residents who worked around the clock to sandbag homes and businesses to keep the Kaskaskia River out of their town.

I met with Evansville mayor Craig Valleroy, emergency management codirector Nancy Shilling, who did a great job in making a presentation to me, and State Representative Jerry Costello, Jr.

I was given a tour around the waterfront and flooded areas. As is often the case with disasters like these, I was impressed with the local residents, first responders, local officials, and volunteers, who just stepped up and started filling sandbags. By building a wall of sandbags around downtown, Evansville residents were able to hold off the worst of the flooding.

Last week, I spoke with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency director, James Joseph, and the FEMA Regional Administrator, Andrew Velasquez, about the rain and flooding. The Governor declared 23 counties State disaster areas. State and local emergency responders were dispatched to affected areas. The State provided almost 1 million sandbags—997,000; 4,000 tons of sand; and 117 DOT trucks for flood mitigation.

As the water continues to recede in the coming days, local officials and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency are working together to assess the damages. I might say there is one issue that Senator KIRK and I have looked at over and over again. We are blessed in our State to have about 13 million people. The largest percentage of them are around the Chicagoland area, but we have a vast State beyond Chicago. That is where I hail from—downstate Illinois, with hundreds of miles of small town and rural areas.

When they go through flooding like this, and they are making a calculation of how much damage there has to be in order for the Federal Government to step in and help pay for the damage, they take into account the entire State and its population. The net result is, had this flooding occurred in a sparsely populated State, they would have received Federal assistance. But we have to hit a threshold number of about $18 million in public infrastructure damage before we qualify for Federal assistance.

Senator KIRK and I have both witnessed the damage of two tornadoes in Illinois, one in Washington, IL, and another one in Harrisburg, which at first glance we thought would clearly qualify for Federal assistance. In neither case did we make the threshold of $18 million in damage. So I think this formula needs to be recalculated. The fact that we happen to have a great city like Chicago and the region around it as part of our State should not really inure to the detriment of people downstate in smaller rural areas who suffer this kind of damage from flooding and tornadoes.

I am proud of the volunteers who came forward. I want to thank our National Guard. They are always there when we need them. Local law enforcement never gets enough credit—our firefighters, police, first responders, hospitals, and volunteers.

When I went into Olive Branch—it is a tiny town—most of the activity in the community center that I went into was happening in the kitchen. They said: Go to that lady wearing the pink hat. She is in charge. She had been there every single day since this flooding started, asking all the neighbors to bring in covered dishes and some food for the volunteers and the people who were displaced from their homes. God bless them for caring so much for their neighbors and responding in this time of need.

I want to recognize the hard work of the Federal and State employees who have been engaged in this. I have no doubt that the people of my State who have been impacted by these floods are going to roll up their sleeves and clean up the mess and get ready to make life normal again.

Our thoughts are with the many people today who have lost their loved ones. There were about 25 who died in these floods in the Midwest. We will again stand with them and others as we prepare for the future, to rebuild as the people of Illinois and the United States always do, stronger for the experience.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MISSION TO MARS AND SPACE SHUTTLE FLIGHT 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we are going to Mars—Mars or bust. We are going to send a human crew to Mars in the decade of the 2030s. We are right at the cusp of the breakthrough to show how this is possible. I have just returned from the Kennedy Space Center, meeting with its Director, Bob Cabana. All of the ground infrastructure—the two launch pads—are being reconfigured. Old abandoned launch pads on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station are being redone with new commercial launch pads.

Less than 2 years from right now, in September of 2017, we will be launching Americans again on American rockets to go to and from the International Space Station. Three years from now, we will be launching the full-up test of the largest and most powerful rocket ever invented by mankind, the Space Launch System, with its spacecraft Orion, which will be the forerunner that will ultimately take us to Mars.

This appropriations bill that we passed just before Christmas treats NASA with a decent increase of over $1 billion and puts the resources into each part of NASA—its scientific programs, its technology programs, its exploration programs, its aviation, and especially aviation research programs—to keep us moving forward in our development of technology.

I am especially enthusiastic about bringing this message because 30 years ago today, I had the privilege of launching on the 24th flight of the space shuttle into the heavens for a 6-day mission. Let me tell you about some of the members of this crew, just to give you an idea of how accomplished these people are.

In NASA terminology in the space shuttle, the commander sits on the left seat; on the right seat, his pilot—in effect, his copilot. He handles all of the systems. In almost all cases, those pilot astronauts are military test pilots. They are so good that when they land that space shuttle without an engine, they have one chance; they are so good they can put it on a dime.

Of course, our crew, 30 years ago launching from pad 39–A—the same pad that I saw on Saturday that has now been transformed into a commercial launch pad under lease to SpaceX—that crew was the best of the best. The two pilot astronauts were naval aviators. In the left seat was CDR Hoot Gibson—Robert Gibson, the best stick-and-rudder guy in the whole astronaut office. He could put it down, and you would hardly know that the wheels had touched.

In the right seat, then Marine colonel, now Marine general, retired, Charlie Bolden, who then went on to command three missions thereafter, and today is—for the last 7 years—the Administrator of NASA. He is the one who has transformed NASA and has us going in the right direction now to go to Mars and at the same time working out the arrangements for the commercial marketplace to flourish, as we are seeing with Boeing and SpaceX, which will be the two rockets that will launch in less than 2 years, taking Americans to and from the International Space Station.

Let me tell you about the rest of the crew that launched 30 years ago today. The flight engineer, Steve Hawley, an astrophysicist. By the way, he is the one who deployed for the first time the Hubble Space Telescope. An astrophysicist, Dr. George ''Pinky'' Nelson. By the way, all of these guys are doctors. They are Ph.D.s. Also, Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz, an astronaut who came to America from Costa Rica—not speaking a word of English after high school and taught himself English. He has a Ph.D. in plasma physics from MIT. While he was still flying, seven times as an astronaut, he was building a plasma rocket. Today that plasma rocket is one of the propulsion systems that NASA is considering when we go to Mars. If you saw the Matt Damon movie, ''The Martian,'' the author of the book had consulted with Franklin about the technology that is referenced in the book as the propulsion that sent that spacecraft to and from Mars. Another is engineer Bob Cenker, an RCA engineer. We launched an RCA communications satellite in the course of the mission.

The seventh is yours truly. I performed 12 medical experiments, the primary of which was a protein crystal growth experiment in zero-g, sponsored by the medical school at the University of Alabama at Birmingham—their comprehensive cancer center. The theory was if you could grow protein crystals—and out of the influence of gravity—then you could grow them larger and more pure, so when you brought them back to Earth, examining them either through x-ray defraction or an electron microscope, you could unlock the secrets of their architecture and get the molecular structure.

I also performed the first American stress test in space in an unmechanized treadmill. You wonder how in zero-g you can propel yourself running on a treadmill. I had to put on a harness with bungee cords that would force me down onto the treadmill, and I pulled and pushed with my feet. We were trying to see what happens to our astronauts who go outside on spacewalks. Their hearts would start skipping beats. So the idea was to get the heart rate up and use me as a comparison.

Indeed, what happened was I ran for 20 minutes, pulling and pushing. Lo and behold I discovered that the tape recorder was not working and had to repeat it. It made so much racket in that small confined space that our crew was mighty happy when I finished. Thus, the space doctors had additional data to study, and they have published that. We thought it was the first stress test in space, but later on we found out that the Soviets had done stress tests—we don't know how long.

On this occasion, 30 years later, of something that was transformative to me, I wish to say I am so optimistic of where we are going because we are going to Mars. If you ask the average American on the street, they think the space program is shut down because they visualize it as the shutting down of the space shuttle, but they will be reminded, reenergized, enthused and excited—as only human space flight can do—when those rockets start lifting off at the Cape in September of 2017, in less than 2 years, and we are beginning on our way to Mars.

I thank the Presiding Officer for this opportunity on this 30th anniversary.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

FEDERAL RESERVE TRANSPARENCY BILL

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak about the legislation we will be considering this afternoon. Specifically, my understanding is we will be voting on a procedural measure which will allow us to take up legislation that is commonly known as auditing the Fed. I want to address that.

Let me start with the context that I think is important to think about when we consider whether we ought to even modestly change the relationship that exists between Congress and the Fed. It starts for me with the simple observation that the financial crisis of 2008 is over. It actually ended a long time ago. It has been a number of years now that our financial system and our economy has not been in the imminent-crisis-meltdown mode that it was in the fall of 2008. In fact, for several years now we have had meager but some economic growth. Our banking system has been massively recapitalized. There is no current or imminent wave of bankruptcies in really any segment of the economy.

Yet despite the fact that we are clearly not in a financial or economic crisis, we have crisis-era monetary policy, policy from the Fed that one would expect to occur—presumably—only in a crisis. The recent very modest change in Fed policy, the movement in the Fed funds rate from a target of zero to 25 basis points to 25 to 50 basis points is arguably the most modest tightening in Fed history. You couldn't even begin to suggest that this is a tightening of monetary policy. This is just a very slightly less easy money policy. That is what we have.

So in my view there are huge dangers and problems that are associated with the Fed pursuing this completely unprecedented and, I would say, radical experiment in monetary policy. I wish to talk about a few of those this morning.

One of the first and clearest problems is because the Fed has kept interest rates so low for so long, the Fed has caused a big misallocation of resources. This undoubtedly caused asset bubbles that are existing today that would not have occurred had it not been for the abnormal monetary policy. For instance, take sovereign debt markets. In many cases—especially in Europe—we have debt issued by governments and the return on those instruments is negative. In other words it doesn't cost the government money to borrow money, which is abnormal. You have to pay interest to borrow money normally. In fact, the government gets paid to borrow money, which is ridiculous and it is extremely abnormal. It has happened in the United States, not at the moment but in recent history. As a result of this Fed policy, we have had the bizarre world of negative interest rates. That is just one category that has clearly been in the bubble.

Most observers believe that the high-yield market, the junk bond market, was in a bubble. That has gone through a very turbulent time and a big selloff—arguably, some of the years coming out of that bubble, but who knows. There has been considerable speculation that there are real estate bubbles, other financial assets. This is inevitable when the Fed distorts monetary policy, and it is a disturbing echo of the distortion that occurred back in the early part of the very beginning of this century, when the Fed's extremely low monetary policy of very low interest rates contributed to a housing bubble which of course ended up collapsing in the financial crisis, but that is just one category of problems the Fed causes with these ultra-low interest rates.

Of course, the second is the corollary that people who have saved money and want to invest in a low-risk investment are completely denied an opportunity to get a return. The savers are forced to—the expression is—reach for yield, which is to say: Take your money out of the bank and buy something else because you are earning nothing with the bank.

Well, you know what, for a lot of people a savings account at the bank is appropriate for their circumstances, for their risk tolerance, but they are driven away from that because bank deposits yield pretty much zero.

Consider the case of an elderly couple who lives in Allentown, PA. They worked their whole lives, saved whenever they could, sacrificed, chose not to squander their money, and they lived modestly rather than lavishly. They did it in the expectation that when they retired, this nest egg that they had worked decades to build, this savings account at the bank, was going to yield a little bit of income to help them make ends meet in their retirement, to help supplement whatever Social Security and whatever pension they might have.

What we have done to those folks—and they are all over America—who have spent a lifetime living prudently, carefully, sacrificing savings, we have said: Well, you made a huge mistake because the government is making sure you earn nothing on those savings.

Joseph Stiglitz is a very respected economist. His research has demonstrated that this zero interest rate and quantitative easing—as it is described, this Fed monetary policy—has contributed significantly to expanding income and wealth inequality. It is not a surprise.

This Fed policy has been very good for stocks. Stock prices have gone up, generally. It has been terrible for people with a bank account. While wealthy people have a lot of money in stocks, people of much more modest means tend to have more of their money sitting in a savings account which, as I have just described, earned zero. So the income inequality problem is exacerbated.

In addition, what the Fed has been doing is encouraging fiscal irresponsibility in Washington. What the heck, borrowing is free, which it basically has been for the Federal Government. Why not run big deficits and borrow lots of money? That is an attitude that some people have. It frankly diminishes the pressure on Congress to pursue sensible and responsible monetary policy. When the Fed is willing to just buy up all the debt and buy it at an extremely low interest rate, it encourages irresponsible behavior.

Now, of course, because the Federal Government has accumulated this $18 trillion mountain of debt, if and when interest rates return to something like normal—which one day they will, whether the Fed likes it or not—then that is a devastating problem for our budget outlook.

So all of this is particularly disturbing to me when you consider that this massive creation of money, this flooding the world with dollars that the Fed has engaged in, does not create wealth. It is the difference between money and wealth.

So some people might feel wealthier when they see stock prices rise if they have stocks, but that can be a very artificial phenomenon. It is an inflation in asset prices. It is not an improvement in productivity. It is not an expansion in our economic output. It is not actual wealth. It is numbers on a piece of paper.

Of course, what the Fed is able to inflate in this artificial means by creating lots of money, well, that can eventually deflate. Whatever good they think they were accomplishing on the way up, why should we think we couldn't see the reverse on the way back down? This is what I think is the fundamental problem. The fact is, we have factors that are holding back our economy that are very real and very important, and the Fed's monetary policy can't correct that.

We have a Tax Code that is completely uncompetitive. It discourages work. It discourages savings. It discourages investment. It makes us less competitive in countries around the

world that have more sensible tax codes than we have. We need to fix the Tax Code. Monetary policy cannot make up for a badly flawed Tax Code.

We have unsustainable entitlement programs. They are the ultimate drivers of large and growing deficits, and we will not be on a sustainable path until we fix these programs, and monetary policy can't make up for the cloud they cast over our economy. We have a declining percentage of Americans who are participating in the workforce. This is a huge problem for us. Again, monetary policy does nothing about that.

Finally, we have been overregulating this economy on a completely unprecedented scale. The massive wave of overregulation that this administration, and on some occasions Congress, has inflicted on our economy clearly contributes a great deal to the subpar economic growth we have been living through. Again, monetary policy doesn't reverse that. It doesn't change that. It seems to me that, despite all their good intentions, their intentions themselves were flawed in that the Fed seems to be trying to compensate for the flawed policy in these other areas.

Given the magnitude, the persistence, and the dangers of pursuing this kind of monetary policy, I think it is time that Congress reassert its authority over monetary affairs. The Constitution clearly gives Congress the responsibility to mint coins and to print money. In 1914, Congress delegated the management of our currency to the Fed. For a long time there was a sense that we ought to just leave them to their own devices and not pay very much attention. I think those days are past. I think the Fed's behavior obligates us to take a different approach.

One good beginning step is the legislation we are considering today, which would audit the Fed. All it really does is give Congress and the American people the opportunity to examine and understand the mechanics and the thinking behind changes in monetary policy in something close to real time. I think we absolutely need that. I will say that I was a skeptic about this for a long time. I thought: I am not so sure it is such a good idea to have Congress looking over the shoulders of the folks making monetary policy. But I think the dangerous behavior that the Fed has engaged in for years now means they have squandered the right to be independent. We need to have more supervision.

A next step which I think would be very important is for Congress to require the Fed to adopt a rule that would govern monetary policy. If we let the Fed decide what that rule should be and if circumstances require it, in the opinion of the Fed, they ought to be able to deviate from that rule. But they should come and explain to the American people and to Congress when and why they are deviating, rather than have year after year of this bizarre, unnatural policy that is very hard to explain and understand.

So I am going to support the legislation we are considering this afternoon, the audit the fed bill. It is one of many important steps we can take to restore the accountability that the Fed ought to have. It is important that we get on a different path with our monetary policy. I understand it is not going to occur overnight, and it is not going to occur entirely as a result of this legislation. But this policy has been going on too long, and it is time for Congress to reassert its authority.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to offer my strong support for the legislation we are debating today that would finally audit the Federal Reserve.

Since I came to Congress, I have supported auditing the Fed. When I was first elected to the House of Representatives, I would attend briefings hosted by Congressman Ron Paul, Senator PAUL's father, and I learned why more accountability and transparency was needed at the Fed.

I remember talking to Congressman Paul on the House floor about various issues at the Fed, and that is when I started to support this bill to audit the Fed, just as I am supporting his son's bill today. I thank Senator PAUL for continuing to take up this cause and for building the momentum to audit the Fed that has led us to where we are today.

Since its founding, the Federal Reserve has often operated in secrecy, even though it is the biggest influence on our country's economy. The Fed's actions affect every American family and their hard-earned income. I am fortunate to be chairman of the Economic Policy Subcommittee on the Senate banking committee, where I have direct oversight over the Federal Reserve's monetary policies. I can say that the Federal Reserve's actions warrant passage of this legislation. For several years we have seen unprecedented monetary and regulatory policies come from the Fed. One of the riskiest policies I have ever seen is the Fed's stimulus program of quantitative easing. The Federal Reserve essentially turned on their computers, fired up their electronic printing presses, created new money out of thin air, and started to buy assets.

Now, we may ask ourselves this: How big is this stimulus program? It is an unbelievable number. As of today, it is nearly $4.5 trillion. Let me say that again: $4.5 trillion. And that is with a ''t.'' That is more than four times the cost of President Obama's own failed stimulus program. And who has benefited from this quantitative easing? I can tell you in two words: It is Wall Street. That is right. Wall Street hit the jackpot because the Fed's easy money policies drove everybody into the equities market to get any return they possibly could on their investments. Wall Street won, and Main Street, savers, and workers lost.

The scary part is the Fed won't rule out buying more assets in the future. If we ask the Fed today when or how they would begin to reduce their $4.5 trillion balance sheet, there is nothing but silence. Is that being transparent? Is that accountability? No, absolutely not. This is just one of the reasons why we must pass this bill to audit the Fed.

I find it ironic that the Federal Reserve is so opposed to being audited, because they themselves go around auditing lending institutions all the time. I frequently hear from community lenders in Nevada who have either the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, the National Credit Union Administration or the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau knocking on their door all the time. These community lenders have not caused the financial crisis, yet they are the ones feeling the brunt of all these audits. Why should there be a double standard that government agencies can examine every American's bank account but the American public can't examine those same agencies back? Again, this is why we must pass this legislation to audit the Fed.

I remind my colleagues that even though most of the news about the Fed revolves around interest rates and the Fed's monetary policy, the Fed is also responsible for major regulations that touch on almost every aspect of our financial system. Now, I support reasonable regulations, but only after thoughtful and careful evaluations. I think it should be mandated that the Fed conduct a cost-benefit analysis of all their proposed regulations and always allow for public comment on proposed regulations.

I am also very concerned that the Fed is getting involved in financial sectors in which they have not been in the past. We have a long tradition here in the United States of having a time-tested and effective State-based insurance regulatory system. Unfortunately, Dodd-Frank has changed all that, and now the Federal Reserve has new authorities over the insurance sector.

Right now, as we speak, the Fed is attempting to regulate capital standard requirements for insurance companies in the United States. This will be the first time the Federal Government imposes domestic Federal capital standards on the State-regulated insurance industry.

I worked very hard to ensure bank-centric standards are not inappropriately applied to the insurance industry by the Fed. But not only does the Fed want to add their own domestic layer of rules on top of State-based insurance regulations, they even want another layer of one-size-fits-all international capital standards on top of that. I almost have to laugh, because it is only in Washington, DC, where a Federal agency can put the trailer in front of the truck.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what the Fed is doing by working on international capital standards before they

complete their own domestic standards. I have serious concerns about these international efforts. Together with Senator TESTER of Montana, we introduced the bipartisan International Insurance Capital Standards Accountability Act, which would compel the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department to complete a study on consumers and markets in the United States before supporting any international insurance proposal or international insurance capital standard.

These are just a few of the examples of some of the Fed's questionable actions. As I said earlier, this legislation to audit the Fed is critical to bring transparency and accountability to the Fed, but even more fundamental changes need to be made.

A few months ago, Chairman SHELBY put together an impressive bill that the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee passed with my support, which would make important reforms to the Fed. One provision would establish a commission to study the potential restructuring of the districts in the Federal Reserve System. Chairman SHELBY's bill would also require the Fed's Federal Open Market Committee to make more frequent and detailed reporting requirements to Congress and to increase transparency by reducing the time lag for Federal Open Market Committee transcripts from 5 years to 3 years. These are very reasonable changes that I think Democrats and Republicans alike can support, and I hope that Chairman SHELBY's bill will be brought to the Senate floor soon.

The Federal Reserve recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, and in many aspects the Fed has not changed much since Woodrow Wilson's time. As most of us know, a few months ago we cut a very specific dividend that banks receive for buying stock of the Federal Reserve System in order to pay for the highway bill. While the debate mostly centered on how to cut the dividend, I was trying to figure out why the Federal Reserve requires banks to buy these so-called stocks to begin with. After all, it doesn't look like the Fed is in desperate need of funds, because over the past half dozen years the Fed has sent nearly half a trillion dollars of profits to the U.S. Treasury.

One hundred years ago, these stock purchases and dividends were meant to incentivize banks to join the Federal Reserve System. Since that time, laws have been passed that essentially don't give a bank the choice as to whether or not they want to be supervised by the Federal Reserve System because, by law, the Fed has gained authority over all banks that are eligible for FDIC insurance. Just because something was standard practice over 100 years ago does not mean it is still needed today. I think it is time to review and examine these Federal Reserve membership requirements even further.

My colleagues, it is essential that Congress exercise its constitutional responsibility to conduct oversight and scrutinize of the Federal Reserve in an open and transparent way, which is why I will proudly vote today to move forward with auditing the Fed, and I encourage my colleagues to join me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in opposition to S. 2232, the Federal Reserve Transparency Act. I am concerned that, out of all the issues before the Senate and out of all the issues we need to work on—in terms of growth, in terms of ISIS, in terms of wage inequality, in terms of transportation, and so many other issues—this is the first bill the Senate considers at the beginning of the year.

I will talk for a moment about the direction in which we should go, but I want to talk about this issue. There are so many issues we are not talking about—national security, job creation, college affordability, student debt, and immigration.

In my time in Ohio over the past several weeks, people talked to me about all kinds of different issues that Congress should be addressing. But it, frankly, comes as no surprise to anybody watching or any of my colleagues that not one person came up to me and said: ''Congress needs a greater say in monetary policy.'' There is no demand for that, except from those who want to score political points. There is no reason for this. There is no legitimate public function that we should even do this legislation, the Federal Reserve Transparency Act. And don't be fooled by the name of the bill because it really isn't about transparency. It is about the Federal Reserve but not about transparency. But let me move on.

Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen recently wrote to Senate leaders, copying all of us in the Senate, and spoke to the central problem with this legislation:

> This bill risks undoing the steady progress that has been made on the economic recovery over recent years in an environment with low and stable inflation expectations; progress that was made in part because the Federal Reserve is able to make independent decisions in the longer-term economic interest of the American people.
>
> ''Audit the Fed'' legislation, if enacted, would undermine the independence of the Federal Reserve and likely lead to an increase in inflation fears and market interest rates, a diminished status of the dollar in global financial markets, increased debt service costs for the federal government, and reduced economic and financial stability.

Janet Yellen is exactly right. This legislation is about 535 Members of Congress getting involved in Federal monetary policy. I can't imagine that the American people want a Federal Reserve where Congress is so involved that it is disruptive and where it becomes so political. That is really what this is all about. It is about a handful of Members of the House and Senate who want to govern monetary policy in a way so that it ultimately won't work in the public interest. It is about their political talking points. It is about all of that.

Let's go back. When President Obama took office—you will hear about this in tonight's speech, I assume, down the hall in the House of Representatives—our country was losing about 800,000 jobs a month when he took office. In February 2010, we did the Recovery Act and the auto rescue. Since February 2010, we have seen job growth for about 69, 70, 71 straight months since the auto rescue. I know what the auto rescue meant in my State. I know we see an auto industry that is doing very well and we see a lot more people back to work.

Supporters of auditing the Fed claim they want to make the Fed's operations and activities more transparent. We know that is not what this is about. In a statement in July, the Senate banking committee chairman—the Republican chair of the committee, RICHARD SHELBY, hit the nail on the head. Here is what he said:

> A lot of people called for an audit of the Fed for years, but they already audit the Fed for years . . . I don't believe they're just talking about an audit, like you'd audit the books of somebody—they're talking about monetary policy. They're talking about . . . 435 members of the House and 100 Senators getting into the day-to-day business of the monetary policy of the Fed. We created the Fed, Congress did, to get politics as far as we could out of it. I don't believe we need politics back in it.

Chairman SHELBY is right. We don't need 535 Members of Congress on the Federal Open Market Committee. One of the most important components we need for sound monetary decision-making policy is political independence.

Senator PAUL—the sponsor of this—argues that we need to understand the ''extent of the Fed's balance sheet.''

Congress already requires the Federal Reserve to have its financial statements audited every year by an external auditor, someone who is outside, independent of all matters relating to the Fed. The Fed releases a quarterly report presenting detailed information on the Fed's balance sheet and information on the combined financial position and results of operations of the Federal Reserve Banks. That report is released to Congress. The report is available to the public on the Fed's Web site. Anyone can go to federalreserve.gov right now and read it.

Each week the Fed publishes its balance sheet and charts of recent balance sheet trends. There are legitimate criticisms of the Federal Reserve. There always have been. There probably always will be because of its reach and complexity, but since the crisis the Fed has gotten better. It has gotten better in part because of the last two Chairs of the Federal Reserve—Ben Bernanke, a Bush appointee and then an Obama nominee the second time, and with Janet Yellen, an Obama

nominee. Since the crisis, the Government Accountability Office has conducted over 100 audits of the Federal Reserve's activities. Many of these audits relate to the financial crisis, including the Fed's emergency lending activities. There is more and there should be more.

The Fed is transparent and accountable in the following ways. Let me list them again. This is not an out-and-out defense of the Fed. They should be open to criticism. There is still much to criticize about them, but this legislation solves nothing, except to politicize the Fed. These are the ways the Fed is transparent and accountable: The Chair of the Federal Reserve is required to testify before the Senate Banking Committee and the House Financial Services Committee twice a year on monetary policy. In practice, she will testify at additional hearings and other topics. The Governors of the Federal Reserve and senior staff—that is, others of the nine members of the Federal Reserve—testify dozens more times every year.

The Fed releases a statement after each Federal Open Market Committee meeting to describe the FOMC's decisions and the reasoning behind those decisions. The Chair holds press conferences four times a year after FOMC meetings. Minutes of FOMC meetings are released 3 weeks after each meeting and are available on the Federal Reserve's Web site. Transcripts of FOMC meetings are released earlier than before—5 years after each meeting and are available on the Fed's Web site. That is much earlier than most other central banks release transcripts, for obvious reasons.

Summaries of the economic forecasts of FOMC participants, including their projections for the most likely path of the Federal funds rate, are released quarterly. The Board's Office of the Inspector General audits and investigates all of the Fed's Board and Reserve bank programs, operations, and functions. These completed audits, assessments, and reviews are listed in the Federal Reserve Board's annual report.

The Fed releases detailed transaction-level data on the discount window lending and open market operations. This is relatively new. This was required by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform law. Clearly, Congress knew the Fed was not as responsible and open as it should be. One of the things we did in Dodd-Frank was this reform. All securities that the Fed holds are published on the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Web site.

The New York Fed, the most important district regional Federal Reserve—there are 12 of them, including one in the city I live in, Cleveland. The New York Fed is the most important for a number of reasons. It publishes an annual report of the system open market account that includes a detailed summary of open market operations over the year, and it includes balance sheet and income projections. I would add, this Chair of the Federal Reserve is more open to the public. This Chair of the Federal Reserve is out and about the country, as was her predecessor, Chairman Bernanke, and Chair Yellen even more so. She was in Cleveland not too long ago last summer making a speech to the City Club of Cleveland. Afterward she and I went to visit a large Cleveland national manufacturer with a large site in Cleveland so she could see the real economy, talk to workers, and see how important manufacturing is, especially in the middle of the country, to all things Federal Reserve.

I wonder how many of those claiming the Fed is not transparent have actually taken the time to read some of these reports I mentioned—whether it is the annual report, whether it is some of the audits, whether it is some of the transcripts of FOMC, and I wonder if they have listened to very many of these hours of testimony from Chair Yellen or from Governor Tarullo, Governor Powell or others on the Federal Reserve. The Fed is far from perfect. I have been one of its major critics in this body, as the ranking Democrat on banking, but I argued, for instance, that it should be a stronger regulator of the Nation's large bank holding companies. I appreciate what it is doing with living wills. I think that is very important. I especially appreciate what the Fed has done for stronger capital standards. To me, that is the most important thing we can do. It is more important than reinstatement of Glass-Steagall, more important than my amendment of 5 years ago to break up the largest banks, making sure banks have significant enough capital to make the system safer and sounder, but it is hard to dispute that this Fed is one of the most transparent central banks in the world.

What is this truly all about? I know some of people are unhappy about decisions the Federal Reserve made during the financial crisis, including holding interest rates near zero for 7 years. They want to show their anger at the Fed by taking away independence, but without the Fed's extraordinary monetary policy actions, which might not have been possible if its actions were micromanaged by Congress, our economy would likely be in a far worse situation today.

Several months ago I was asked by C–SPAN to interview Chairman Bernanke on one of its shows called ''After Words.'' We sat for an hour at a studio in Washington and discussed the memoir that Chairman Bernanke began to write on the day he left the Federal Reserve a couple of years ago. It was clear then that because Congress had pursued, in terms of fiscal policy, such austerity, he saw the economic growth that had started with the auto rescue and the Recovery Act, he saw that economic growth—immobilized is perhaps not the right word, but he saw that economic growth stall. He knew, because Congress was starting to squeeze the economy at that point with the wrong kind of fiscal policy, that he had to make up for it by low interest rates and ultimately by quantitative easing, which is what he did. So understanding that he knew he would offend some Members of Congress with that action, he also understood that because he was independent, he could do the kinds of things, as Chair Yellen has been able to do, to get this economy growing. Hence, in large part because of the auto rescue but in large part because of QE that the Federal Reserve has done through the last two Chairs of the Federal Reserve—one a Republican appointee and one a Democratic appointee—the Fed has been independent enough to do the right thing.

Inflation remains low. We have something called a dual mandate, where the Federal Reserve is responsible for working to keep inflation at no more than 2 percent and unemployment at no more than 5 percent. The Fed has balanced that well. Inflation remains low, despite the doomsday prediction by many of this bill's proponents. We know our economy still has a way to go and that too many Americans are struggling, but it is clear that an increase in interest rates before last month would have been premature and would have been harmful to working Americans. If Congress were involved in that, in the way that the sponsor of this bill seems to want, our economy would be in much worse shape. I don't think there is much question about that.

Audit the Fed legislation, there is also a backdoor, piecemeal way of instituting something called the Taylor rule, which is an attempt to impose a monetary policy role on the Fed. To me, this is the heart of this legislation that when they look at the dual mandate, they think way more about inflation, which is what the bondholders of Wall Street want them to do, and way less about fiscal policy and way less about low interest rates and way less about employment. The dual mandate is inflation and employment.

If you lean far too much toward inflation, which is what Wall Street wants, then people on Main Street are left out. Frankly, that has been the story of the Fed for far too many years. That is why what Chairman Bernanke did and what Chairwoman Yellen have done is so important, but if the audit the Fed sponsors have their way, we will see some kind of Taylor rule.

In November, House Republicans passed a Federal Reserve reform bill that imposes the Taylor rule. The enforcement mechanism? GAO reviews, audits, and reports. Is there any doubt that this is where the audit the Fed effort is headed next?

I urge my colleagues to vote no this afternoon. This vote will take place in a couple of hours. It is in the interests of all of us to understand the role, the operations, and the activities of the Federal Reserve. We can do that better

in this body. This is not the way to do it. We can do it better. It is also in the interest of the American economy for Congress to keep its political hands, if you will, out of monetary policy decisionmaking.

If Republicans were serious about making the Fed work better, they would confirm the two pending nominees to the Board of Governors—a Republican community banker named Al Landon, who has been waiting for a nomination hearing for a year, and Kathryn Dominquez, a Democratic nominee, who has been waiting for nearly 6 months. Yet, instead of working to improve the Fed's operations, we are considering this bill to undermine it. It is a big mistake that most people I know who have any expertise in the Federal Reserve reject. I ask my colleagues to vote no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, tonight the President of the United States will offer his last State of the Union speech and one that I know we will all be listening carefully to. I couldn't help but reflect on the first speech he gave to a joint session of Congress back in 2009, shortly after his inauguration. It was a hopeful speech, it was an optimistic speech—one that appealed to the better angels of Republicans and Democrats and the whole Nation alike. He said we needed to pull together and boldly confront the challenges we face, but somewhere along the way he seems to have forgotten the benefit of finding common ground where folks can agree. It seems we have seen the Obama administration more involved in dividing the American people when facing opposition and then preferring to go it alone rather than to work with Congress under the constitutional scheme created by our Founding Fathers.

Tonight in his final address on his priorities as President, I am sure President Obama will want to talk about what his legacy looks like once he leaves office, and that will invariably include times when he has simply done an end run around Congress. We have seen it time and time again. It is a mistake. It is shortsighted, but it is his method of governing and presumably being able to tell people: Well, I have gotten my way and I haven't had to do the hard work of working with people of different points of view to find the areas where we agree.

I have said it before, but I think it is worth noting the comment by the senior Senator from Wyoming, when I said to him: You are on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions with Teddy Kennedy, the liberal lion of the Senate, whom I served with for a while before he unfortunately passed away. How is it that you are able to work with somebody whose world view is so opposite from yours and you are still able to actually get things done? To this he replied: It is simple. It is the 80–20 rule. We look at the 80 percent of things we can agree upon, and we do those and forget the 20 percent we can't agree on.

I fear that our country and the Congress has become a Congress that looks at the 20 percent we can't agree on and as a result can't do the 80 percent that we do agree on because we disagree on the 20 percent, and that is a mistake. It is also not the scheme of government that was created by America and our Constitution, and it would be a mistake to do nothing because we can't agree on the 20 percent when we can agree on the 80 percent.

I know there are some areas where we are going to have a fundamental disagreement, and we are going to continue to fight and oppose each other's points of view, but I have been around here long enough to know that there are people of goodwill on both sides of the aisle, some of whom I disagree with strenuously, but by working together, we can find ways to solve problems and help move the country's agenda forward. But somewhere along the way, the President forgot that, and so I suspect he will be talking about some of his Executive orders, which have been a terrible mistake.

First of all, on his Executive order for immigration, there was a lawsuit. A Federal judge issued an injunction, which has been upheld so far. It bars implementation of his Executive order. So what did the President accomplish other than to enrage and polarize people and poison the well when it comes to actually trying to begin the process of solving and fixing some of our broken immigration system? The President has poisoned the well and made it virtually impossible for us to work with him on solving or fixing our broken immigration system because of what? Because of an Executive order that was subsequently enjoined by a Federal court. So he wasn't able to accomplish his goal, but he was able to kill meaningful immigration reform debate in the Senate.

Of course, as we have on the Iranian nuclear negotiation, the President seems content not to engage in a treaty process, which is actually binding on his successor. It is simply a political document which is not even in writing. It tries to freeze out the American people, whom we represent, and the sort of educational and consensus-building process that is good for our country. I mean, that is how we have become unified as a country—by looking at the things we can work together on and not just focusing on our differences. If we are just going to focus on our differences, we are never going to get anything done. There are some people who may be OK with that, but, frankly, I think the American people voted for Republicans and a new leadership in the last election not because they didn't want to get anything done, but because they wanted to give us the responsibility for setting the agenda and doing the things that were their priorities, which doesn't entail doing nothing. That entails doing those things that reflect the priorities of the American people and by working together where we can.

Nobody here is a dictator, not even the President of the United States. It is shortsighted. It is a mistake, and it is in contravention of the whole constitutional framework that was set up 230-something years ago.

We saw it most recently on the President's announcement on gun issues where he, again, ignored Congress and said: Well, I am going to do it my way. Maybe he is impatient. Maybe he doesn't believe in consensus building. Maybe he just doesn't like his job very much. Sometimes I think that is true. Temperamentally, I think the President may not be suited for the kind of consensus building and legislative process that is necessary to actually get important things done.

I was thinking, as we were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act a short time back, do you actually think we could do something like that, given this polarized political environment and a President unwilling to work with Congress? I would say Lyndon Baines Johnson was a lot of things, but he knew how to get things done. He was the antithesis of this President when it came to rolling up his sleeves and working with Congress and people with different points of view and actually trying to find the possible and the doable—not to focus on failure but to focus on where we can make progress.

Unfortunately, as a result, I think the President's legacy is going to be discussed in a way that he probably isn't going to fully appreciate.

I was reading the Wall Street Journal this morning and was reminded of how his political legacy will be remembered. Since President Obama took office, his party has lost 13 Senate seats, 69 House seats, 910 State legislative seats, and has lost majority party status in 30 State legislatures. Those are amazing statistics, given that the President came out of the starting gate so strong. Unfortunately, he used his political capital by passing legislation like ObamaCare with just Democratic votes. That is not a way to build durable or sustainable policy or to build consensus. That is a way of jamming it down the throat of the minority party and then saying: Well, you are just going to have to live with it. Well, that is not the case.

As we reflected on the recent vote we had on appealing ObamaCare, which the President vetoed, we have the political will and votes to change that ill-considered and misguided health care law and to replace it with something that makes more sense, is more affordable, and suits the needs of individual Americans. What we do need is a new President, and I think we have demonstrated that.

If you look at item after item and our struggling economy—after the terrible events of 2008, I admit the President had a tough hand because America's economy cratered, and we went into a recession. Typically what economists will tell us—and I take some of my economic advice from former Senator Phil Gramm who is a Ph.D. economist. He wrote in the Wall Street Journal, or maybe it was the Washington Post, that following recessions, typically what you have is a v-shaped bounce of the economy. But what we have had under this President's policy—because of overregulation and political uncertainty, just because of his unwillingness to work to build consensus to get things done, we have seen an economy struggling to recover with stagnant wages and slow economic growth.

Then there is the issue of foreign policy. I just had the privilege of meeting with a group of people, including the King of Jordan, where we talked about the battle against the Islamic State and Syria, which is right outside the King's back door, and the work they have been doing with us to try and deal with the Russians that are taking advantage of the chaos. There is a lack of a master strategy or plan to deal with this threat. It is not just a threat over there, as we have learned; it is a threat over here because of the use of social media and the ability to radicalize people who live in the United States and convince them to commit acts of violence right here in our country. So we have a mess in Syria and no real strategy to fight ISIL.

I mentioned ObamaCare just a few moments ago because I can't help but remember when the President was selling ObamaCare and jammed it through on a purely partisan vote. I remember he said: If you like what you have, you can keep it. Well, that was not true. I was a former attorney general in Texas. We had a consumer protection division that sued people for consumer fraud. When people are lied to about what it is they are going to get in exchange for their hard-earned money and they don't get it because they have been deceived, that usually ends up in court, and you end up getting sued. Well, we know that premiums didn't come down an average of $2,500 for a family of four. Instead, they skyrocketed. And we have been reading stories in the press which show that a lot of younger people who need to be part of the pool in order to keep rates down—because, frankly, you need young, healthy people as part of that insurance pool to hold down rates for the whole country—didn't buy it because they don't think it suits their needs, and it is it too expensive. They are being forced to buy coverage that they can't use.

I say all of this because I think in some ways the President has squandered his mandate when he was elected. I remember in 2008 when the President talked about hope and change. I wasn't quite sure what he meant, but we all agree that hope is a good thing, and frequently change is a good thing. We were hopeful for the new President—the first African-American President elected in American history. It was a very positive thing for so many of us. It represented a huge transition for a country that unfortunately committed the original sin of treating African-Americans as less than fully human, and we paid a terrible price for it, and we continue to pay a terrible price. But I was hopeful, like many others were, that he would actually use his position as President to bring people together and work with us.

I will tell you that I am an optimistic person, and so despite the last 7 years, I hope the President talks tonight about what he plans to do in his last year in office. He still has one full year left in his two terms, or 8 years, in office. He has a choice to make, just as we all have choices to make. The President can decide to double down on his go-it-alone strategy, which has proved to be a disaster. It doesn't work. It is not enduring, and it polarizes the political parties and the American people. I think, actually, the way this President has chosen to govern is more responsible for the polarization we see among the American people when it comes to politics and some of the sorts of craziness of our current political process, which we all talk about privately. I think he is actually largely responsible for that—maybe not entirely, but largely.

The President can decide whether he actually wants to do something during his last year in office. He can actually want to try to work with Congress.

I will suggest an area where we can find common ground and work together, and that is by reforming our criminal justice system. Actually, I have been involved for several years, as have many Members on the Democratic and Republican side, on looking at our criminal justice system and saying: How can we do better?

For example, for too long we have treated our prison system at the State and Federal levels as a warehouse for people, and we have forgotten some of the basic tenets of the goals of the criminal justice system, which is to rehabilitate people. You can't rehabilitate everybody. You have to have a willing heart, and you have to have people willing to change and take advantage of an opportunity to turn their lives around. There are people like that, and we have demonstrated that in many of our State penal systems, such as Texas, where we have seen that if you provide the right incentives, people will take advantage of opportunities to turn their lives around and deal with their addictions, lack of education, and lack of skills so they no longer have to live a life—as one person in Houston told me. He called himself a frequent flier in the criminal justice system. Every time he got out, he ended up coming back, until he finally took advantage of the opportunity to turn his life around. So we do have legislation that passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee 15 to 5.

There are some things we still need to continue to work on with our colleagues. But I think it represents a great opportunity—something the President himself has said he wants to see us do—and I think it could be a genuine legacy item for him and something that offers hope to people without much hope. It is also good for the taxpayers. We have actually been able to shutter three different penitentiaries in Texas and save the taxpayers billions of dollars, so it strikes me that it is a win across the board. So I think reforming our criminal justice system is a great opportunity.

I also believe, as I mentioned yesterday when I spoke on the floor, that addressing our broken mental health system is another area that we could deal with productively on a bipartisan basis and that could be a legacy of this President and certainly of this Congress.

We know our mental health delivery system is broken. All we have to do is look at people living on our streets, homeless people. These people frequent our emergency rooms because they have various medical conditions, but because of their mental illness, they never get the treatment they need, so they go in and out of that turnstile.

We also know that some people tragically become a danger not only to themselves but to their loved ones and the communities where they live. I know it is a simple fact borne out by public opinion polls that most people understand that some of the acts—not all but some of the acts—in fact, public opinion in the polling I have seen said that 70 percent of respondents in public opinion polls said that mental illness is a factor in incidents of mass violence, including shootings in places such as Sandy Hook; Aurora, CO; Charleston; and others. We can name those incidents and those tragic circumstances, but until we get serious about working together to try to improve access to mental health services and give families the additional tools they need in order to get their loved ones compliant with their doctor's orders and their medication, we are never going to be able to make progress in this area.

I think about Adam Lanza, the shooter at Sandy Hook, who stole his mother's own gun, killed her with it, and then went on to that elementary school and killed those poor, innocent children—a horrific tragedy. But Adam Lanza's mother knew he was sick. She knew he was basically living downstairs and descending into his mental illness and getting sicker and sicker. She didn't have much in the way of options, so she tried to find common ground with him and work with him, but obviously that wasn't enough to overcome his mental illness. If we could just do some simple things, such as provide outpatient, court-ordered

mental health treatment—that is something that is included in a piece of legislation on which we will be having a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee. That will provide families additional tools other than involuntary commitment, which is just temporary and doesn't serve the long-term problems.

One of the biggest problems, I have learned, with our mental health system is that so often people who need treatment refuse treatment. In other words, frequently they don't take their medication. As long as it is purely a voluntary matter, particularly for people who are a threat to their own safety as well as the community's safety, then we are going to continue to see repetitions of this and more and more tragedies, more families torn apart by mental illness, when we could actually offer them some help and some hope.

There is a gentleman named Pete Earley who is an award-winning journalist who wrote a book called ''Crazy.'' This is not about his son, although his son did suffer from mental illness; this is about our broken mental health system. He called it ''Crazy.'' He wrote a book, which I would commend to anybody, about his own family's experience dealing with a mentally ill son and how hard it was to get him to comply with his doctor's orders and take his medication and the like.

I hope Pete Earley will come testify in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee later this month, along with some really innovative programs like those in San Antonio, TX, where they found a way to not just warehouse the mentally ill in our jails but to actually divert them for treatment and to get them in a better place and out of this turnstile of the criminal justice system.

So those are just a couple of ideas about what this President could do, and I hope they are areas he will perhaps address tonight that he would be willing to work with us on: criminal justice reform and mental health reform. I think if he were willing to do that, he would find Republicans and Democrats alike willing to work with him to try to build that common-ground consensus, and actually that would be one of the lasting legacies of his final year of his administration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

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

SCRUB ACT

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome Act—more affectionately known as the SCRUB Act. This past summer, my colleague Senator HATCH and I introduced this legislation to help free American families and small businesses from the unnecessary burdens of our regulatory system. I am pleased to mention that the bill passed the House last week on a bipartisan basis.

For too long, our Nation's innovators and employers have been trying to comply with a swath of outdated, duplicative, or obsolete regulations that hamper their growth and creativity. Many of these regulations also come with stacks of paperwork requirements that force our small businesses to spend time on filling in the blanks rather than filling in jobs. The SCRUB Act would peel back these types of regulations so our businesses can focus on doing what they know best: innovating and creating jobs.

The purpose of this bill is to take an objective and in-depth look at major regulations that are at least 15 years old and could be repealed because they have, No. 1, achieved their goal and there is no threat to the problem reoccurring; No. 2, technology or market changes have made the regulation unnecessary; or No. 3, they are ineffective or overlap with other Federal or State regulations.

For decades, lawmakers and Presidents on both sides of the aisle have recognized the need to unleash our small businesses and job creators from rules and regulations that don't make sense. When new rules are proposed, there is very little, if any, attention paid to how the new rule will work with the hundreds of other rules that came before it. This buildup of rules is a cumulative burden on our businesses which ultimately slows job growth and hits families even harder who are already struggling to make ends meet. In fact, according to one study, if the cost of all of these regulations was considered in an independent country—all of the costs of these rules and regulations—it would be about the 10th largest economy in the world.

Let's face it: The more expensive it becomes to make a product or deliver a service, the more money the consumer will have to dig out of their own pockets to pay for it. It is those families who are working multiple jobs to provide for their kids who are going to be hit the hardest.

This bill is how we start to solve that problem. The SCRUB Act establishes a bipartisan, blue ribbon commission to give a fair and thoughtful review of our Nation's existing regulations. Once the commission is finished with their review, they would provide recommendations to Congress and we would have an opportunity to vote on them.

If an agency wants to impose a new regulation, they can do that under the SCRUB Act, but they would have to offset the cost of that new regulation by repealing an existing one that is of equal cost and has been deemed unnecessary or outdated by the commission.

I know Iowa families do this. They know how to prioritize. Why can't our Federal agencies? We simply cannot allow the buildup of unnecessary and costly regulations over time.

I will end with just one last comment. Rules and regulations often have unintended consequences. It is our responsibility as lawmakers to not only recognize when this happens but to then proactively fix it.

The SCRUB Act is a commonsense solution that forces lawmakers and our agencies to be honest about their regulatory system by fixing the rules that need fixing and dropping those that have outlived their useful purpose.

I thank Senator HATCH for his leadership on this, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

RECESS

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

FEDERAL RESERVE TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2232, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 289, S. 2232, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to secrecy. I rise today in support of auditing the Federal Reserve. I rise in opposition to the lack of accountability at the Reserve, an institution that has for too long been shrouded in secrecy. The objective of the Federal Reserve Transparency Act is simple: to protect the interests of the average American by finding out where hundreds of billions' worth of our dollars are going.

The Federal Reserve has the ability to create new money and to spend it on whatever financial assets it wants, whenever it wants, while giving the new money to whichever banks it wants. Yet if the average Joe and Jane from Main Street printed their own money, they would be imprisoned as counterfeiters.

Nowhere else but in Washington, DC, would you find an institution with so much unchecked power. Creating new money naturally lowers interest rates, or the price of using money. Put another way, the Federal Reserve's unchecked printing press creates a price control on the cost of using money.

Throughout our country's history, price controls have never worked, and the Fed's price control on interest rates has also not worked. Think back to the housing bubble. Artificially low interest rates led to many individuals buying, selling, and investing in the housing industry. This in turn led prices to soar, which ultimately led the economy to spiral down to the great recession of 2008.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, the Fed has increased its balance sheet from less than $1 trillion to over $4 trillion. Although the Fed has created trillions of new dollars, it has become apparent that most of this money is not finding its way into the hands of average Americans. From 2009 to 2012, the incomes of the top 1 percent increased by a whopping 31 percent, while everyone else's income increased by only 0.4 percent. The reason for this is simple: Big banks, corporations, and government entities receive the Federal Reserve's money long before anyone else, and they bid up the price of assets before any of the rest of us can get to purchase them.

Former Federal Reserve Governor Kevin Warsh once referred to the Fed's easy-money policies as the reverse Robin Hood effect. ''If you have access to credit—if you've got a big balance sheet—the Fed has made you richer,'' he said in an interview. ''This is a way to make the well-to-do even more well-to-do.''

The side effect of this uneven distribution of money is painfully apparent to anyone who shops at a grocery store. Over the past 15 years, the price of white bread has increased by over 50 percent, while the price of eggs has more than doubled. The cost of housing has also appreciated significantly in many areas. When adjusting for inflation, the price of housing in San Francisco has increased by 58 percent over just 25 years.

Real household income for regular Americans has declined 10 percent over the past 15 years. Higher rent and higher grocery bills cause low-income workers to incur more loans and credit card debt, which involve far higher interest rates than what the banks and Wall Street are currently paying. These low-income workers do not get the luxury of receiving the Fed's newly created money first, nor do they have the luxury of receiving the near-zero interest rates the wealthy do. As a result, one thing is for certain: The Fed's price control on interest rates acts as a hidden tax on the less well-to-do.

The Fed also exacerbates income inequality by paying large commercial banks $12 billion in interest. This is a departure from nearly a century of practice. While individual savers earn practically no interest, the big banks are given $12 billion per year in interest. There often is a revolving door between the Fed, the Treasury, and Wall Street. It is a revolving door in a building that is all too eager to enrich big banks and asset holders at the expense of everyone else.

I think it is about time we pull back the curtain to uncover this cloak of secrecy once and for all. Who is receiving the loans from the Fed today? To whom is the Fed paying interest? Are there any conflicts of interest about how these payments are determined? Are there any checks and balances on the size of these payments?

The Federal Reserve Act actually forbids the Fed from buying some of the troubled assets they bought in 2008; yet they did it anyway.

Given all of these unanswered questions and given the sharp increase in the risk of the Fed's balance sheet, it is unquestionably necessary for the Fed to be audited more thoroughly than it has been in the past. Audit the Fed is just 3 pages long, and it simply says that the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, which is a nonpartisan, apolitical agency in charge—that they be allowed to audit the Fed, a full and thorough audit.

Currently the GAO is not allowed to audit the Fed's monetary policy deliberations or the Fed's Open Market Committee transactions. The GAO was also forbidden from reviewing agreements with foreign central banks. During the downturn in 2008, trillions of dollars were spent, much of it or quite a bit of it on foreign banks, and we are not allowed to know what occurred, to whom it was given, and for what purpose. The Fed audit in its current form is virtually futile.

When these restrictions were added to the audit in the 1970s, the GAO testified before Congress, saying: ''We do not see how we can satisfactorily audit the Federal Reserve System without the authority to examine [its] largest single category of financial transactions and assets. . . . ''

To grasp just how limited the current audit is, recall that in 2009 Democratic Congressman ALAN GRAYSON asked then-Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke which foreign countries received $500 billion in loans from the Fed. Bernanke was unwilling to name which countries or banks received half a trillion dollars' worth of funds.

That is right. The Feds swapped half a trillion dollars to foreign countries in secret and did not even have the decency, under testimony before Congress, to report the details. But it gets worse. Democratic Senator BERNIE SANDERS asked Bernanke: Who received $2.2 trillion that the Fed lent out during the financial crisis? Again, Bernanke refused to give an answer.

In the 2011 Dodd-Frank law, Congress ordered a limited, one-time GAO audit of Fed actions. During the financial crisis, that audit uncovered that the Fed lent out over $16 trillion to domestic and foreign banks during the financial crisis.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an extra 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, does Senator PAUL—how much time do we have?

Mr. PAUL. I would be happy to ask unanimous consent for equal time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator PAUL's time has expired. The time of the majority has expired.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I only need 5 minutes, so I am willing to cede whatever remains so he can have enough time, but I would like to reserve 5 minutes, and I lift my objection.

Mr. PAUL. Well, the unanimous consent would be to have 5 extra minutes and to give the Senator as much time as he needs to conclude.

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

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Both Republicans and Democrats agree that it is absurd that we do not know where hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of our money is going. In fact, last year my audit the Fed bill received the support of nearly every Republican in the House and over 100 Democrats.

Some say an audit will politicize the Fed. I find this claim odd given the support of both sides of the aisle for the bill. The GAO is nonpartisan, independent, and works for Congress. It does not lean Republican or Democratic, and it is not interested in influencing policy. I can't seem to understand how a simple check by the GAO to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest will politicize anything.

Instead of criticizing a standard audit, though, maybe the individuals who work at the Fed and within our central bank should begin curbing their own actions. Unlike the actions of current Fed officials, my bipartisan bill will not politicize anything. I simply want the Fed overseen to ensure that our central bank isn't picking favorites, and I want to ensure that it remains solvent.

Like every agency, the Federal Reserve was created by Congress and is supposed to be overseen by Congress.

Auditing the Fed should not be a partisan issue. Regardless of one's monetary policy views, regardless of whether one thinks interest rates should be higher or lower, everyone can and should agree that for the sake of the country's economic well-being, we need to know what has been going on behind the Federal Reserve's cloak of secrecy. It is time we quit this guessing game. It is time we audit the Federal Reserve once and for all to restore transparency to our Nation's checkbook.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I do not support Senator PAUL's bill to audit the Federal Reserve.

In 2010, I supported an amendment to the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation included in the final law which required an audit of the Federal Reserve's actions during the financial crisis. That report was released in 2011 and found no significant problems with the Fed's activities.

Dodd-Frank not only authorized the 2011 audit, it also expanded the scope for future GAO audits which any Member of Congress can request. Also, the Fed includes an independent audit of its financial statements within its annual report to Congress.

The Federal Reserve has taken independent actions in recent years to be more transparent about its operations. Since 2009, the Fed has publicly released its economic projections, and since 2011, the chairman has held quarterly press conferences following Federal Open Market Committee meetings. Two recent studies found the Fed to be one of the most transparent central banks in the world.

Transparency and openness in government is essential to a healthy democracy, but by requiring more audits and more disclosures, we risk politicizing a nonpartisan institution that plays a uniquely significant role in the global economy.

Fed Chairman Janet Yellen recently wrote that a similar bill that passed the House of Representatives ''would politicize monetary policy and bring short-term political pressures in the deliberations of the FOMC by putting into place real-time second guessing of policy decisions. . . . The provision is based on a false premise—that the Fed is not subject to an audit.''.

Since there are already many means for audits, disclosure, and transparency at our disposal, I do not support Senator PAUL's bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the audit the Fed bill.

One of the things that we learned around here as new Members of the House and Senate—and I served with the Presiding Officer almost my entire time in the House, and we learned this—is that if you can name the bills here, you have a tremendous advantage. You call the estate tax the death tax, even though about 1 percent of Americans pay it, and you may have won the debate. Calling this bill audit the Fed—and how can you be against auditing the Fed—may win the debate, but this time I don't think so.

I am concerned in this way. It won't make the Fed stronger. It won't make the Fed more effective. It won't make the Fed more accountable. It will impair the Fed's functions. It will give conservative Members of Congress more tools to second-guess the Fed's decisionmaking. It will make the system ultimately less sound, flexible, and responsive.

Think about what happened in 2009. President Obama took office. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Congress passed the Recovery Act, passed the auto rescue, which mattered so much to the Presiding Officer's State, to my State, and, frankly, to the Senator from Kentucky and his State too, but then, with the changing time and the elections of 2010, this Congress engaged in austerity, and we saw what that meant. It took a Bush-appointed Federal Reserve Chair, Ben Bernanke, who engaged in enough pump priming, if you will, through low interest rates and then QE to get the economy going.

I think we asked ourselves, would we have wanted a Federal Reserve then where Congress had its tentacles in monetary policy? Congress failed on fiscal policy. Chairman Bernanke and now Chair Yellen have had to move on monetary policy in that way. I don't want to straitjacket this Congress and straitjacket the Federal Reserve by doing that with Congress.

I know some of you have supported audit bills in the past. Many supported the Dodd-Sanders amendment during Wall Street reform. But this one is different. It doesn't include provisions to review the Independent Foreclosure Review Program process, and it doesn't include protections on some of the sensitive information that GAO could review, such as transcripts.

What this is about, in addition to Congress meddling in monetary policy, is ultimately this: We know the Fed is charged with a dual mandate—to deal with the tension between combatting inflation and combatting unemployment. We know that in past years the Fed has leaned far more toward the bondholders and Wall Street in combatting inflation than it has toward Main Street in employment and combatting unemployment.

We also know that with the pressures in this town, when President Obama signed Wall Street reform, the chief lobbyist for the financial services industry said it is now half time, meaning that conservative Members of this Congress, people in this Congress influenced by Wall Street, would immediately go and try to weaken these rules going directly to the agencies.

We will see the same thing here. We will see many Members of Congress pushing the Fed to side with the bondholders and Wall Street on combatting inflation rather than siding with Main Street and small businesses and workers in dealing with unemployment. That is fundamentally the biggest problem with the Paul proposal. I ask my colleagues to defeat it.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 289, S. 2232, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, John Cornyn, Cory Gardner, David Vitter, Shelley Moore Capito, Rand Paul, Johnny Isakson, Steve Daines, Patrick J. Toomey, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Mike Lee, David Perdue, Rob Portman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2232, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 2 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Ayotte	Gardner	Portman
Baldwin	Graham	Risch
Barrasso	Grassley	Roberts
Blunt	Hatch	Rounds
Boozman	Heller	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Sanders
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johnson	Sessions
Collins	Kirk	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Crapo	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Vitter
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—44

Bennet	Heinrich	Nelson
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Peters
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Boxer	Kaine	Reid
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	McCaskill	Udall
Corker	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	

NOT VOTING—3

Coats Cruz Franken

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 44.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete my remarks.

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

SCRUB ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to take up a piece of legislation that I am sponsoring which has recently passed the House of Representatives, the Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome Act—or SCRUB Act.

Federal regulations today impose—by some estimates—a crushing burden of $1.88 trillion on our economy. That is roughly $15,000 per household and more than the entire country's corporate and individual income taxes combined. Excessive and often unnecessary rules imposed by unaccountable Washington bureaucrats strain family budgets and create conditions where small businesses struggle to create jobs.

Nevertheless, the regulatory burden keeps growing year after year. The Code of Federal Regulations is now more than 175,000 pages long and contains more than 200 volumes. Since 2008, regulators have added on average more than $107 billion in annual regulatory costs. And as we near the end of President Obama's time in office, Americans should be prepared for a deluge of new rules. As has been widely reported, about 4,000 regulations are working their way through the Federal bureaucracy, with some experts predicting their costs to exceed well over $100 billion.

Every President since Jimmy Carter has affirmed the need to review our existing regulations to make sure that they are efficient and no more intrusive and burdensome than is absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, administrations of both parties have failed to make meaningful reductions in the regulatory burden, with some retrospective review efforts even adding costs to the economy. Most notably, according to a study by the American Action Forum, the Obama administration's much-touted efforts to review old rules actually added more than $23 billion in costs on the economy and mandated nearly 9 million additional hours of paperwork.

With family budgets stretched thin and our economy badly in need of job creation, we need to act to turn this longstanding bipartisan commitment to effective retrospective review into a reality. But to do so, we need to take the responsibility of reviewing old rules away from the bureaucrats who keep failing to make the reductions to the regulatory burden. That is why I have joined my colleagues, the junior Senators from Iowa and Missouri, to introduce the SCRUB Act.

The SCRUB Act establishes a bipartisan, blue-ribbon commission to review existing Federal regulations and identify those that should be repealed to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens. It prioritizes for review regulations where major rules have been in effect more than 15 years, impose paperwork burdens that could be reduced substantially without significantly diminishing regulatory effectiveness, impose disproportionately high costs on small businesses, or could be strengthened in their effectiveness while reducing regulatory costs. It also sets other basic, commonsense criteria for recommending repeal of regulations, such as: whether they have been rendered obsolete by technological or market changes; whether they have achieved their goals and can be repealed without target problems recurring; whether they are ineffective; whether they overlap, duplicate, or conflict with other Federal regulations or with State and local regulations; or whether they impose costs that are not justified by benefits produced for society within the United States.

Once the commission develops a set of recommendations, our bill requires that these recommendations be presented to the House and the Senate for approval by joint resolution. If Congress votes to approve the commission's recommendations, repeal must take place.

Mr. President, I have served long enough to know that Washington's preferred solution to a tough problem is to create a commission that, once established, is rarely seen or heard from again, no matter how compelling its recommendations. Therefore, I want to lay out a few key features of how SCRUB avoids the pitfalls of so many do-nothing commissions as well as the problems encountered with other attempts to implement retrospective review.

First, our bill sets a hard target for the commission: the reduction of at least 15 percent in the cumulative costs of Federal regulation with a minimal reduction in the overall effectiveness of such regulation. The Obama administration's efforts at retrospective review—perhaps by mistake, perhaps by design—lacked a quantified cost reduction mandate. The result was the manipulation of the review process into a charade in which highly suspect new benefits were touted as a reason for adding costs. Our bill structures the retrospective review process in a way that prioritizes cost cutting while maintaining a responsible respect for benefits by calling for a minimal reduction in general overall effectiveness.

Second, our bill does not artificially limit what costly and unjustified regulations could be repealed. Under some superficially similar but fundamentally unsound proposals for retrospective review, review would be arbitrarily limited by time or subject. Such limits would not only seriously hinder the prospect of meeting a meaningful cost reduction target, but also put numerous regulations off limits for review just because they have seen minor tweaks after a certain arbitrary cutoff.

Third, our bill guarantees an up-or-down vote on the Commission's package of recommendations as a single package. This element of our bill represents the single most important feature that distinguishes it from a do-nothing commission that far too often characterizes Washington's approach to intractable problems. We should be under no illusions that every single special interest in town is going to fight to preserve the favors they have won by manipulating the regulatory process over the years, and gathering the votes to get the Commission's recommendations enacted will certainly be a difficult endeavor.

Following the models of other successful means by which Congress has addressed situations in which the costs are concentrated but benefits are widely dispersed, it is absolutely vital that the Commission's recommendations be packed together as a single bill and not subject to dismemberment by amendment.

Further, to put it simply, an up-or-down simple majority vote requires an actual viable pathway to repealing these regulations. Subjecting the package to the supermajority threshold would represent nothing but a death knell for the prospect of repealing these onerous rules. Moreover, because extended debate in the Senate exists to allow Senators to modify a proposal under debate, the lack of amendment opportunities seriously undermines the rationale for subjecting it to the supermajority threshold typically required to end debate. And this carefully tailored exception to the cloture rule is hardly a wild departure from precedent; rather, it follows the precedents set by numerous other pieces of legislation such as trade promotion authority and the Congressional Review Act, both of which have long earned bipartisan support.

Fourth, for any given regulation, the Commission is authorized to recommend either immediate repeal or repeal through what we call cut-go procedures, whereby agencies, on a forward basis, would have to offset the costs of new regulations by repealing Commission-identified regulations of equal or greater cost. These procedures allow immediate repeal in the most urgent cases and staggered repeals of other regulations to assure a smoother process for agencies and affected entities.

Mr. President, a process such as cut-go proves critical for two particular reasons. First, it provides an avenue for addressing the many regulations on the books that impose unjustifiable costs in pursuit of a legitimate goal. While some regulations on the books

could undoubtedly be repealed without any meaningful negative consequences, numerous others provide important protections but in an inefficient and costly manner. The cut-go process allows agencies to repeal costly rules and replace them with more sensible ones—for example, prescribing performance standards instead of specific, oftentimes outdated technology—in a manner that reduces costs on the economy while maintaining or even improving regulatory effectiveness.

Second, the cut-go process holds agencies accountable to Congress's laws, a perennial problem in the regulatory process. Bureaucratic agencies—so often devoted to increasing their own power and insensitive to the costs they impose on the economy—frequently use the excuse of limited resources to avoid retrospective review. By imposing a reasonable limit on prospective rulemaking until an agency complies with congressionally enacted repeal recommendations, cut-go ensures that the agency cannot simply ignore its duty to repeal.

Mr. President, these are just a handful of the numerous reasons why the SCRUB Act provides a uniquely visible pathway to accomplishing the longstanding bipartisan goal of repealing outdated and ineffective regulations. I wish to thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle—and both sides of the Capitol, by the way—who have joined in support of this bill, especially Senator ERNST for her leadership on this issue on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Even though she has only been in the Senate for a year, her strong and effective leadership on this issue has been a model for how to hit the ground running. I call on my colleagues in the Senate to follow the House's lead and pass this effective, commonsense approach to rooting out unjustifiably burdensome regulations. Also, as I understand it, the House has passed this bill just today.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Mr. President, I also wish to address another subject—the subject of religious liberty. Congress is convening for the second session of the 114th Congress at a moment in time rich with significance for religious freedoms. January 6, for example, marked the 75th anniversary of President Franklin Roosevelt's famous ''Four Freedoms'' speech. During the depths of World War II, President Roosevelt used his 1941 State of the Union Address to describe a world founded on what he called ''four essential human freedoms.'' One of these is the ''freedom of every person to worship God in his own way.''

At the end of the week, on January 16, it is Religious Freedom Day. It commemorates the 230th anniversary of the Virginia General Assembly's enactment of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. Thomas Jefferson authored the legislation and, after he left to serve as U.S. Minister to France, his colleague James Madison secured its enactment.

Of his many accomplishments—and Jefferson had a lot of accomplishments—Jefferson directed that three of what he called ''things that he had given the people'' be listed on his tombstone. One of them was the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which laid the foundation for the protection of religious freedom in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. President, last fall I delivered a series of eight speeches on the Senate floor presenting the story of religious freedom. I explained why religious freedom itself is uniquely important and requires special protection. At no time in world history has religious freedom been such an integral part of a Nation's character as it is here in the United States.

The story of religious freedom includes understanding both its status and its substance. The status of religious freedom can be summarized as both inalienable and preeminent. As James Madison put it, religious freedom is ''precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of civil society.''

Madison also explained that religious freedom is the freely chosen manner of discharging a duty an individual believes he or she owes to God. As we have affirmed so many times in statutes, declarations, and treaties, it includes both belief and behavior in public and in private, individually and collectively.

Tonight, President Obama delivers his final State of the Union Address. According to the Washington Post this morning, President Obama will speak about unity, about coming together as one American family. Until very recently, religious freedom was such a unifying priority. Last month, I described to my colleagues the unifying statement about religious freedom called the Williamsburg Charter. Published in 1988, it brought together Presidents and other leaders in both political parties, the heads of business and labor, universities and bar associations, and diverse communities to endorse the first principles of religious freedom.

The charter boldly proclaims that religious freedom is an inalienable right that is ''premised upon the inviolable dignity of the human person. It is the foundation of, and is integrally related to, all other rights and freedoms secured by the Constitution.'' It asserts that the chief menace to religious freedom is the expanding power of government—especially government control over personal behavior and the institutions of society. And the charter also declares that limiting religious freedom ''is allowable only where the State has borne a heavy burden of proof that the limitation is justified—not by any ordinary public interest, but by a supreme public necessity—and that no less restrictive alternative to limitation exists.''

Congress made these principles law 5 years later by almost unanimously enacting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act—an act that I had a great deal to do with. One way to know the value of something is by the effort made to protect it. In RFRA, government may burden the exercise of religion only if it is the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling government purpose. That is the toughest standard found anywhere in American law. By this statute, we declared that religious freedom is fundamental, it is more important than other values and priorities, and government must properly accommodate it. The Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion supporting RFRA was the most diverse grassroots effort I have ever seen in all of my years in the U.S. Senate.

Five years after RFRA, Congress unanimously enacted the International Religious Freedom Act. Twenty-one Senators serving today voted for it—12 Republicans and 9 Democrats. So did Vice President JOE BIDEN and Secretary of State John Kerry when they served here. That law declares that religious freedom ''undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States.'' It calls religious freedom a universal human right, a pillar of our Nation, and a fundamental freedom.

That is what unity looks like. With a Presidency no less than any other aspect of life, however, actions speak louder than words. While President Obama has paid lip service to religious freedom, as I assume he will in his annual Religious Freedom Day proclamation this week, the actions of his administration tell a different story.

In 2011, the Obama administration argued to the Supreme Court that the First Amendment provides no special protection for churches, even in choosing their own ministers. The Court unanimously rejected that bizarre theory. The administration ignored religious freedom and RFRA altogether when developing the Affordable Care Act and its implementing regulations. When religious employers argued that the administration's birth control mandate did not adequately accommodate their religious freedom, the administration fought them all the way to the Supreme Court. The Court again rejected the administration's attempt to restrict religious freedom.

Yesterday, 32 Members of the Senate and 175 Members of the House of Representatives filed a legal brief with the Supreme Court supporting religious organizations that are again arguing that the Obama administration's birth control mandate violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. I want to thank my friend from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD, for working with me on this important project. I know religious freedom was important to him when he served in the House and he is already a leader on this critical issue in the Senate and I am pleased to see him in the chair today.

This mandate requires religious organizations to violate their deeply held religious beliefs or pay crushing monetary fines. The plaintiffs in these cases

include Christian colleges, Catholic dioceses, and many organizations that minister to the elderly and disadvantaged as part of their religious mission. They want to provide health insurance for their employees and students in a manner that is consistent with their religious beliefs.

The Obama administration, however, is working hard to make those religious groups knuckle under to its political agenda. It provides blanket exemptions for churches that do not object to the birth control mandate but denies exemption to religious employers that do object. The administration exempts for-profit companies employing more than 44 million workers, including some of America's largest corporations, even if they have no objection to the mandate. Yet it is fighting to force compliance by religious nonprofit organizations that do object to the mandate on the basis of deeply held religious beliefs. Not only is that policy simply irrational, but it treats religious freedom as optional.

Here is how I put it last month: Subjugating religious beliefs to government decrees is not the price of citizenship. To the contrary, respecting and honoring the fundamental rights of all Americans is the price our government pays to enjoy the continued consent of the American people.

If that is true, then religious freedom must be properly respected and accommodated. And I believe it is true.

Religious freedom should be a primary consideration, not an afterthought. Religious freedom should be given the accommodation that a preeminent right requires, rather than begrudgingly be given the least attention politically possible.

If our leaders wish to abandon the religious freedom that undergirds America's origin and existence, they should say so. If Members of Congress now reject what they once supported and insist that religious freedom is less important than the political reference of the moment, they should make that case.

If the Obama administration wants to repudiate treaties we have ratified, asserting that religious freedom is a fundamental human right, the President should be upfront about it.

As with many things that happen in the twilight of a Presidency, I expect to hear much in the State of the Union Address tonight that speaks to President Obama's legacy. What will he be remembered for? What great principles or causes will be associated with the Obama Presidency?

Part of President Roosevelt's legacy is that State of the Union Address 75 years ago that affirmed that practicing one's faith is an essential human freedom. What a tragedy to have President Obama be remembered for hostility to—rather than protection of—religious freedom.

In the coming days, I will be presenting to each of my Senate colleagues the collection of speeches on religious freedom that I offered on the floor last fall. I hope they will encourage us in Congress, as well as our fellow citizens, to unite in our commitment to this fundamental right.

This is important. Even though we may agree or disagree with certain religious beliefs, they still ought to have the right to believe them. They still ought to have the right to worship the way they want to. The fact of the matter is that is what has made America the greatest country in the world—bar none. I don't want to see it destroyed because we are doing everything we can to undermine religious freedom in this country. I refuse to allow that to happen, and I hope my colleagues will take this seriously as well. I know a number of them do, including the current Presiding Officer.

I just want everybody to know that as long as I am in the Senate, I am going to be fighting for religious freedom and I hope that all of us will also.

God bless America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, tonight President Obama will be coming to Congress to deliver his final State of the Union Address. His advisers have been all over television talking about what the President is planning to say. Tonight, I expect President Obama will talk a little about the health care law. Last year in his State of the Union Address, the President bragged—he actually bragged—that more people have insurance now than when he took office. I expect he will probably say something similar tonight.

I wish to talk a little bit about the other side of the story. I want to talk about what President Obama is not going to say tonight to the American people. The President is not going to admit that many Americans are actually worse under his health care law. He is not going to say that under the health care law there is a very big difference between health law insurance and being able to actually get health care. The President focuses on the word ''coverage'' and, as a doctor, I focus on the word ''care.''

The New York Times had an article about this just the other day. The article on page 1 of Monday, January 4, says: ''Many Holdouts Roll the Dice And Pay I.R.S., Not an Insurer.'' They would rather pay the penalty to the Internal Revenue Service rather than pay the insurance company. Why?

Turn to page A9 of the same day, January 4, 2016: ''Many Who Refuse Insurance See I.R.S. Penalty as Most Affordable Option.'' The most affordable option for the American people is not the Obama health law insurance. It is actually paying the IRS the penalty. The article tells the story about a number of different people. One is named Tim Fescoe from Culver City, CA. He and his wife had an insurance plan that cost them more than $5,000 a year, but it came with a deductible of over $6,000 for each of them—$5,000 for the policy, $6,000 for the deductible for him and another $6,000 for her. Well, they decided to drop the insurance last year.

Mr. Fescoe told the New York Times: ''It literally covered zero medical expenses.''

I wonder if President Obama is going to talk about this man tonight, Tim Fescoe. Will we hear anything about him in his speech tonight? Will the President point to him in the gallery as somebody who the President claims to have helped by making insurance so expensive and so unaffordable that it was much better to just pay the penalty than deal with what the mandates of the President's health care law call into play? Is he going to talk about the deductibles and how the out-of-pocket costs have become so high for Americans all across the country?

The article also talks about Clint Murphy of Sulfur Springs, TX. Clint Murphy expects that he will have to pay a penalty of about $1,800 for being uninsured this year. The article says that in his view, paying the penalty is worth it if he can avoid buying the President's law health insurance, a policy that costs $2,900 or more.

This man in Texas went on to say: ''I don't see the logic behind that, and I'm just not going to do it.''

Is President Obama going to talk about these people—people who think that it is better to pay the steep IRS penalty than buy the President's expensive and, in many ways, useless insurance? There are millions of Americans in this same situation as Clint Murphy, as Tim Fescoe, and other people who are mentioned in a story in the New York Times. If the New York Times is writing about it—they are supporters of the health care law—even they are pointing to the damage that this very unpopular law continues to do to the American people.

According to a report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, about 7 million Americans were finding it cheaper to pay the tax penalty than to pay for this unusable insurance. Look at this chart. Of those people who don't get subsidies and are not eligible for subsidies, 95 percent would pay—all of these people—less for the tax penalty than for an ObamaCare bronze plan, which is the cheapest level of plan that there is.

So for people who don't get a subsidy from Washington, 95 percent of them would pay less by paying the tax penalty than they would for an ObamaCare bronze-level plan with high deductibles and high copays—so high that the people who look at it say: It is unusable.

Now, remember, again, these bronze plans are the cheapest option, and the people are just saying no because even the cheapest option under ObamaCare is more expensive than dropping insurance and paying the penalty. Bronze plans are the ones most likely to have a $5,000 to $6,000 deductible per individual on the plan.

Do we expect President Obama to talk about any of these things tonight or any of these people who have been harmed by his law?

After the President gives his State of the Union Address, much has been made that he is going on a tour of America. He is going to visit Baton Rouge, LA, and Omaha, NE. What the President may not know and certainly won't mention is how much ObamaCare premiums have increased in those States he is going to visit.

In Louisiana, prices for the benchmark silver plan on the ObamaCare exchange went up over 9 percent this year. In Nebraska, the same benchmark silver plan rates went up almost 12 percent this past year. Now that is for the people who are willing to actually shop around and switch their insurance from last year to try to hold down the costs.

Remember when the President said this: If you like your plan, you can keep your plan. Well, if you only want a 9-percent or a 12-percent increase, you can't keep your plan. You have to try to shop around and switch to a different plan, maybe even change your doctors and the hospital you go to. That is the only way you can find rates of insurance that still go up a lot but don't go up even higher by staying with what you had.

The President probably won't mention that when he goes to Louisiana or Nebraska. He probably won't mention either that the ObamaCare co-ops in both of the States that he is visiting collapsed last year—fundamentally collapsed. Tens of thousands of people lost the insurance they had in those States, and now the taxpayers are on the hook for over $100 million.

The law has not come anywhere near what President Obama promised the people of Louisiana or the people of Nebraska or the people of America. All across the country, the American people know that ObamaCare was not what they wanted. They know that it has never been the right answer for the problems in our health care system. That is why majorities in both Houses of Congress voted recently to repeal the key parts of the Obama health care law. We passed the legislation, and we sent it to the President's desk. When President Obama vetoed the bill, he rejected the judgment of the American people.

In his speech tonight, I expect the President to continue to pretend that there are no problems at all with American health care under his law. Well, Republicans are going to keep offering solutions to fix health care in America. Almost 6 years ago President Obama sat down with Members of Congress to try to sell us his health care law. I was part of that roundtable discussion. I told the President at the time that low-cost catastrophic plans could be a good option for people as long as they could use health savings accounts to help pay their day to day medical bills.

The President had no interest in that idea or in any of the Republican ideas that we brought forward that day.

So now, under his law, people are left with the equivalent of catastrophic coverage and they are paying far too much for it because of all of the law's mandates. On top of that, the law cuts back on health savings accounts. The law specifically cut back on that so people all across the country have fewer options to help them pay for their care.

Republicans are going to continue to bring up better ideas. We will talk about real solutions that give people more options, not more mandates. We will talk about the ideas that help people get the care they need from a doctor they want at lower costs, not just as the President talks about coverage—coverage that most Americans find they cannot use.

Tonight President Obama is probably going to make a lot more promises. When he does, I think everybody should remember Clint Murphy from Sulfur Springs, TX, who doesn't see the logic in paying for overpriced ObamaCare insurance. They should remember all of the broken promises from the health care law and all of the hardworking Americans who have been hurt by the Obama health care law. Even though President Obama won't admit it tonight, America can do much better. If the President won't say it, then it will be up to Congress to lead on the issue. That is exactly what Republicans intend to do. President Obama's speech tonight will be looking to define his legacy. Tonight and for the rest of the year, Republicans will be offering solutions for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to enter into a colloquy with a number of my colleagues, including Senators from Virginia, Florida, and New Jersey.

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

DELEGATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND IMPLEMENTING THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I have just returned from a trip to the Middle East—an absolutely important and eye-opening trip at this vital moment when the threat of extremism, the threat of violence, and the risks posed to regional stability by Iran and its regional ambitions could not be clearer. Senator GILLIBRAND of New York led this delegation, and a group of eight of us had an opportunity to visit Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Austria.

Let me begin by saying that all of us were deeply moved and concerned when we heard this morning news of a terrorist attack in Istanbul, literally in an area we had just visited Saturday morning. I reached out, as have a number of others on this trip, to express our condolences and concerns both to the Turkish Ambassador, the American Ambassador, and to others we met with on our visit there.

This is just another brazen reminder of the instability raging throughout the Middle East and of the threats to our concerns and interests and to regional stability posed by terrorism.

I invite the Senator from Virginia to join me in making some comments based on his insights and his experience on this trip. The very first place we visited left an important and lasting impression on me. We visited with the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency, in Vienna to hear about their progress towards implementing the nuclear deal with Iran and what they are going to be doing, now and in the future, to ensure full, thorough, and valuable inspections of the entire cycle of Iran's nuclear efforts.

If Senator KAINE would offer any additional comments as a member of the delegation and someone who joined in the trip, what were some of the things that the Senator saw and what were some of the concerns that the Senator came home with that we ought to share with our constituents and colleagues?

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Delaware for the opportunity to engage in a colloquy. It was a remarkable visit with eight Senators to Israel, Vienna, Turkey, as well as Saudi Arabia, to dig into two issues that I would like to address. The issues are Iran and the war against ISIL.

With respect to Iran, since the conclusion of the negotiation and the green light for the deal to go forward, there have been some positive developments and there have been some troubling developments. I wish to spend time talking about both.

On the positive development side, because of the deal that the United States and other nations entered into with Iran, as of yesterday they have permanently decommissioned the plutonium reactor at Arak, which is one half for them to make a nuclear weapon. That is a very positive result of the negotiation.

Second, they have disabled a huge percentage of the centrifuges, which was also a requirement under the agreement—the centrifuges that are used to enrich uranium, another path to nuclear weapons.

Third, Iran has worked with the IAEA to structure the level of inspections. Under the inspections required by the agreement, Iran will be the most inspected nation in the world, because the inspections will not only go to nuclear sites, but they will go to the entire supply chain of uranium mills and uranium mines. Those are inspections not required of any other nation.

The IAEA is ready to move forward on those inspections.

Finally, there is the last bit of positive news, which in my view, personally, is the most compelling. Iran took more than 28,000 pounds of low-enriched uranium, which is sufficient for multiple nuclear weapons. Because of this deal, they have shipped that uranium out of Iran. It is held in a facility in Russia that is closely monitored 24/7, 365 by the IAEA. So any movement of that material will be understood.

Having that nuclear material—sufficient for multiple nuclear weapons—out of Iran's hands and out of that country would not have happened without this deal, and it makes the world safer.

There are some challenges. In October, Iran fired a missile, and a number of us on the Foreign Relations Committee immediately wrote to the President and Secretary of State that we think this violates a separate U.N. Security Council resolution. The United Nations empaneled a team of exports to dig into the factual and technical evidence, and they concluded in mid-December that Iran had in fact fired a missile in violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution separate from this deal. We all think it is very important—for both Congress and the administration and our global partners—to make sure that there is a consequence for that. Whether we supported the deal or didn't, the strategy should be strict enforcement and strict implementation, requiring that Iran meet every last detail—not only of the deal but of their other international obligations. We need to continue to press the administration and Congress to do that.

So on Iran, that was basically the gist of the conversation. We had a lengthy discussion with Prime Minister Netanyahu, where we said: Look, we disagreed on the deal. But now the important thing is to make sure we implement it and we are strong and united on implementation issues. I think that is critically important.

Finally, I have a word about ISIL. Everywhere we went in the region we heard about the threat of ISIL. The bombing this morning in a tourist square in Istanbul, where some of us were standing just 72 hours ago, although all of the investigative work hasn't yet been done, clearly has the earmarks of an ISIL-related bombing, much as the bombings in the Sinai, in Beirut, and the attacks in Paris. So it is very critical that we take this seriously because we are not only seeing ISIL extend their field of battle beyond Syria and Iraq; we are seeing them engage in one-off or rogue terrorist activities around the globe.

The U.S. is at war with ISIL, and we have been at war since August 8, 2014. We are in the 17th month of that war. We have spent billions of dollars, we have deployed thousands of troops, and we have seen both American hostages and servicemembers killed in this war. But as I hand it back to my colleague, I will conclude and say that Congress has been strangely silent during this war. It is Congress under article I that should declare war, and yet we have not been willing to have a debate and vote—even as we are deploying people, even as Americans are being killed, even as we are spending billions of taxpayer dollars. The only vote that has taken place in this body on the war directly on the authorization question was in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December of 2014. It was a vote to move forward to an authorization. But when it came to the floor, it got no action.

I am reminded of the great Irish poet W.B. Yeats, who talked about a time where ''the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.'' We see every day efforts that ISIL is, at worst, filled with passionate intensity. I believe America is the best. I believe Congress should be the best. Yet we have been strangely silent and have lacked conviction in the face of an enemy that is dangerous and threatens us abroad and at home.

With that, I hand it back to my colleague, the Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Virginia for his service on the Foreign Relations Committee and for his real leadership on the question of our prosecution the war against ISIL and the roll of this Senate in confirming that we are in fact engaged in a conflict, for his role on the Armed Services Committee, and for the important and tough questions he asked on our visit to the four countries that I just referenced in opening. I appreciate the Senator detailing the four different, big positive moves forward that are happening as the JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal, moves towards into full implementation.

I wish to encourage my colleague from Florida, the second-most senior Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, to also offer his thoughts on how this deal contributes to our security and what concerns are remaining.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President and my fellow Senators, I just want to point out what the Senator has already brought up and underscore that the fact is that the plutonium reactor in Arak has now been filled with concrete. The fact is that 12 tons—or 24,000 pounds—of enriched uranium has been shipped out of Arak to another destination, mostly to Russia.

Before the agreement, it would only take 3 months to build a nuclear weapon. Now, it would take at least 12 months. So we would have a 1-year advance notice in order to determine what we needed to do to deter Iran.

May I say it is irritating that we are going to continue to deal with an Iran that is going to do things that are going to provoke us. And they have certainly done this in the Strait of Hormuz just a few days ago, doing a live-fire exercise while we have the aircraft carrier battle group going through the Strait of Hormuz—not even 29 miles wide. That is a provocation. There is the provocation of shooting off two missile tests, which is a violation of U.N. sanctions. I hope the President will follow through and sanction them for that, regardless of their protests that say: Oh well, then, you are violating our nuclear agreement.

No, it is a nuclear agreement. They have now stretched the time to 12 months before, if they decided today that they wanted to build a nuclear weapon. That was the whole purpose of the nuclear negotiations in the first place—to take off the table that Iran would be a nuclear power and upset the balance of power in that part of the world.

I thank my colleague for yielding. I thank all of my colleagues for making these insightful comments.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Florida.

I would invite my colleague from New Jersey, who also joined us in the Middle East and is on the homeland security committee, to offer his comments on how the Iran deal actually contributes to regional and global security, and I ask what remaining concerns there are that we have to tackle together.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, first, I echo the concerns of my colleagues here. It was extremely valuable to be able to travel with Senators HEITKAMP, KAINE, and COONS as part of the eight-Member delegation to the IAEA, and meet with the individuals in charge of the inspections, as well as to go to Israel, and meet with Benjamin Netanyahu in a private setting about the concerns Senator KAINE articulated. In addition to that, we visited with other allies: Saudi Arabia, as well as Turkey.

Let's be clear. As has been said already, we are seeing important steps being taken that, in the immediate term, reduce the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. The steps they are taking are definitive, measurable, and specifically aligned with the JCPOA.

It is important to understand—whether it is moving uranium out, blocking their plutonium pathway, and setting up the inspections regime along the entire supply chain—that these are all important steps toward implementing the JCPOA. But I want to make two very clear points.

The first point is that last summer, as I and many of my colleagues were immersed in evaluating the JCPOA, the Administration promised clear and firm responses to even the smallest violation. Like many of my colleagues, this played a role in my decision to support the nuclear agreement. We expect to see a follow-through on that promise of accountability. We expect enforcement. If we allow Iran—as this agreement goes on—to push the bounds and cross the lines laid out in this deal without a response, we are undermining the strength of this agreement

and, I believe, actually putting in jeopardy the security of the region.

The second point I want to make relates to the provocative behavior Iran is engaging in right now. Separate and apart from the nuclear sanctions that will be lifted, there are other sanctions in place for other issues related to Iran's behavior. Iran is a dangerous actor and has proven so throughout that region. They are a state sponsor of terrorism and other destabilizing activities in that region. While the immediate threat of the nuclear issue might be off the table, they are still a regional threat.

So when we have clear transgressions that are measurable, that have been done in violation of international law—such as two separate instances of ballistic missile testing—there must be a response. I am calling on the administration not to hesitate any longer. We must respond with sanctions appropriate to these violations of international law. To not do so, to me, is unacceptable.

The U.S. must make the consequences for Iranian regional aggression clear and follow with robust response, if necessary. We cannot lose sight of Iran's use of surrogates and proxies in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen to further undermine the security of the region. Let's not lose sight of the fact that there are Americans being held in Iran right now, such as Siamak Namazi, a graduate of Rutgers University in New Jersey, arrested in October, and being held by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard for, as of yet, unspecified reasons. Let's not forget about Jason Rezaian, who continues to languish in jail without a clear and justifiable rationale for his imprisonment, as well as Saeed Abedini, Amir Hekmati, and Robert Levinson. These Americans are being held by a regime for no justifiable reason.

These are particularly egregious violations. In my opinion, Iran should be held accountable. So I repeat, the Senate should collectively call on the administration to take action against Iran and to sanction Iran for their violation of Security Council Resolution 1929.

I want to finally say that my colleagues and I observed in our meetings with Israeli officials, as Senator KAINE mentioned, an Israeli administration that understands the nuclear deal will go into effect. Let's make sure it is enforced. Let's make sure we have the eyes and ears in place so we can make sure the nuclear threat is removed. But let's stay united with Israel and our other allies in holding this dangerous actor to account if they violate international law, if they threaten their neighbors, if they engage in destabilizing activities, if they support terrorism. We must share intelligence. We must double down our efforts to interdict the movement of arms. And we must work together for a larger piece in that region.

With that, I will turn it back to Senator COONS.

Mr. COONS. I wish to thank my colleague from the State of New Jersey and to briefly recognize a success in the fall, in September—a raid off the coast of Yemen that seized a large cache of Iranian arms destined for the Houthi rebels who are working to undermine the legitimate Government of Yemen. This massive weapons shipment of 56 tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided TOW missiles, and the associated sights, mounts, tubes, and batteries—those are all the different components for these advanced and sophisticated anti-tank weapons—was successfully interdicted in international water. This is an example of what my colleague the Senator from New Jersey was just talking about, which is the need for more and more aggressive and more successful interdiction to push back on Iran's destabilizing actions in the region.

I am grateful now to be joined on the floor by my colleague from the State of New Hampshire, who is also my colleague on the Foreign Relations Committee, who wants to contribute to our conversation today about the positive progress that is being made in the implementation of this deal and what remains ahead in the work we have to do to make sure we are implementing it effectively.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague Senator COONS and others on the floor today, especially those of you who had a chance to travel to the Middle East. I didn't get a chance to go with you on this trip. But, like Senator KAINE, I do serve on both the Armed Services and the Foreign Relations Committees, and I supported the nuclear deal with Iran because I was convinced and continue to be convinced that it is the best available option for preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

As my colleagues have already spoken to, to some extent, we already see the effects of this nuclear deal in Iran's actions. On December 28, Iran shipped over 25,000 pounds of low-enriched uranium to Russia, including the removal of all of Iran's nuclear material enriched to 20 percent that was not already fabricated into reactive fuel. We know this was one path for Iran to get a nuclear weapon. They have removed this low-enriched uranium. It is in Russia.

The IAEA has increased the number of its inspectors on the ground in Iran. They are deploying modern technologies to monitor Iran's nuclear facilities, and they have set up a comprehensive oversight program of Iran's nuclear facilities. The IAEA is now inspecting all of Iran's declared nuclear facilities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and they will have access not just to the facilities where we know Iran was trying to build a weapon but also to the uranium mines and mills, which will give the IAEA and the rest of the world complete access to the entire nuclear fuel cycle.

The Iraq reactor, which has been spoken to already, will be completely disabled. Its core is being filled with concrete. Once the IAEA verifies that Iran has completed the steps related to the Arak reactor, Iran's plutonium pathway to a bomb will have effectively been blocked. Iran has been dismantling its uranium enrichment infrastructure, including the removal of thousands of centrifuges.

Again, taken together, these and other steps will effectively cut off Iran's four pathways to a nuclear weapon, and they will push its breakout time to at least a year for the next 10 years.

What should Congress be doing? My colleague from New Jersey, Senator BOOKER, was very eloquent in talking about some of the actions that we need to take, both Congress and the administration, to continue to address Iran's terrorist activities throughout the region. But I think one of the other things we ought to be doing as a Congress is confirming key Obama administration foreign policy and national security nominees because many of these nominees are critical as we look at the implementation of the Iran agreement. They are critical as we think about what we need to protect this country, to protect our national security.

I would ask my colleague on the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator MURPHY, what does it mean that we have failed to confirm Adam Szubin as the Treasury Department's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes? I was a cosponsor, with Senator RUBIO, of the Hezbollah sanctions bill, the additional sanctions we can put on Hezbollah to limit their activities, and yet we are still missing one of the key players in making that work at the Treasury Department. What does that mean, I ask Senator MURPHY, the fact that Congress has failed to confirm these nominees?

Mr. MURPHY. I thank Senator SHAHEEN for the question. I would hope that regardless of how any individual Senator voted on this deal, we would all be rooting for its success because success in the end is an assurance that Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon. But the results of this Senate failing to confirm Adam Szubin as the Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes undermine the implementation of not only this important achievement but also of all our efforts to try to root out the financial sources of terrorism all around the world.

The fact is that this gentleman, Adam Szubin, is particularly qualified for the job. There is no one on the Republican side who has raised any individual objection to him. He has been doing the job very well for the United States under President Obama. He was the senior advisor to this appointee under President Bush's administration. He has done and worked in this field under both Republican and Democratic Presidents. It seems as if it is just politics that are holding this up. He is not

the only one who is on that list. Laura Holgate has been appointed to be our U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. offices in Vienna, which includes the IAEA. She was nominated on August 5. Her nomination hasn't even gotten out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Wendy Sherman's replacement, Tom Shannon, was nominated on September 18. His nomination is on the floor today. We could vote on that this week if it was our pleasure.

If we want this agreement to succeed, if we want to make sure Iran does not get a nuclear weapon, if we want to cut off the flow of funds from Iran to groups like Hezbollah, then we actually have to have people in place to do those jobs.

I wanted to quickly come to the floor to make the point that in addition to the important points that are being made by my colleagues about the success so far of the agreement with respect to implementation, if we all are hoping that the end result of this is despite the predictions of many Republicans that Iran doesn't obtain a nuclear weapon, then we have to have these people in these important roles.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Would my colleague yield for another question briefly? I didn't give the date that Adam Szubin was nominated, and he has been before the banking committee. Does the Senator have that information to share with everybody?

Mr. MURPHY. I said that Holgate was August 5, and Shannon was September 18. Adam Szubin has been before the banking committee since April 16. He is a few months away from being before the Senate for almost a full year in a job that we can all agree is one of the most important when it comes to protecting the national security of this country. That is pretty astounding.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank all three of my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee. I will close and yield back to Senator COONS with saying that I would hope that one of the things we would all agree to, as Senator MURPHY has said, is that regardless of where we stood on the Iran nuclear agreement, the goal now is to make sure that is implemented in a way that makes sure that at least 10 years from now we have at least a year's breakout before Iran—if they decided to do that—could go back and have a nuclear weapon. I would hope that we all share that as our most important priority with respect to Iran.

I yield back to my colleague Senator COONS.

Mr. COONS. I thank my colleagues from Connecticut and from New Hampshire. I invite my colleague from North Dakota, who also serves on the homeland security committee and who was part of our delegation that just had the opportunity to travel to Israel, to Saudi Arabia, to Turkey, and to Austria, and in Austria to hear from the IAEA.

The references just made by my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee were in one part to the vacancy in the position of the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. offices in Vienna. I want to reemphasize that. Ever since August 5 of last year, that mission the Senator from North Dakota and I just visited that is responsible for directing and supporting the work of the IAEA to the extent the United States helps fund it and supports it and is a participating member—they have been waiting for a new confirmed ambassador for more than 6 months.

I wish to invite my colleague to make comments based on her experiences and her reflections based on this recent trip.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, thank you to my great friend from the State of Delaware. I wish to first make a comment on Adam Szubin because I also serve on the banking committee and have had a chance not only to meet with him personally but to witness the excellent testimony he provided during his confirmation hearing.

We all see very smart people. They come through and they agree to serve their country in these appointed positions which frequently get bogged down here. And not taking anything away from anyone else who has ever appeared before the banking committee, I would say that he is one of the brightest America has to offer. He has a wonderful family, he is deeply devout in his religion—he is Jewish—and a friend to Israel, a friend to this country, using his enormous talents to keep this country safe. There is nothing that would recommend that we not confirm Adam Szubin in one of the most critical positions we have in the Treasury Department. If we are serious about stopping Iran from getting a weapon, if we are serious about enforcing a regime of sanctions, then we need our best and brightest. He clearly is our best and brightest.

One of the points I want to make coming to the floor is that we cannot allow incremental creep, incremental violations, small, little violations. You know how it is. We are all parents, and we watch kids take advantage and take advantage until pretty soon we don't really have the role anymore of a parent. We want to make sure that when we are enforcing this agreement and when we are looking at this agreement, we send a clear message from the very beginning, which is we will not tolerate a breach.

I think it is disturbing that somehow this has become such a partisan issue. We should all be on the floor today encouraging the administration to not let this agreement be eroded by the failure to enforce.

An agreement is only as good as the enforcement capability, and we need to fund the IAEA. We need to make sure they have adequate resources. My great friend from Delaware has suggested a long-term strategy for funding. We need to make sure they have the political support, not just in this body, but across the world to do the right thing.

We have been talking about the reason we, in fact, agreed to allow this agreement to go forward, and the biggest agreement was the enforcement regime. We believed that because of the unprecedented access that the IAEA would have in Iran, we would know more about this program and we would have access to more. We were reassured about that access when we went to Vienna. We were reassured that, yes, they were not going to back down, but if they do back down and don't give access, we need enforcement. We should all be joining together to talk about what that enforcement should look like, how we fund that enforcement, and what a difference it could make.

I share a level of optimism that we are moving in the right direction, but being someone who has negotiated deals, I know it is not over when you sign on to the agreement. It is never over when you sign on to the agreement. It is going to take a level of absolute myopic focus on enforcement to make sure we realize the promise of this international agreement and that we work with our allies and work with our colleagues. We can't do that if we don't have people in those positions who can have a dialogue and speak for the administration, and we certainly can't do it if we allow an incremental breach.

I am joining with my colleagues to provide a unified voice that says: We stand ready to do what it takes to enforce this agreement and prevent breach and make sure we realize the promise of the joint agreement.

Mr. BOOKER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Ms. HEITKAMP. I will be glad to yield to the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. I was with the Senator when you heard from Prime Minister Netanyahu about the priorities and the partnership between our two nations, including support for the Iron Dome and David's Sling. What was also critical, was our cooperation to prevent terror tunnels. One of the other challenges we had before this deal was even executed, was Hezbollah's vast arsenal of rockets that could be fired toward Israel. Those missiles are getting more sophisticated and their range is getting longer.

I don't think people put the connection together between the importance of us doing the work of the Treasury Department to stop the flow of money that can purchase those weapons and have Israeli citizens scrambling for bomb shelters. When we say a name like Adam Szubin, most folks in America have no idea who he is and the work that he is doing. Now that the Senator has been to Israel, I wonder if she can make the connection as to why the work he is doing is so important to stop the growing sophistication and source of those missiles.

Ms. HEITKAMP. I thank my good friend from New Jersey for that question. The surest way to prevent acts of terror is to make sure acts of terror

are never funded. That takes an international banking sophistication and an understanding of every potential loophole you have in every country out there, and that is what Adam Szubin does. He spends all day getting briefings and reports about where those potential failures could be and how to plug those holes. How do we do what is necessary to unfund terrorism? Whether it is ISIL—ISIS—Hezbollah or Hamas, we need to take away the money. That is the surest way toward success.

If we do not confirm someone in this critical position, what is the message? I will be the first person to say that if he is not up to the job, let's find somebody else, but after having met him and watched his testimony and the level of dialogue he has not only with the Democrats but also with the Republicans—this isn't about the caliber of this gentleman to serve our country. It is about a political fight over this deal. The deal is done—not done, but the deal is in its infancy. If we are going to realize the promise of this deal and the commitment this country made, we absolutely need people in place to make sure this deal is enforced, and that is in fact Adam Szubin.

My colleagues who were on the trip with me know we received a number of briefings that went to the heart of taking a look at the international banking system, where the weakest links are, and how we can attack those weakest links in shutting down the terrorist network for financing this terrible behavior.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues who have come to the floor to join with one voice in recognizing the very strong progress that is being made so far in implementing the JCPOA, in implementing the nuclear deal with Iran.

I wish to particularly thank my colleague from North Dakota who has taken her experience on the banking committee to help us understand why it is so important to have confirmed senior administration figures who can enforce the sanctions that were on the books before this deal, were enforced during this deal, and should be enforced going forward.

In closing, let me briefly make some reference as to what that means. The JCPOA was an agreement about constraining Iran's nuclear program, but the sanctions the United States has on the books to stop Iran's support for terrorism, to stop Iran's ballistic missile program, and to stop Iran's human rights abuses or to hold them accountable and sanction them for those abuses will remain on the books.

I will briefly mention that during the negotiation of the JCPOA, the Treasury Department, where Adam Szubin is the nominee to be the top sanction enforcement person, utilized multiple authorities and sanctioned more than 100 Iranians and Iran-linked entities, including more than 40, under its ongoing terrorism sanction authorities.

Just this past July, three senior Hezbollah military officials were sanctioned in Syria and Lebanon because they provided military support to the Assad regime. In November, the Treasury Department designated procurement agents and companies in Lebanon, China, and Hong Kong, and just this last week, on January 7, the Treasury Department targeted a key Hezbollah support network by designating a Hezbollah financier and member, Ali Youssef Charara, and Spectrum Investment Group.

As my colleague from New Jersey has said, we are all optimistic that the administration will take the next step and soon impose sanctions in response to recent ballistic missile launches.

I celebrated earlier because I recognized the success the administration had in interdicting a weapons shipment from Iran to the Houthis rebels, their proxies in the region. The fundamental point is this. If we want to have the positive successes of the JCPOA, and if we want to continue to have the opportunity to constrain Iran's nuclear program and its bad behavior in the region, we have to be vigilantly engaged in oversight and in support for the enforcement of that agreement and for our exercise of the prerogatives and capabilities the American Government has to push back on Iran.

I think by working together in a bipartisan and responsible way, we can get this done. There are folks in this Chamber who opposed the deal and folks who supported it, but what we heard on our recent delegation trip to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey was that our regional allies are looking for clarity—clarity that the United States stands together in fighting Iran's regional ambitions to support terror and in constraining Iran's nuclear program. We can do that best by confirming these nominees, by funding the IAEA, by exercising the sanction authorities that this administration and this Congress have put in place, and by continuing to make progress under this agreement.

With that, I thank my colleagues and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

THE PRESIDENT'S ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, tonight President Obama will deliver his final State of the Union Address, a closing argument for his Presidency. This President, who promised change, will attempt to point to his administration's accomplishments, as many Presidents have done in the past. However, this will prove to be difficult because Georgians and Americans have seen change but in the wrong direction.

When President Obama took the White House, he promised fiscal responsibility, but right now he is on track to more than double the debt in his tenure. He promised to work together in a bipartisan way, but he used the Democratic supermajority in those first 2 years to force through ObamaCare and Dodd-Frank on the American people. He promised to bring us together, but he has served to divide us as a country. He promised to focus on defeating terrorism, but he created a power vacuum in the Middle East for others who wish to do us harm. There is no denying it, under this President's failed leadership, the American people have had a tough several years.

Today more Americans have fallen into poverty under this Presidency. Too many individuals and families have seen their health care premiums and their deductibles rise to points where they can no longer afford them. Our national debt is almost $19 trillion, which is well past any reasonable tipping point, and we have a global security crisis on our hands that makes the world possibly more dangerous than at any point in my lifetime. These are all symptoms of the President's failed economic policies as well as a lack of leadership in foreign policy.

Even by his own accord, the President has saddled our country with an irresponsible amount of debt which he described in the past as unpatriotic. Before he took office, then-Senator Barack Obama reviewed President Bush's tenure in office saying:

> The way Bush has done it over the last eight years is to take out a credit card from the Bank of China in the name of our children, driving up our national debt from $5 trillion for the first 42 presidents—number 43 added $4 trillion by his lonesome, so that we now have over $9 trillion of debt that we are going to have to pay back—$30,000 for every man, woman, and child. That's irresponsible. It's unpatriotic.

Those are the words of this President, Barack Hussein Obama.

Let's be clear, under this President, our national debt has ballooned to almost $19 trillion from $10 trillion. That means that President Obama has added almost $9 trillion already and is on track to more than double this debt before he is through.

Before President Obama leaves office, he will have nearly added as much debt as all of the other Presidents before him. This is even more outrageous when you factor in how much revenue or tax dollars the Federal Government has collected.

In 2015, we collected over $3.4 trillion in taxes for our Federal Government. This is more than any year in our history. Washington does not have a revenue problem, it has a spending problem, and it is focused on the wrong priorities.

Equally concerning, this massive debt isn't interest free. If interest rates were to rise to the 30-year average of only 5.5 percent, the interest on this debt would amount to over $1 trillion each year. That is more than twice what we spent on all nonmilitary discretionary spending. It is more than twice what we spend on our military and defending our country. It is totally out of control and this is unmanageable.

In reality, this debt crisis will only get worse because this President and

Washington have not tackled the government's largest expense—mandatory spending programs such as Social Security and Medicare. This debt crisis does not only present a fiscal problem, it is inextricably linked to the global security concerns we are seeing today.

In order to have a strong foreign policy, we have to have a strong military, but to have a strong military we have to have a vibrant and growing strong economy. There is no secret that down through history the countries that have had the strongest militaries, and therefore the most secure foreign policy, are those that had the most vibrant economies of their day. Under this President's foreign policy decisions, he has created a power vacuum and put the country in a much weaker position.

Today our enemies don't fear us and our allies don't trust us. Just three decades ago we brought down the Soviet Union with the power of our ideas and the strength of our economy. Look at the world today. Over the past 7 years, we have seen the rise of a global security crisis that is unrivaled in my lifetime. We have seen the rise of traditional rivals such as China and Russia grow more aggressive. We have seen North Korea and Iran actually collaborate on nuclear proliferation. We have seen Syria cross red lines and terrorism fill power vacuums in the Middle East and around the world.

Last week North Korea claimed to have successfully completed its fourth nuclear weapons test with a much more powerful weapon than they possessed before. This is a sobering and stark reminder of the true consequences our country faces when our President shows weakness in the face of these radical regimes. And not only have we witnessed weaknesses, but we have also seen this President naively trust a country like Iran, the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism today.

Since President Obama announced his dangerous Iran deal in July despite strong bipartisan opposition, Iran has actively accelerated its ballistic missile program and continued financial support for terrorism in the region, in violation of the very sanction we just heard on this floor.

Iran has fired rockets near U.S. warships, fomented unrest in Yemen, taken more Americans hostages, refused to release an American passenger who has been held for 3 years, convicted an American journalist of spying, banned American products from being sold in Iran, and renewed its support for Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists.

From the beginning, President Obama didn't listen to military advice and prematurely pulled our troops out of Iraq, creating another power vacuum. ISIS, of course, we now know, grew into that power vacuum and sprouted influence not only in the Middle East but in Africa and Asia as well.

Last November, this President told the American people in a news interview:

> We have contained them. They have not gained ground in Iraq. And in Syria if they'll come in, they'll leave. But you don't see this systematic march by ISIL across the terrain.

Well, we now know ISIS is not being contained in their ability to wage war against the West and will stop at nothing to deliver terrorism even to the shores of America. The President's plan has failed, it is plain and simple, and we sit here today with no strategy to defeat ISIS.

The world needs to see decisive action from the United States, not empty rhetoric that can't be backed up. We need a new leader who takes every threat of any size seriously. Moving forward, nothing can go unchecked and unmet without relentless American resolve.

No matter how we measure it, President Obama's economic and foreign policies have indeed failed. Time and again, he has refused to change course when his policies didn't work, when they didn't help the American people, whom he claims to champion. Instead, this President has created the fourth arm of government—the regulators—and they are sucking the very life out of our free enterprise system today. Now, fewer people are working, wages are stagnant, incomes aren't growing, the debt is soaring, and the world is much more dangerous than it was 8 years ago.

But tonight we will also hear from this President about his optimism for the future. Well, I get that. I share that optimism but only because I believe we can do better. We can do a lot better. We can tackle our national debt crisis. We can save Social Security and Medicare. We can defeat terrorism once and for all. We cannot do it without bold leadership, however. We cannot do it without a sense of urgency or responsibility. We cannot do it unless the political class in this town—Washington, DC—finally puts national interests in front of self-interests. We cannot do it without the will and support of the American people.

I believe in America. Georgians believe in America. Americans believe in America. Americans have always risen to the crisis of the day, and I believe we will rise to this crisis. But Washington needs to really listen to the American people, focus on solutions they support, and unite our Nation to make sure our best days are indeed ahead of us. We owe it to our children and our children's children, and the time to move is right now. The time for rhetoric has ended.

We need to face up to the two crises we have today: the global security crisis and our own debt crisis, which are interwoven together.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. AYOTTE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I withdraw the motion to proceed to S. 2232.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

AMERICAN SECURITY AGAINST FOREIGN ENEMIES ACT OF 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 300, H.R. 4038.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

> Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 300, H.R. 4038, a bill to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

> We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 300, H.R. 4038, an act to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes.
>
> Mitch McConnell, Rob Portman, John Thune, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, James M. Inhofe, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Lindsey Graham, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Michael B. Enzi, James E. Risch, John McCain.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived with respect to this cloture motion.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote occur at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 20, and that if cloture is invoked, then the time be counted as if it had been invoked at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS BURR

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, today I wish to honor and congratulate Mr. Thomas Burr, the Salt Lake Tribune's Washington correspondent and newly inaugurated president of the National Press Club. Tommy has worked for the Salt Lake Tribune for 14 years, including 10 years as a correspondent here in Washington. Utah is privileged to have such a reputable journalist covering our Nation's capital.

In addition to his role as the Tribune's Washington correspondent, Tommy has also served as the president of the Regional Reporters Association and chairman of the Congressional Standing Committee of Correspondents. Moreover, he is one of the youngest members ever to join the Gridiron Club & Foundation.

Tommy is a native of Salina, UT, and the son of Ann Burr and the late James Burr. A graduate of Snow College and Southern Utah University, Tommy covered the Presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and Jon Huntsman and was named the top regional reporter in Washington for a record three times by the National Press Club. He is the second Utahn to hold the title of press club president.

Founded in 1908, the National Press Club bills itself as the ''World's Leading Professional Organization for Journalists.'' Since its inception, the organization has hosted monarchs, heads of state, U.S. Presidents, and prominent thought leaders such as Martin Luther King and the Dalai Lama. As president, Tommy will focus on building the press club's long-standing efforts to expand press freedoms worldwide. He also intends to boost membership and speak out for journalists who face government restraints.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the achievements of Tommy Burr and thank him for his contributions to the great State of Utah. On a personal note, I am grateful for my friendship with Tommy and look forward to many more stories to come. I wish him the very best in his new role as president of the National Press Club.

REMEMBERING DIANA TABLER FORBES

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, today I wish to pay tribute to a dedicated, long-time public servant, wife, and mother, Diana Tabler Forbes. Diana died peacefully at her home in Alexandria, VA, on December 28, 2015, after a courageous 3-year battle with esophageal cancer.

Diana was a truly remarkable public servant. For over three decades, she served senior government leaders from both the executive and legislative branches of government in the areas of military health and personnel policy.

Throughout her career, Diana often played a central role in responding to both international crises and domestic challenges. From 2004 until her retirement in 2013, she served as the senior professional staff member primarily responsible for oversight of the military health system on the Senate Armed Services Committee, serving me as ranking member and previously Chairman John Warner. In that role, she helped shape the legislative response to improving care and services to wounded, ill, and injured military servicemembers following a series of Pulitzer prize-winning Washington Post stories on health care support provided at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Additionally, Diana played an instrumental role in developing legislation that established TRICARE benefits for military reservists and their families; provided community support for military families with disabilities; expanded combat casualty care research; and ensured access to healthcare services for servicemembers suffering from behavioral health conditions, like post-traumatic stress, and from traumatic brain injury.

In 2001, Diana was the senior health leader in the Pentagon on September 11. After relocating to other government buildings following the attack on the Pentagon, she oversaw the coordination of military medical support in both Washington, DC, and New York City.

Shortly after the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, Diana volunteered to serve in Iraq as a civilian in 2003, where she played a key role in the reconstruction of health systems in Iraq while serving as an adviser to the coalition provisional authority with U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq.

During the 1990s, Diana served in executive positions within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs, and helped oversee and implement many of the major components of the military health system now in place today, to include the establishment of TRICARE—the military's global health benefit that serves 9.5 million Americans today.

Following her retirement from Federal service, Diana continued to serve others. She remained closely connected with the Department of Defense, and she supported military servicemembers and families on the board of the National Military Family Association.

Diana's limitless energy and passion for the well-being of servicemembers and their families was legendary. She ensured everyone in Congress remembered who we served and why we served them. She knew how to cut through the bureaucracy and provide real solutions for those in need.

I express my sympathy to her husband, Ripley Forbes; her daughter, Meredith, a schoolteacher in Alexandria; and son, Jonathan, a junior at Virginia Commonwealth University. As they mourn, they should know that Diana's legacy lives on in them and in the many thousands of servicemembers and their families that she selflessly served.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON JANUARY 12, 2016—PM 36

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States which was ordered to lie on the table:

To the Congress of the United States:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans:

Tonight marks the eighth year I've come here to report on the State of the Union. And for this final one, I'm going to try to make it shorter. I know some of you are antsy to get back to Iowa.

I also understand that because it's an election season, expectations for what we'll achieve this year are low. Still, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the constructive approach you and the other leaders took at the end of last year to pass a budget and make tax cuts permanent for working families. So I hope we can work together this year on bipartisan priorities like criminal justice reform, and helping people who are battling prescription drug abuse. We just might surprise the cynics again.

But tonight, I want to go easy on the traditional list of proposals for the year ahead. Don't worry, I've got plenty, from helping students learn to write computer code to personalizing medical treatments for patients. And I'll keep pushing for progress on the work that still needs doing. Fixing a broken immigration system. Protecting our kids from gun violence. Equal pay for equal work, paid leave, raising the minimum wage. All these things still matter to hardworking families; they are still the right thing to do; and I will not let up until they get done.

But for my final address to this chamber, I don't want to talk just about the next year. I want to focus on the next five years, ten years, and beyond.

I want to focus on our future.

We live in a time of extraordinary change—change that's reshaping the way we live, the way we work, our planet and our place in the world. It's change that promises amazing medical breakthroughs, but also economic disruptions that strain working families. It promises education for girls in the most remote villages, but also connects terrorists plotting an ocean away. It's change that can broaden opportunity, or widen inequality. And whether we like it or not, the pace of this change will only accelerate.

America has been through big changes before—wars and depression, the influx of immigrants, workers fighting for a fair deal, and movements to expand civil rights. Each time, there have been those who told us to fear the future; who claimed we could slam the brakes on change, promising to restore past glory if we just got some group or idea that was threatening America under control. And each time, we overcame those fears. We did not, in the words of Lincoln, adhere to the ''dogmas of the quiet past.'' Instead we thought anew, and acted anew. We made change work for us, always extending America's promise outward, to the next frontier, to more and more people. And because we did—because we saw opportunity where others saw only peril—we emerged stronger and better than before.

What was true then can be true now. Our unique strengths as a nation—our optimism and work ethic, our spirit of discovery and innovation, our diversity and commitment to the rule of law—these things give us everything we need to ensure prosperity and security for generations to come.

In fact, it's that spirit that made the progress of these past seven years possible. It's how we recovered from the worst economic crisis in generations. It's how we reformed our health care system, and reinvented our energy sector; how we delivered more care and benefits to our troops and veterans, and how we secured the freedom in every state to marry the person we love.

But such progress is not inevitable. It is the result of choices we make together. And we face such choices right now. Will we respond to the changes of our time with fear, turning inward as a nation, and turning against each other as a people? Or will we face the future with confidence in who we are, what we stand for, and the incredible things we can do together?

So let's talk about the future, and four big questions that we as a country have to answer—regardless of who the next President is, or who controls the next Congress.

First, how do we give everyone a fair shot at opportunity and security in this new economy?

Second, how do we make technology work for us, and not against us—especially when it comes to solving urgent challenges like climate change?

Third, how do we keep America safe and lead the world without becoming its policeman?

And finally, how can we make our politics reflect what's best in us, and not what's worst?

Let me start with the economy, and a basic fact: the United States of America, right now, has the strongest, most durable economy in the world. We're in the middle of the longest streak of private-sector job creation in history. More than 14 million new jobs; the strongest two years of job growth since the '90s; an unemployment rate cut in half. Our auto industry just had its best year ever. Manufacturing has created nearly 900,000 new jobs in the past six years. And we've done all this while cutting our deficits by almost three-quarters.

Anyone claiming that America's economy is in decline is peddling fiction. What is true—and the reason that a lot of Americans feel anxious—is that the economy has been changing in profound ways, changes that started long before the Great Recession hit and haven't let up. Today, technology doesn't just replace jobs on the assembly line, but any job where work can be automated. Companies in a global economy can locate anywhere, and face tougher competition. As a result, workers have less leverage for a raise. Companies have less loyalty to their communities. And more and more wealth and income is concentrated at the very top.

All these trends have squeezed workers, even when they have jobs; even when the economy is growing. It's made it harder for a hardworking family to pull itself out of poverty, harder for young people to start on their careers, and tougher for workers to retire when they want to. And although none of these trends are unique to America, they do offend our uniquely American belief that everybody who works hard should get a fair shot.

For the past seven years, our goal has been a growing economy that works better for everybody. We've made progress. But we need to make more. And despite all the political arguments we've had these past few years, there are some areas where Americans broadly agree.

We agree that real opportunity requires every American to get the education and training they need to land a good-paying job. The bipartisan reform of No Child Left Behind was an important start, and together, we've increased early childhood education, lifted high school graduation rates to new highs, and boosted graduates in fields like engineering. In the coming years, we should build on that progress, by providing Pre-K for all, offering every student the hands-on computer science and math classes that make them job-ready on day one, and we should recruit and support more great teachers for our kids.

And we have to make college affordable for every American. Because no hardworking student should be stuck in the red. We've already reduced student loan payments to ten percent of a borrower's income. Now, we've actually got to cut the cost of college. Providing two years of community college at no cost for every responsible student is one of the best ways to do that, and I'm going to keep fighting to get that started this year.

Of course, a great education isn't all we need in this new economy. We also need benefits and protections that provide a basic measure of security. After all, it's not much of a stretch to say that some of the only people in America who are going to work the same job, in the same place, with a health and retirement package, for 30 years, are sitting in this chamber. For everyone else, especially folks in their forties and fifties, saving for retirement or bouncing back from job loss has gotten a lot tougher. Americans understand that at some point in their careers, they may have to retool and retrain. But they shouldn't lose what they've already worked so hard to build.

That's why Social Security and Medicare are more important than ever; we shouldn't weaken them, we should strengthen them. And for Americans short of retirement, basic benefits should be just as mobile as everything else is today. That's what the Affordable Care Act is all about. It's about filling the gaps in employer-based care so that when we lose a job, or go back to school, or start that new business, we'll still have coverage. Nearly eighteen million have gained coverage so far. Health care inflation has slowed. And our businesses have created jobs every single month since it became law.

Now, I'm guessing we won't agree on health care anytime soon. But there should be other ways both parties can improve economic security. Say a hardworking American loses his job—we shouldn't just make sure he can get unemployment insurance; we should make sure that program encourages him to retrain for a business that's ready to hire him. If that new job doesn't pay as much, there should be a system of wage insurance in place so that he can still pay his bills. And even if he's going from job to job, he should still be able to save for retirement and take his savings with him. That's the way we make the new economy work better for everyone.

I also know Speaker Ryan has talked about his interest in tackling poverty. America is about giving everybody willing to work a hand up, and I'd welcome a serious discussion about strategies we can all support, like expanding tax cuts for low-income workers without kids.

But there are other areas where it's been more difficult to find agreement

over the last seven years—namely what role the government should play in making sure the system's not rigged in favor of the wealthiest and biggest corporations. And here, the American people have a choice to make.

I believe a thriving private sector is the lifeblood of our economy. I think there are outdated regulations that need to be changed, and there's red tape that needs to be cut. But after years of record corporate profits, working families won't get more opportunity or bigger paychecks by letting big banks or big oil or hedge funds make their own rules at the expense of everyone else; or by allowing attacks on collective bargaining to go unanswered. Food Stamp recipients didn't cause the financial crisis; recklessness on Wall Street did. Immigrants aren't the reason wages haven't gone up enough; those decisions are made in the boardrooms that too often put quarterly earnings over long-term returns. It's sure not the average family watching tonight that avoids paying taxes through offshore accounts. In this new economy, workers and startups and small businesses need more of a voice, not less. The rules should work for them. And this year I plan to lift up the many businesses who've figured out that doing right by their workers ends up being good for their shareholders, their customers, and their communities, so that we can spread those best practices across America.

In fact, many of our best corporate citizens are also our most creative. This brings me to the second big question we have to answer as a country: how do we reignite that spirit of innovation to meet our biggest challenges?

Sixty years ago, when the Russians beat us into space, we didn't deny Sputnik was up there. We didn't argue about the science, or shrink our research and development budget. We built a space program almost overnight, and twelve years later, we were walking on the moon.

That spirit of discovery is in our DNA. We're Thomas Edison and the Wright Brothers and George Washington Carver. We're Grace Hopper and Katherine Johnson and Sally Ride. We're every immigrant and entrepreneur from Boston to Austin to Silicon Valley racing to shape a better world. And over the past seven years, we've nurtured that spirit.

We've protected an open internet, and taken bold new steps to get more students and low-income Americans online. We've launched next-generation manufacturing hubs, and online tools that give an entrepreneur everything he or she needs to start a business in a single day.

But we can do so much more. Last year, Vice President Biden said that with a new moonshot, America can cure cancer. Last month, he worked with this Congress to give scientists at the National Institutes of Health the strongest resources they've had in over a decade. Tonight, I'm announcing a new national effort to get it done. And because he's gone to the mat for all of us, on so many issues over the past forty years, I'm putting Joe in charge of Mission Control. For the loved ones we've all lost, for the family we can still save, let's make America the country that cures cancer once and for all.

Medical research is critical. We need the same level of commitment when it comes to developing clean energy sources.

Look, if anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You'll be pretty lonely, because you'll be debating our military, most of America's business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community, and 200 nations around the world who agree it's a problem and intend to solve it.

But even if the planet wasn't at stake; even if 2014 wasn't the warmest year on record—until 2015 turned out even hotter—why would we want to pass up the chance for American businesses to produce and sell the energy of the future?

Seven years ago, we made the single biggest investment in clean energy in our history. Here are the results. In fields from Iowa to Texas, wind power is now cheaper than dirtier, conventional power. On rooftops from Arizona to New York, solar is saving Americans tens of millions of dollars a year on their energy bills, and employs more Americans than coal—in jobs that pay better than average. We're taking steps to give homeowners the freedom to generate and store their own energy—something environmentalists and Tea Partiers have teamed up to support. Meanwhile, we've cut our imports of foreign oil by nearly sixty percent, and cut carbon pollution more than any other country on Earth.

Gas under two bucks a gallon ain't bad, either.

Now we've got to accelerate the transition away from dirty energy. Rather than subsidize the past, we should invest in the future—especially in communities that rely on fossil fuels. That's why I'm going to push to change the way we manage our oil and coal resources, so that they better reflect the costs they impose on taxpayers and our planet. That way, we put money back into those communities and put tens of thousands of Americans to work building a 21st century transportation system.

None of this will happen overnight, and yes, there are plenty of entrenched interests who want to protect the status quo. But the jobs we'll create, the money we'll save, and the planet we'll preserve—that's the kind of future our kids and grandkids deserve.

Climate change is just one of many issues where our security is linked to the rest of the world. And that's why the third big question we have to answer is how to keep America safe and strong without either isolating ourselves or trying to nation-build everywhere there's a problem.

I told you earlier all the talk of America's economic decline is political hot air. Well, so is all the rhetoric you hear about our enemies getting stronger and America getting weaker. The United States of America is the most powerful nation on Earth. Period. It's not even close. We spend more on our military than the next eight nations combined. Our troops are the finest fighting force in the history of the world. No nation dares to attack us or our allies because they know that's the path to ruin. Surveys show our standing around the world is higher than when I was elected to this office, and when it comes to every important international issue, people of the world do not look to Beijing or Moscow to lead—they call us.

As someone who begins every day with an intelligence briefing, I know this is a dangerous time. But that's not because of diminished American strength or some looming superpower. In today's world, we're threatened less by evil empires and more by failing states. The Middle East is going through a transformation that will play out for a generation, rooted in conflicts that date back millennia. Economic headwinds blow from a Chinese economy in transition. Even as their economy contracts, Russia is pouring resources to prop up Ukraine and Syria—states they see slipping away from their orbit. And the international system we built after World War II is now struggling to keep pace with this new reality.

It's up to us to help remake that system. And that means we have to set priorities.

Priority number one is protecting the American people and going after terrorist networks. Both al Qaeda and now ISIL pose a direct threat to our people, because in today's world, even a handful of terrorists who place no value on human life, including their own, can do a lot of damage. They use the Internet to poison the minds of individuals inside our country; they undermine our allies.

But as we focus on destroying ISIL, over-the-top claims that this is World War III just play into their hands. Masses of fighters on the back of pickup trucks and twisted souls plotting in apartments or garages pose an enormous danger to civilians and must be stopped. But they do not threaten our national existence. That's the story ISIL wants to tell; that's the kind of propaganda they use to recruit. We don't need to build them up to show that we're serious, nor do we need to push away vital allies in this fight by echoing the lie that ISIL is representative of one of the world's largest religions. We just need to call them what they are—killers and fanatics who have to be rooted out, hunted down, and destroyed.

That's exactly what we are doing. For more than a year, America has led

a coalition of more than 60 countries to cut off ISIL's financing, disrupt their plots, stop the flow of terrorist fighters, and stamp out their vicious ideology. With nearly 10,000 air strikes, we are taking out their leadership, their oil, their training camps, and their weapons. We are training, arming, and supporting forces who are steadily reclaiming territory in Iraq and Syria.

If this Congress is serious about winning this war, and wants to send a message to our troops and the world, you should finally authorize the use of military force against ISIL. Take a vote. But the American people should know that with or without Congressional action, ISIL will learn the same lessons as terrorists before them. If you doubt America's commitment—or mine—to see that justice is done, ask Osama bin Laden. Ask the leader of al Qaeda in Yemen, who was taken out last year, or the perpetrator of the Benghazi attacks, who sits in a prison cell. When you come after Americans, we go after you. It may take time, but we have long memories, and our reach has no limit.

Our foreign policy must be focused on the threat from ISIL and al Qaeda, but it can't stop there. For even without ISIL, instability will continue for decades in many parts of the world—in the Middle East, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in parts of Central America, Africa and Asia. Some of these places may become safe havens for new terrorist networks; others will fall victim to ethnic conflict, or famine, feeding the next wave of refugees. The world will look to us to help solve these problems, and our answer needs to be more than tough talk or calls to carpet bomb civilians. That may work as a TV sound bite, but it doesn't pass muster on the world stage.

We also can't try to take over and rebuild every country that falls into crisis. That's not leadership; that's a recipe for quagmire, spilling American blood and treasure that ultimately weakens us. It's the lesson of Vietnam, of Iraq—and we should have learned it by now.

Fortunately, there's a smarter approach, a patient and disciplined strategy that uses every element of our national power. It says America will always act, alone if necessary, to protect our people and our allies; but on issues of global concern, we will mobilize the world to work with us, and make sure other countries pull their own weight.

That's our approach to conflicts like Syria, where we're partnering with local forces and leading international efforts to help that broken society pursue a lasting peace.

That's why we built a global coalition, with sanctions and principled diplomacy, to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. As we speak, Iran has rolled back its nuclear program, shipped out its uranium stockpile, and the world has avoided another war.

That's how we stopped the spread of Ebola in West Africa. Our military, our doctors, and our development workers set up the platform that allowed other countries to join us in stamping out that epidemic.

That's how we forged a Trans-Pacific Partnership to open markets, protect workers and the environment, and advance American leadership in Asia. It cuts 18,000 taxes on products Made in America, and supports more good jobs. With TPP, China doesn't set the rules in that region, we do. You want to show our strength in this century? Approve this agreement. Give us the tools to enforce it.

Fifty years of isolating Cuba had failed to promote democracy, setting us back in Latin America. That's why we restored diplomatic relations, opened the door to travel and commerce, and positioned ourselves to improve the lives of the Cuban people. You want to consolidate our leadership and credibility in the hemisphere? Recognize that the Cold War is over. Lift the embargo.

American leadership in the 21st century is not a choice between ignoring the rest of the world—except when we kill terrorists; or occupying and rebuilding whatever society is unraveling. Leadership means a wise application of military power, and rallying the world behind causes that are right. It means seeing our foreign assistance as part of our national security, not charity. When we lead nearly 200 nations to the most ambitious agreement in history to fight climate change—that helps vulnerable countries, but it also protects our children. When we help Ukraine defend its democracy, or Colombia resolve a decades-long war, that strengthens the international order we depend upon. When we help African countries feed their people and care for the sick, that prevents the next pandemic from reaching our shores. Right now, we are on track to end the scourge of HIV/AIDS, and we have the capacity to accomplish the same thing with malaria—something I'll be pushing this Congress to fund this year.

That's strength. That's leadership. And that kind of leadership depends on the power of our example. That is why I will keep working to shut down the prison at Guantanamo: it's expensive, it's unnecessary, and it only serves as a recruitment brochure for our enemies.

That's why we need to reject any politics that targets people because of race or religion. This isn't a matter of political correctness. It's a matter of understanding what makes us strong. The world respects us not just for our arsenal; it respects us for our diversity and our openness and the way we respect every faith. His Holiness, Pope Francis, told this body from the very spot I stand tonight that ''to imitate the hatred and violence of tyrants and murderers is the best way to take their place.'' When politicians insult Muslims, when a mosque is vandalized, or a kid bullied, that doesn't make us safer. That's not telling it like it is. It's just wrong. It diminishes us in the eyes of the world. It makes it harder to achieve our goals. And it betrays who we are as a country.

''We the People.'' Our Constitution begins with those three simple words, words we've come to recognize mean all the people, not just some; words that insist we rise and fall together. That brings me to the fourth, and maybe the most important thing I want to say tonight.

The future we want—opportunity and security for our families; a rising standard of living and a sustainable, peaceful planet for our kids—all that is within our reach. But it will only happen if we work together. It will only happen if we can have rational, constructive debates.

It will only happen if we fix our politics.

A better politics doesn't mean we have to agree on everything. This is a big country, with different regions and attitudes and interests. That's one of our strengths, too. Our Founders distributed power between states and branches of government, and expected us to argue, just as they did, over the size and shape of government, over commerce and foreign relations, over the meaning of liberty and the imperatives of security.

But democracy does require basic bonds of trust between its citizens. It doesn't work if we think the people who disagree with us are all motivated by malice, or that our political opponents are unpatriotic. Democracy grinds to a halt without a willingness to compromise; or when even basic facts are contested, and we listen only to those who agree with us. Our public life withers when only the most extreme voices get attention. Most of all, democracy breaks down when the average person feels their voice doesn't matter; that the system is rigged in favor of the rich or the powerful or some narrow interest.

Too many Americans feel that way right now. It's one of the few regrets of my presidency—that the rancor and suspicion between the parties has gotten worse instead of better. There's no doubt a president with the gifts of Lincoln or Roosevelt might have better bridged the divide, and I guarantee I'll keep trying to be better so long as I hold this office.

But, my fellow Americans, this cannot be my task—or any President's—alone. There are a whole lot of folks in this chamber who would like to see more cooperation, a more elevated debate in Washington, but feel trapped by the demands of getting elected. I know; you've told me. And if we want a better politics, it's not enough to just change a Congressman or a Senator or even a President; we have to change the system to reflect our better selves.

We have to end the practice of drawing our congressional districts so that politicians can pick their voters, and not the other way around. We have to reduce the influence of money in our politics, so that a handful of families

and hidden interests can't bankroll our elections—and if our existing approach to campaign finance can't pass muster in the courts, we need to work together to find a real solution. We've got to make voting easier, not harder, and modernize it for the way we live now. And over the course of this year, I intend to travel the country to push for reforms that do.

But I can't do these things on my own. Changes in our political process—in not just who gets elected but how they get elected—that will only happen when the American people demand it. It will depend on you. That's what's meant by a government of, by, and for the people.

What I'm asking for is hard. It's easier to be cynical; to accept that change isn't possible, and politics is hopeless, and to believe that our voices and actions don't matter. But if we give up now, then we forsake a better future. Those with money and power will gain greater control over the decisions that could send a young soldier to war, or allow another economic disaster, or roll back the equal rights and voting rights that generations of Americans have fought, even died, to secure. As frustration grows, there will be voices urging us to fall back into tribes, to scapegoat fellow citizens who don't look like us, or pray like us, or vote like we do, or share the same background.

We can't afford to go down that path. It won't deliver the economy we want, or the security we want, but most of all, it contradicts everything that makes us the envy of the world.

So, my fellow Americans, whatever you may believe, whether you prefer one party or no party, our collective future depends on your willingness to uphold your obligations as a citizen. To vote. To speak out. To stand up for others, especially the weak, especially the vulnerable, knowing that each of us is only here because somebody, somewhere, stood up for us. To stay active in our public life so it reflects the goodness and decency and optimism that I see in the American people every single day.

It won't be easy. Our brand of democracy is hard. But I can promise that a year from now, when I no longer hold this office, I'll be right there with you as a citizen—inspired by those voices of fairness and vision, of grit and good humor and kindness that have helped America travel so far. Voices that help us see ourselves not first and foremost as black or white or Asian or Latino, not as gay or straight, immigrant or native born; not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans first, bound by a common creed. Voices Dr. King believed would have the final word—voices of unarmed truth and unconditional love.

They're out there, those voices. They don't get a lot of attention, nor do they seek it, but they are busy doing the work this country needs doing.

I see them everywhere I travel in this incredible country of ours. I see you. I know you're there. You're the reason why I have such incredible confidence in our future. Because I see your quiet, sturdy citizenship all the time.

I see it in the worker on the assembly line who clocked extra shifts to keep his company open, and the boss who pays him higher wages to keep him on board.

I see it in the Dreamer who stays up late to finish her science project, and the teacher who comes in early because he knows she might someday cure a disease.

I see it in the American who served his time, and dreams of starting over—and the business owner who gives him that second chance. The protester determined to prove that justice matters, and the young cop walking the beat, treating everybody with respect, doing the brave, quiet work of keeping us safe.

I see it in the soldier who gives almost everything to save his brothers, the nurse who tends to him 'til he can run a marathon, and the community that lines up to cheer him on.

It's the son who finds the courage to come out as who he is, and the father whose love for that son overrides everything he's been taught.

I see it in the elderly woman who will wait in line to cast her vote as long as she has to; the new citizen who casts his for the first time; the volunteers at the polls who believe every vote should count, because each of them in different ways know how much that precious right is worth.

That's the America I know. That's the country we love. Clear-eyed. Big-hearted. Optimistic that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. That's what makes me so hopeful about our future. Because of you. I believe in you. That's why I stand here confident that the State of our Union is strong.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *January 12, 2016*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:52 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 142. An act to require special packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.

S. 1115. An act to close out expired grants.

S. 1629. An act to revise certain authorities of the District of Columbia courts, the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia, and the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 598. An act to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes.

H.R. 653. An act to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), to provide for greater public access to information, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1069. An act to amend title 44, United States Code, to require information on contributors to Presidential library fundraising organizations, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1777. An act to amend the Act of August 25, 1958, commonly known as the ''Former Presidents Act of 1958'', with respect to the monetary allowance payable to a former President, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3231. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect unpaid interns in the Federal Government from workplace harassment and discrimination, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 653. An act to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), to provide for greater public access to information, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1777. An act to amend the Act of August 25, 1958, commonly known as the ''Former Presidents Act of 1958'', with respect to the monetary allowance payable to a former President, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs .

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–4003. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Spinetoram; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9933–39–OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4004. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Propiconazole; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9940–01–OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4005. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; ATR–GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0682)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4006. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3783))

received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4007. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Services B.V. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–1048)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4008. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–6546)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4009. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Piper Aircraft, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0627)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4010. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; SOCATA Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3642)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4011. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; REIMS AVIATION S.A. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3398)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4012. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Viking Air Limited Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3073)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4013. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Zodiac Aerotechnics (formerly Intertechnique Aircraft Systems)'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0927)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4014. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–1043)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4015. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0490)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4016. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0928)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4017. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0251)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4018. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–5806)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4019. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0346)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4020. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0932)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4021. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1266)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4022. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0929)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4023. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–5819)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4024. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace for the following New York Towns: Elmira, NY; Ithaca, NY; and Poughkeepsie, NY'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–4514)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4025. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (12); Amdt. No. 3672'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4026. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (35); Amdt. No. 3671'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4027. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (43); Amdt. No. 3670'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4028. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (158); Amdt. No. 3669'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4029. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Registration and Marking Requirements for Small Unmanned Aircraft'' (RIN2120–AK82) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4030. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XE274) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4031. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer , Office of Protective Services, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''NASA Protective Services Enforcement'' (RIN2700–AE24) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4032. A communication from the Regulatory Ombudsman, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Electronic Logging Devices and Hours of Service Supporting Documents'' (RIN2126–AB20) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4033. A communication from the Deputy Division Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Improvements to Benchmarks and Related Requirements Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets and Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets'' ((WT Docket No. 15–285 and WT Docket No. 07–250) (FCC 15–155)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 17, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4034. A communication from the Secretary of the Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Telemarketing Sales Rule'' (RIN3084–AB19) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 17, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4035. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Network Penetration Reporting and Contracting for Cloud Services'' ((RIN0750–AI61) (DFARS Case 2013–D018)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4036. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Taxes—Foreign Contracts in Afghanistan'' ((RIN0750–AI26) (DFARS Case 2014–D003)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4037. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Trade Agreements Thresholds'' ((RIN0750–AI79) (DFARS Case 2016–D003)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4038. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4039. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Russian Sanctions: Addition of Certain Persons to the Entity List'' (RIN0694–AG64) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4040. A communication from the Assistant Director for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Cyber-Related Sanctions Regulations'' (31 CFR Part 578) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4041. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation as an emergency requirement all funding so designated by the Congress in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the following accounts: ''International Monetary Programs—United States Quota, International Monetary Fund—Direct Loan Program Account'' and ''Loans to the International Monetary Fund—Direct Loan Program Account''; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC–4042. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of funding for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC–4043. A communication from the Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Board's competitive sourcing efforts for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4044. A communication from the Acting Associate Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rules for Interstate Inmate Calling Services'' ((RIN3060–AK08) (FCC 15–136)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4045. A communication from the Senior Assistant Chief Counsel for Hazmat Safety Law, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hazardous Materials: Requirements for the Safe Transportation of Bulk Explosives (RRR)'' (RIN2137–AE86) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4046. A communication from the Trial Attorney, Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Passenger Train Exterior Side Door Safety'' (RIN2130–AC34) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4047. A communication from the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Assessment of Demand Response and Advanced Metering''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4048. A communication from the Federal Register Certifying Officer, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulations Governing United States Savings Bonds'' ((RIN1530–AA11) (31 CFR Parts 315, 353, and 360)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4049. A communication from the Federal Register Certifying Officer, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Debt Collection Authorities Under the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996'' ((RIN1530–AA12) (31 CFR Part 285)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4050. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Payout Requirements for Type III Supporting Organization That Are Not Functionally Integrated'' ((RIN1545–BL44) (TD 9746)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 4, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4051. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2015 Cumulative List of Changes in Plan Qualification Requirements'' (Notice 2015–84) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 4, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4052. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Claiming the Health Coverage Tax Credit for 2014 and 2015'' (Notice 2016–02) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 4, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4053. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Minimum Value of Eligible Employer-Sponsored Plans and Other Rules Regarding the Health Insurance Premium Tax Credit'' ((RIN1545–BL43) (TD 9745)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 4, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4054. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''2013 Scientific and Clinical Status of Organ Transplantation''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4055. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''National Health Service Corps Report to the Congress for the Year 2014''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4056. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on Coordination of Federal HIV Programs for Fiscal Years 2009–2013''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4057. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Fiscal Year 2011 Report to Congress on the Assets for Independence Program''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4058. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Annual Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4059. A communication from the Vice President (Acting) for Congressional and Public Affairs, Millennium Challenge Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Corporation's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4060. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition Regulation; Definition of 'Multiple-Award Contract''' ((RIN9000–AM96) (FAC 2005–86)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4061. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition Regulation; Trade Agreement Thresholds'' ((RIN9000–AN16) (FAC 2005–86)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4062. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition Regulation; Small Entity Compliance Guide'' (FAC 2005–86) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4063. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition Regulation; Introduction'' (FAC 2005–86) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4064. A communication from the Federal Liaison Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''International Trademark Classification Changes'' (RIN0651–AD06) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2015; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4065. A communication from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Commission's competitive sourcing efforts during fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–126. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Illinois applying to the United States Congress, pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention for proposing amendments; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 42

Whereas, The first President of the United States, George Washington, stated in his Farewell Address: ''The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government.''; and

Whereas, It was the stated intention of the framers of the Constitution of the United States of America that the Congress of the United States of America should be ''dependent on the people alone'' (James Madison, Federalist 52); and

Whereas, That dependency has evolved from a dependency on the people alone to a dependency on those who spend excessively in elections, through campaigns or third-party groups; and

Whereas, The United States Supreme Court ruling in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, 558 U.S. 310 (2010), removed restrictions on amounts of independent political spending; and

Whereas, Article V of the United States Constitution requires the United States Congress to call a convention for proposing amendments upon application of two-thirds of the legislatures of the several states for the purpose of proposing amendments to the United States Constitution; and

Whereas, The State of Illinois sees the need for a convention to propose amendments in order to address concerns such as those raised by the decision of the United States Supreme Court in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission and related cases and events, including those occurring long before or afterward, or for a substantially similar purpose, and desires that the convention should be so limited; and

Whereas, The State of Illinois desires that the delegates to the convention shall be comprised equally from individuals currently elected to State and local office, or be selected by election in each Congressional district for the purpose of serving as delegates, though all individuals elected or appointed to federal office, now or in the past, be prohibited from serving as delegates to the Convention, and intends to retain the ability to restrict or expand the power of its delegates within the limits expressed above; and

Whereas, The State of Illinois intends that this be a continuing application, considered together with applications calling for a convention currently pending in the 188th Massachusetts legislature as S.1727 and H.3190, the 2013–2014 Vermont legislature as J.R.S. 27, and the 2013–2014 California legislature as AJR 1, and all other passed, pending, and future applications, the aforementioned concerns of Illinois notwithstanding until such time as two-thirds of the several states have applied for a Convention and that Convention is convened by Congress; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate of the Ninety-Eighth General Assembly of the State of Illinois, the House Of Representatives concurring herein, that we, the legislature of the State of Illinois, hereby make application to the Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention for proposing amendments; and be it further

Resolved, That this application shall be deemed an application for a convention to address each and any of the subjects listed in this resolution; for purposes of determining whether two-thirds of the states have applied for a convention addressing any subject, this application is to be aggregated with the applications of any other state legislatures limited to one or more of the subjects listed in this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution constitutes a continuing application and remains in effect until rescission by any sitting session of the legislature of this State; this application does not constitute a recognition that any particular activity or activities currently undertaken by the federal government is or are authorized by the Constitution; and be it further

Resolved, That suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and the Archivist of the United States; to the members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives from this State; and to the presiding officers of each of the legislative chambers in the several states, requesting their cooperation.

POM–127. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging the United States Senate to concur with the United States House of Representatives and repeal the country-of-origin labeling regulations; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 184

Whereas, The United States and Canada have the largest trading relationship in the world, with bilateral trade valued at $759 billion in 2014, an association that benefits the economies of both countries. Michigan's merchandise exports to Canada in 2014 were valued at $25.4 billion, and 259,000 Michigan jobs depend on trade and investment with Canada; and

Whereas, The U.S. has implemented mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) rules requiring meats sold at retail stores to be labeled with information on the source of the meat. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has repeatedly ruled that COOL discriminates against imported livestock and is not compliant with international trade obligations. Due to the WTO rulings, the U.S. may be subject to $3.6 billion in retaliatory tariffs sought by Canada and Mexico; and

Whereas, COOL regulations also jeopardize the viability of the U.S. packing and feeding industries. The additional $500 million in annual compliance costs could lead to significant job losses and plant closures with potentially devastating impacts to local and state economies. All this for an issue the United States Department of Agriculture has clearly indicated is not about food safety; and

Whereas, The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2393 to repeal the mandatory labeling for certain meats in June 2015 with 300 votes, showing a strong recognition

across party lines, as well as regionally, that COOL must be repealed. However, the U.S. Senate appears less inclined to repeal the COOL requirement, risking the American economy to billions of dollars in retaliatory tariffs; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the United States Senate to concur with the United States House of Representatives and repeal the country-of-origin labeling regulations; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–128. A petition by a citizen from the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to propose an amendment to the United States Constitution which would clarify that a declaration of martial law, or a suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, does not immunize the President of the United States from any process of involuntary removal from the office of President that is contained within the Constitution; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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:

S. 2021. A bill to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–200).

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 1579. A bill to enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States (Rept. No. 114–201).

S. 1761. A bill to take certain Federal land located in Lassen County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–202).

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 1822. A bill to take certain Federal land located in Tuolumne County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–203).

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 387. A bill to provide for certain land to be taken into trust for the benefit of Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–204).

H.R. 487. A bill to allow the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma to lease or transfer certain lands (Rept. No. 114–205).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. ALEXANDER for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

*Robert McKinnon Califf, of South Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

By Mr. ISAKSON for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Michael Joseph Missal, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

*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.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 2438. A bill to amend titles XI and XIX of the Social Security Act to establish a comprehensive and nationwide system to evaluate the quality of care provided to beneficiaries of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program and to provide incentives for voluntary quality improvement; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. HELLER):

S. 2439. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service from rehiring any employee of the Internal Revenue Service who was involuntarily separated from service for misconduct; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2440. A bill to amend the Real ID Act of 2005 to repeal provisions requiring uniform State driver's licenses and State identification cards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2441. A bill to provide that certain Cuban entrants are ineligible to receive refugee assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 2442. A bill to authorize the use of passenger facility charges at an airport previously associated with the airport at which the charges are collected; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. BALDWIN:

S. 2443. A bill to support the establishment of a Standards Coordinating Body in Regenerative Medicine and Advanced Therapies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. Res. 344. A resolution expressing the Sense of the Senate regarding the use of electronic devices on the floor of the Senate; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. Res. 345. A resolution congratulating the North Dakota State University football team for winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 314

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 314, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 358

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 358, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that women members of the Armed Forces and their families have access to the contraception they need in order to promote the health and readiness of all members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. 524

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, a bill to marshal resources to undertake a concerted, transformative effort that seeks to bring an end to modern slavery, and for other purposes.

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 697

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 697, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 793

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 793, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes.

S. 1061

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1061, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1106

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1106, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to allow the Secretary of Education to award Early College Federal Pell Grants.

S. 1214

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1214, a bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States.

S. 1382

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1382, a bill to prohibit discrimination in adoption or foster care placements based on the sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status of any prospective adoptive or foster parent, or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child involved.

S. 1726

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1726, a bill to create protections for depository institutions that provide financial services to marijuana-related businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 1771

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1771, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt Indian tribal governments and other tribal entities from the employer health coverage mandate.

S. 1774

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1774, a bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to treat Puerto Rico as a State for purposes of chapter 9 of such title relating to the adjustment of debts of municipalities.

S. 1911

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1911, a bill to implement policies to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths globally.

S. 1945

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 1945, a bill to make available needed psychiatric, psychological, and supportive services for individuals with mental illness and families in mental health crisis, and for other purposes.

S. 1951

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1951, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require the availability of early voting or no-excuse absentee voting.

S. 2144

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2144, a bill to improve the enforcement of sanctions against the Government of North Korea, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2144, supra.

S. 2196

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2196, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories.

S. 2312

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) 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. 2370

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2370, a bill to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from modifying or amending the standards and regulations governing the substantiation of charitable contributions.

S. 2373

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2373, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 2398

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. 2398, a bill to provide benefits and services to workers who have lost their jobs or have experienced a reduction in wages or hours due to the transition to clean energy, to amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, and for other purposes.

S. 2429

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2429, a bill to require a report on the military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program and to prohibit the provision of sanctions relief to Iran until Iran has verifiably ended all military dimensions of its nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 2437

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2437, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the burial of the cremated remains of persons who served as Women's Air Forces Service Pilots in Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 21

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 21, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

S.J. RES. 25

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 25, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to ''National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2440. A bill to amend the Real ID Act of 2005 to repeal provisions requiring uniform State driver's licenses and State identification cards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, in 2005, the Federal Government enacted the REAL ID Act, imposing Federal standards established by the Department of Homeland Security to the production and issuance of States' driver's licenses and identification cards.

This law was an underfunded, top down, Federal mandate, infringing on personal privacy and State sovereignty. Furthermore, a REAL ID compliant State ID will be required for all ''official federal purposes,'' including boarding commercial aircraft.

Twenty States have implemented laws prohibiting the implementation of REAL ID. Montana led opposition to this Federal mandate. In 2007, Montana enacted a law, after both chambers of the State legislature unanimously passing legislation, refusing to comply.

That is why I am re-introducing the Repeal ID Act—to allow Montana and

other States to implement their laws. Consistent with the Montana State legislature, this legislation will repeal the REAL ID Act of 2005.

Montanans are fully aware of the power that big data holds and the consequences when that data is abused. Montana has shown how States are best equipped to make licenses secure, without sacrificing the privacy and rights of their citizens. The Repeal ID Act will allow us to strike a balance that protects our national security, while also safeguarding Montanans' civil liberties and personal privacy.

I want to thank Senator TESTER for being original cosponsors of this bill and I ask my other Senate colleagues to join us in support of this legislation. I want to also thank Representative ZINKE for leading introduction of companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2440

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 ''Repeal ID Act of 2016''.

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIFORM STATE DRIVER'S LICENSES AND STATE IDENTIFICATION CARDS.

(a) REPEAL.—Title II of the Real ID Act of 2005 (division B of Public Law 109–13) is repealed.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) CRIMINAL CODE.—Section 1028(a)(8) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking ''false or actual authentication features'' and inserting ''false identification features''.

(2) INTELLIGENCE REFORM AND TERRORISM PREVENTION ACT OF 2004.—Section 7212 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–458) is amended to read as it did on the day before the date of the enactment of the Real ID Act of 2005.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 344—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE

Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 344

Resolved, That it is the Sense of the Senate that—

(1) certain uses of electronic devices by Senators on the floor of the Senate are necessary and proper in the conduct of official Senate business, would not distract, interrupt, or inconvenience the business of Members of the Senate, and should therefore be permissible, including—

(A) delivering floor remarks from text displayed on personal digital assistant devices and tablet computers;

(B) reviewing and editing documents on personal digital assistant devices and tablet computers while seated or standing at a desk, except when the Senator who wishes to use the device holds the floor or seeks to be recognized; and

(C) sending email and other data communication using personal digital assistant devices and tablet computers while seated or standing at a desk, except when the Senator who wishes to use the device holds the floor or seeks to be recognized;

(2) necessary and proper uses of electronic devices on the floor of the Senate do not include—

(A) transmitting sound for any purpose other than through earphones or in such a manner as would not disturb proceedings on the floor of the Senate for the purpose of assisting a person with a disability;

(B) using telephones or other devices for voice communication; or

(C) using desktop computers, laptop computers, or other large devices;

(3) the Committee on Rules and Administration should consider an amendment to the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing consistent with the principles stated above; and

(4) any amendment to the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing should take into account possible future changes in technology.

SENATE RESOLUTION 345—CONGRATULATING THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2015 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SUBDIVISION TITLE

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 345

Whereas the North Dakota State University (referred to in this preamble as ''NDSU'') Bison won the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the ''NCAA'') Division I Football Championship Subdivision title game in Frisco, Texas, on January 9, 2016, in a decisive victory over the Jacksonville State Gamecocks by a score of 37 to 10;

Whereas NDSU has now won 13 NCAA Football Championships;

Whereas NDSU has now won 5 consecutive NCAA Division I Football Championships, an extraordinary and record-setting achievement in modern collegiate football history;

Whereas the NDSU Bison have displayed tremendous resilience and skill over the past 5 seasons, with 71 wins to only 5 losses, including a streak of 33 consecutive wins;

Whereas an estimated 17,000 Bison fans attended the Championship game, reflecting the tremendous spirit and dedication of Bison Nation that has helped propel the success of the team; and

Whereas the 2015 NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision title was a victory not only for the NDSU football team, but also for the entire State of North Dakota: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the North Dakota State University Bison football team as the 2015 champions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision;

(2) commends the North Dakota State University players, coaches, and staff for—

(A) their hard work and dedication on a historic season; and

(B) fostering a continuing tradition of athletic and academic excellence; and

(3) recognizes the students, alumni, and loyal fans that supported the Bison while the Bison sought to capture a fifth consecutive Division I Football Championship Subdivision trophy for North Dakota State University.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2944. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2232, to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2944. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2232, to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. _____. REPEAL OF DUPLICATIVE MANDATORY INSPECTION PROGRAM.

(a) FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND ENERGY ACT OF 2008.—Effective June 18, 2008, section 11016 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246; 122 Stat. 2130) is repealed.

(b) AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 2014.—Effective February 7, 2014, section 12106 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79; 128 Stat. 981) is repealed.

(c) APPLICATION.—The Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.) shall be applied and administered as if the provisions of law struck by this section had not been enacted.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 12, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 12, 2016, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the

Senate on January 12, 2016, at 2:30 p.m., in room S–216 of the Capitol.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 12, 2016, at 2:30 p.m.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 305; that there then be 30 minutes of debate on the nomination; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

CONGRATULATING THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2015 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SUBDIVISION TITLE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 345, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 345) congratulating the North Dakota State University football team for winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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. 345) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDER FOR RECESS AND ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2016, AND TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 8:25 p.m. tonight and upon reconvening proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the joint session of Congress provided under the provisions of H. Con. Res. 102; that upon dissolution of the joint session, the Senate adjourn until 11 a.m., Friday, January 15, for a pro forma session only, with no business conducted; further, that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, January 15, it next convene on Tuesday, January 19, at 2 p.m.; 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, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each until 5 p.m.; finally, that at 5 p.m., the Senate then proceed to executive session as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 8:25 p.m. tonight.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:55 p.m., recessed until 8:25 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ROUNDS).

JOINT SESSION OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by the President of the United States.

Thereupon, the Senate, preceded by the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, James Morhard; the Secretary of the Senate, Julie E. Adams; and the Vice President of the United States, JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr., proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by the President of the United States, Barack H. Obama.

(The address delivered by the President of the United States to the joint session of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2016, AT 11 A.M.

At the conclusion of the joint session of the two Houses, and in accordance with the order previously entered, at 10:17 p.m., the Senate adjourned until Friday, January 15, 2016, at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

DONALD KARL SCHOTT, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT, VICE TERENCE T. EVANS, DECEASED.

MYRA C. SELBY, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT, VICE JOHN DANIEL TINDER, RETIRED.

WINFIELD D. ONG, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA, VICE SARAH EVANS BARKER, RETIRED.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RESTORING AMERICANS' HEALTHCARE FREEDOM RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 2016

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my strong support for the Senate Amendment to H.R. 3762, the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act of 2015. Mr. Speaker, this legislation caps a long march by House Republicans to repeal President Obama's job-killing health care legislation, the so-called Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). But you don't have to just take my word for it. Since its enactment, PPACA has never been popular with a majority of the America people. The Kaiser Family Foundation has maintained a monthly tracking poll of the law's popularity and only once in the last five years was its favorability as high as 50%. House Republicans recognized this and voted over 60 times to repeal or modify provisions of PPACA. Because of this, eighteen different provisions of PPACA have been considered and passed by both the House and the Senate and have been signed into law by the President.

The Senate Amendment to H.R. 3762 does three important things: it repeals the individual mandate, eliminates the employer mandates, eliminates the taxes on prescription drugs and medical devices, and it places a moratorium on taxpayer funding to abortion providers. These provisions are estimated to repeal more than $1.2 trillion in tax hikes on hardworking families, and reduces spending by nearly $1.5 trillion, over the next 10 years. As a member of the Budget Committee, I am proud to have played a role in shaping this reconciliation bill to repeal a law that a majority of Americans have never wanted, a law that has taken away coverage that people liked and replaced it with inferior coverage which costs even more.

In addition to this, Mr. Speaker, the Senate Amendment to H.R. 3762 includes a moratorium on taxpayer funding to abortion providers, like Planned Parenthood, and redirects those funds to community health centers. Like you, Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to abortion and have been a consistent proponent of laws and policies that respect life and protect the unborn. I am pleased this legislation provides for a moratorium of funding to Planned Parenthood.

Broadly, I do not believe that taxpayers should fund Planned Parenthood. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 217, the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, which would prohibit family planning assistance to an entity unless it certifies that it will not provide funds to another entity that performs abortions except in the cases of rape, incest, or the life of the mother, I have also cosponsored H.R. 3134, the Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015, which would prevent any funds from going to Planned Parenthood until it is certified that they do not perform abortions and supported this legislation when it passed the House, by a vote of 241–187, on September 18, 2015. In addition, I voted in favor of H.R. 3495, the Women's Public Health and Safety Act, which gives states the flexibility to exclude abortion providers, like Planned Parenthood, from their Medicaid programs. I do not believe it is appropriate to use public funds to pay for abortions and am pleased to see this further limitation as a part of the Senate Amendment to H.R. 3762.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments to respond to some of my colleagues' remarks that seemed to imply that funding for Planned Parenthood was included in the omnibus. Approximately 90 percent of Planned Parenthood's federal funding comes from Medicaid reimbursements, which is mandatory or entitlement spending, and not included in the omnibus at all. The other 10 percent of Planned Parenthood's federal money comes primarily from the Title X Family Planning Program in the form of competitive grants. This amounts to around $60 million in any given year that Planned Parenthood must compete for. Obviously, with this Administration, it seems likely that Planned Parenthood will receive funds; however, electing a pro-life President who will also select like-minded appointees and cabinet members is the long-term solution. Ultimately, even with a government shutdown, Planned Parenthood would still receive the vast amount of the funding it currently receives.

As the Chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee responsible for funding the Department of Health and Human Services, I removed all funding for Title X programs that fund organizations conducting abortions, such as Planned Parenthood as part of the House version of this legislation. Unfortunately, we were not able to maintain that funding prohibition or the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act in the final version of the bill. For some to suggest, as they have, that more could have been done to stop this horrifying practice in the omnibus, is simply untrue.

I am opposed to abortion and have been a consistent proponent of laws and policies that respect life and protect the unborn. Since becoming a Member of Congress, I have made protection of life one of my highest priorities. As stewards of the laws of this country, protecting the most vulnerable, including the unborn, should be one of Congress' highest priorities. I have a 100 percent pro-life voting record and intend to continue building on that record.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this legislation demonstrates what the American people have known for a long time: that Obamacare is deeply unpopular in both Washington and back at home. Forcing the President to veto this legislation demonstrates that the support is here in Washington for a full repeal. If a Republican President would be elected in 2016, I am sure this albatross around the neck of the American people would be no more.

I encourage all of my colleagues to listen to the voices of the American people and vote yes on repeal of Obamacare and a temporary moratorium on federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

SUNSHINE FOR REGULATORY DECREES AND SETTLEMENTS ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 712) to impose certain limitations on consent decrees and settlement agreements by agencies that require the agencies to take regulatory action in accordance with the terms thereof, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, today I rise in opposition to The Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2015.

In our first legislative week of 2016 the Republican agenda is clear—continue to erode the rights of Americans. Despite its sunny title, this bill does nothing more than make it more difficult for agencies to implement environmental, public health and consumer regulations. This bill helps big corporations that do not want to comply with agency promulgations at the expense and health of the American people.

It is for this reason Mr. Speaker that I must vote no.

FAIRNESS IN CLASS ACTION LITIGATION ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 8, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1927) to amend title 28, United States Code, to improve fairness in class action litigation.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise to express my opposition to the Fairness in Class Action Litigation Act of 2015.

On Monday of this week, the Justice Department filed a civil complaint against Volkswagen after discovering that Volkswagen manipulated over half a million diesel engines to circumvent our environmental standards. By the end of the week Republicans brought legislation to the floor that will make it exceedingly difficult for consumers harmed by deliberately deceitful corporations to file class action lawsuits. The problem that Republicans are pretending to solve with this bill does not exist, but the consequences of this bill are

very real. If this bill passes it will limit the ability of consumers to have access to courts and prevent them from holding companies accountable.

We have spent this week on policies that deprive Americans of their health care, deprive women of safe and secure healthcare, and protect corporations instead of protecting American citizens. If this week is a harbinger of the legislative agenda that Republicans have for 2016 then the people's House will fail to do the people's business.

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM GLIOBLASTOMA

HON. THOMAS MacARTHUR

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the scourge of glioblastoma.

The glial cells are the glue of the brain. Glial tumors, which attack and destroy this glue, account for over eighty percent of all malignant brain tumors. Glioblastomas are both the most frequent and the most aggressive kind of glial tumor. Put simply, glioblastoma is the most malignant form of brain cancer known to medical science.

The suffering caused by glioblastoma is hard to overstate. As the glue of the brain breaks down, glioblastoma causes great difficulties for patients and their loved ones. Life expectancy after diagnosis is about three months without treatment, and even with treatment, typical life expectancy is between one and two years. The five-year survival rate for patients receiving treatment is less than ten percent.

Despite these enormous odds, many patients and their families continue to fight bravely and advocate for a cure. I would like to join them in that cause. The National Institutes of Health recently received a major funding increase, and I urge them, along with other centers of medical research, to take seriously the enormous importance of finding new and better treatments for glioblastoma, which represents such a challenge for so many Americans and their families.

I also want to recognize in particular Mr. Joseph J. Rullo, a constituent of mine from Beachwood, New Jersey, who passed away after his battle with this terrible disease. His son, Joe, is an active voice in the fight to combat glioblastoma, and I thank him—and all glioblastoma advocates—for their dedication to the hard work of advocacy on behalf of those who suffer from glioblastoma and their families. It's my honor to represent them in Congress as they continue fighting the good fight.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE GIBSON

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. Mike Gibson. Mr. Gibson served as the manager of the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, and recently retired after serving 14 years to the area. He is a standout citizen, demonstrated by his hard work and dedication to his former job, and was recently named Water Manager of the Year by the Colorado Division of Water Resources, Division 3 of the Rio Grande Basin. This is the second time he received this award in seven years. Mr. Gibson's ability to effectively manage water reinforces his commitment to excellent service to the people of Southern Colorado.

The Colorado Division of Water presents this award to a person involved in water management within the Rio Grande Basin who has shown outstanding effort in the management of their water, and demonstrated leadership in the larger water issues facing the basin. Water is a scarce resource in Colorado and the effective management of it is a top priority. Mr. Gibson has consistently demonstrated his ability to manage water and, as a result, has earned multiple Manager of the Year awards, respect from his colleagues, and the gratitude of the Southern Colorado communities which he serves.

Mr. Gibson's passion for water related issues was reflected not only by his work at the San Luis Valley Water Conservation District, but also by his leadership on other organizations, including the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable, Rio Grande Natural Area Commission, and his past duties as president of the Colorado Water Congress. His willingness to collaborate and volunteer speaks to his dedication not only to protecting the basin's water resources but to educating its citizens as well.

Mr. Speaker, Mike Gibson truly deserves the admiration he has received from the Colorado water community over the years. His services were immensely important for the communities in the San Luis Valley, and he is among the very best of the water managers in the Third Congressional District of Colorado. Mr. Gibson's work has been invaluable over the last several years. I applaud him for his outstanding accolades and his successful career, and I wish him well in his retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PAT A. GENTILE

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Pat A. Gentile, 87, who passed away on Friday January 1, 2016. Pat was born on February 2, 1928 in Belltown, Pennsylvania, a son of Antonio and Liberta DelSignore Gentile.

Pat attended Struthers High School and graduated from the New Castle School of Trades. Pat enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was in the Sea Bee Division, from where he was honorably discharged in 1948.

Pat worked in the steel mills and Kaiser Refractories and then became a self-employed carpenter for 50 years. One of his greatest accomplishments was the building of his children's homes. He was known as a jokester and loved to play tricks on the kids. Pat was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed hunting and fishing. He loved spending time with his children and grandchildren, especially at his cabin in the Allegheny National Forest. He loved animals and music, especially his accordion. Pat was a member of the Christ Our Savior/St. Nicholas Church in Struthers.

Pat will be deeply missed by his family. He leaves behind his wife, Marian "Honey" Caggiano, whom he married on April 17, 1948, at St. Lucy's Church in Campbell. They raised four children, Patrick (Denise) Gentile of New Middletown, Michael (Lori) Gentile of Poland, Carole "Mimi" (Pat) Patterson of Fresno, Calif., and Laraine (Gary) Solvesky of Poland. He leaves one brother, Joseph P. (Eleanor) Gentile of Struthers; 12 grandchildren; and 31 great-grandchildren, with one on the way; and many nieces, nephews and cousins, all of whom adored him.

Pat was preceded in death by six brothers, Nick, Chris, Fred, Sam, William, and Dominic Gentile; five sisters, Emma Genova, Amelia Quatro, Mary Quattro, Anne Spano, and Anne Gentile; one great-grandson, Dylan Solvesky; and one daughter-in-law, Rochelle Hudock Gentile.

Losses like these are never easy, but we can all take solace in the fact that Pat led a long and fulfilling life. He will live on in the memory of his beautiful family.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROOSEVELT D. ALLEN, JR.

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness and the utmost respect that I take this time to remember a dear friend and one of Indiana's most distinguished citizens, Roosevelt D. Allen, Jr., Lake County Commissioner. On Saturday, January 9, 2016, Roosevelt Allen passed away at the age of 68. Commissioner Allen devoted his life to serving the people of Northwest Indiana, and he will be greatly missed by his family, friends, coworkers, and the many grateful constituents throughout the community whose lives he touched.

In 1965, Roosevelt Allen graduated from Roosevelt High School in Gary, Indiana, before continuing his studies at Howard University. From there, he graduated magna cum laude from Indiana University, receiving a bachelor's degree in accounting, before completing graduate classes at DePaul University. Roosevelt went on to become a successful and admired funeral director for the family business, Guy & Allen Funeral Directors, Inc., in Gary, which has served the community for eighty years.

Public service was a way of life for Commissioner Allen. He served the community of Northwest Indiana because he wanted to make a difference, and he did so with passion and enthusiasm. Roosevelt served on the Calumet Township Advisory Board for twenty-seven years. In 2006, he was elected to serve as Lake County Commissioner for the first district. Commissioner Allen was in his third term, and was serving as President of the Board of Commissioners, at the time of his passing. Fellow officials remember him as a true gentleman, a mentor to all, and an exemplary government leader. During his time in office, Roosevelt also served as the commissioners' representative on the Northwestern Indiana

Regional Planning Commission and was chairman of the Lake County Public Safety Communications Commission. Throughout his lifetime, Commissioner Allen also served in many capacities for numerous organizations. He was a life member of the NAACP, member of the Lake County Democratic Organization, a board member of Edgewater Systems for Balanced Living, and a board member of the Regional Bus Authority, among others. A faithful man, Roosevelt was a devout member of Saint Timothy Community Church in Gary, Indiana.

Roosevelt Allen is survived by his beloved daughters: Lisa, LaTrice, and Olivia. He also leaves to cherish his memory seven beautiful grandchildren, many dear friends and family members, and a saddened but indebted community.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in paying tribute to my dear friend, and a true public servant, Roosevelt Allen. For his tremendous contributions to the people of Northwest Indiana, his lifetime of service is worthy of the highest praise. Roosevelt's selfless and lifelong commitment to the people of his community will be forever remembered, and his legacy serves as an inspiration to us all.

HONORING MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT CORPORAL HERSHEL ''WOODY'' WILLIAMS

HON. EVAN H. JENKINS

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Corporal Hershel ''Woody'' Williams, a lifelong West Virginian. When the freedom of the United States and the world was in peril during the Second World War, he gallantly heard the call to defend our nation and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1943. After finishing his training in California, Cpl. Williams was stationed in the Pacific Theater and bravely fought in the Battle of Guam in 1944.

What truly distinguishes Cpl. Williams is the exceptional bravery he demonstrated during the battle of Iwo Jima. When tanks became ineffective on the beaches, he fought his way to destroy seven Japanese pillboxes while covered only by four riflemen. His bravery in taking out the pillboxes in the battle of Iwo Jima was a determining factor in turning the tide of the battle in favor of the Americans.

Cpl. Hershel ''Woody'' Williams was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Truman in 1945. The Medal of Honor was ''For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as demolition sergeant serving with the 21st Marines, 3d Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, 23 February 1945.'' Cpl. Williams is the last living Medal of Honor recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Known by all as Woody, he had a distinguished career in the military and has spent his life tirelessly helping veterans and their families. His service to America and West Virginia is unparalleled. I have known Woody for decades and am proud to call him not only a constituent but a friend. On January 14, 2016, Woody Williams receives another honor: a ship in the United States Navy will bear his name. I congratulate and commend Cpl. Williams on a remarkable and admirable life. Woody Williams serves as a pillar for all Americans to aspire to, a brave man who put his fellow Americans before himself.

HONORING JOHN A. DILLINGHAM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pause to honor a constituent of Missouri's 6th Congressional District and someone I am especially proud to call my friend, John A. Dillingham, upon being awarded as the 2015 Northlander of the Year by the Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce.

John Dillingham grew up with a strong 6th generation Missouri heritage in Clay and Platte County, Missouri, with an education from Wentworth Military Academy, Smithville High School, and my alma mater, the University of Missouri. John also enlisted in the U.S. Army and served with distinction in Korea as a 2nd Lt. in the Lacrosse Guided Missile Battalion of the U.S. Army, was the 2nd Lt. Aide-de-camp, Division Artillery Commander of the 1st Infantry Division, and was presented with the Army Commendation Medal for his service.

Corporately, John has been a Vice President of Loans for Traders Bank of Kansas City, Senior Vice President of Garney Companies for 16 years, President of Dillingham Enterprises and has served as an Independent Trustee of Waddell & Reed.

John is so widely respected throughout Missouri that he has served Republican and Democrat Governors, Senators, Congressmen and Mayors in positions such as the Kansas City Board of Police Commission, the University of Missouri of Extension Advisory Board, the Kansas City Agribusiness Council, Children's Mercy Hospital, and was a Charter Board Member of the Clay County Veteran's Memorial built in a park named after his good friend, Anita Gorman. He has also served as an Honorary Director of the Heart of America Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the Freedoms Frontier National Heritage Area Chairman and the Governance Chairman of Harry S. Truman Library Institute, as well as serving on the Kansas City Crime Commission and the National World War I Museum National Advisory Board.

John has also been honored as a member of the Missouri Academy of Squires, an Outstanding Kansas Citian by the Kansas City Native Sons & Daughters, an Outstanding Missourian by the Missouri State Legislature, the Silver Good Citizens Medal by the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, an Honorary Director for Life of the American Royal, the Meritorious Service Award from the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department, as a Sachem in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, the Silver Wreath Award from the National Eagle Scouts' Association, and the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America.

Mr. Speaker, I could list at least 50 more organizations that John has guided and worked with over his very distinguished lifetime. However, I ask that you join me, John's wife Nancy, their sons, Bill and Allen, their families and the entire Northland community in congratulating John A. Dillingham on this accomplishment wishing him God's blessings in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY'S UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MOVEMENT

HON. DAVID A. TROTT

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michigan State University's commitment to racial equality in our country through their integration efforts for sports programs in the 1960s.

In light of the College Football National Championship game last night, I want to take the time to remember another National Title game 50 years ago. In 1966, segregation was widespread in our country. It was a time of great struggle and injustice for African Americans. Michigan State football, however, became a bastion for integration and equality. University President John Hannah and Head Coach Duffy Daugherty had a long history of providing academic and athletic opportunity to African Americans who were denied access in their home states. Daugherty spearheaded a recruitment network throughout southern states that became known as the Underground Railroad Movement. He sought out black players who were not allowed to play in their own states due to their race. His efforts culminated with the 1966 team, which included 20 black players, 11 starters, and was led by one of the only black quarterbacks among major colleges at the time, Jimmy Raye. Raye led the Spartans to win the National Title in 1966, which was a victory for MSU, and a victory for equality across America.

The leadership shown by Michigan State University and the courage of the players marked an important advancement for society. Their actions proved a catalyst for other teams to expand their recruiting profiles, and Americans to expand their perspective. The barriers that were broken in Michigan State's programs marked an important step toward full integration of collegiate sports in 1972. On this 50th anniversary of their National Title win, I commend Michigan State University for their legacy of providing opportunity for all Americans, regardless of race.

A BILL TO COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESS COMPACT IMPACT IN AFFECTED JURISDICTIONS

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce legislation that will help address the impact of the Compacts of Free Association on affected jurisdictions like Guam and Hawaii. I continue to support the intent of the Compacts, and I understand the benefits these

agreements have for our nation and our security. However, the costs borne by our local governments for providing social services to Compact migrants are unsustainable, and Congress must act to provide relief for affected jurisdictions who have spent millions of local funds to support the Compacts and migrants. COFA migrants make positive contributions to our communities, but insufficient support from the federal government causes a significant socioeconomic strain on our island communities.

This strain only increases, especially in the face of uncertain economic conditions in the Freely Associated States as well as the impact climate change is having on Pacific island nations. The bill I am introducing, as well as proposals that I have made in the past, will provide relief and empower local jurisdictions with solutions to reduce the burden of Compacts.

The best solution to Compact impact would be an increase in annual mandatory funding from the current $30 million, divided among each of the affected jurisdictions, to the $185 million recommended by the GAO. However, the current budget environment makes appropriating this difficult. Nonetheless I am proud to be a cosponsor of a bill introduced by Congressman TAKAI of Hawaii that would increase this annual appropriation, and I hope that we can at least have a debate on this measure.

However, as we work to find long-term solutions to Compact-impact, I believe that there are important fixes we can make that will provide much needed relief to our local governments without significant costs to taxpayers. The ideas that I incorporate into this bill are based on ways to reduce the burden with the in-kind contributions that our local governments have provided to support COFA migrants. This approach is a more budget-friendly way to address this daunting policy challenge. The bill's provisions address four areas where we can reduce the burden.

Firstly, my bill would permit the affected jurisdictions to use the cumulative amount that they have spent to provide social services to COFA migrants, towards the non-federal portion of providing Medicaid to their local residents. The bill proposes a new formula that would increase the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage for each of the affected jurisdictions. This would go a long way towards alleviating the burden on affected jurisdictions by increasing the percentage assistance provided by the federal government for Medicaid.

Secondly, the bill would categorize elementary and secondary education-aged COFA students as federally connected students and make them eligible for Impact Aid. I understand the fiscal challenges that the Impact Aid community faces, and I am committed to working with them to address the effect this bill may have on them. The bill attempts to offset this effect by increasing funding authorization and ensures that we are not taking from one group to pay for another.

Thirdly, this legislation would clarify Congress's intent when we extended eligibility for housing assistance programs to COFA migrants. This bill ensures that U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent residents are not displaced when applying for housing benefits and that they are given priority when applying for these benefits.

Lastly, this bill would commission independent research on the viability of the current Compacts, and make recommendations on policy alternatives moving forward. I hope this research will provide strategic guidance as we move towards renewal of the Compacts in 2023 and ensure that we are administering these agreements in the best way moving forward.

I am pleased to count my colleague Mr. TAKAI from Hawaii as an original cosponsor. As this Congress discusses solutions for the crisis in Puerto Rico, it is important that we also discuss challenges that the other territories face, especially the challenge of supporting the Compacts of Free Association. While the challenges facing affected jurisdictions are nowhere near as serious as Puerto Rico, doing nothing would only welcome economic and security challenges down the road. I look forward to this bill becoming law and being a tremendous help to jurisdictions affected by Compact impact.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN C. CARNEY, JR.

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to clarify that on January 11, 2016 I was unable to vote on roll call votes 34 and 35 because I was attending to congressional business in my district.

On Roll Call Vote Number 34, on passage of H.R. 598, I did not vote. It was my intention to vote "Aye."

On Roll Call Vote Number 35, on passage of H.R. 3231, I did not vote. It was my intention to vote "Aye."

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $18,888,640,000,429.69. We've added $8,261,762,951,516.61 to our debt in 7 years. This is over $8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

RECOGNIZING STAFF SERGEANT JOSEPH LEMM

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the service and sacrifice of my constituent, New York Police Department (NYPD) Detective and Staff Sergeant Joseph Lemm of West Harrison. A 15-year veteran of the NYPD and member of the Air National Guard, Staff Sergeant Lemm was killed alongside five other Americans in Afghanistan on December 21, 2015.

Staff Sergeant Lemm was a true patriot who dedicated his life to protecting others. To quote New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton, "he chose selflessness; he chose sacrifice; he chose to serve."

Staff Sergeant Lemm is survived by his wife, Christine, and two children, Brooke and Ryan. Tonight, Christine will accompany me to President Obama's final State of the Union Address. I urge my colleagues to honor her sacrifice and remember that each service member who loses his or her life leaves behind a circle of loved ones to whom we are also indebted.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Staff Sergeant Lemm's exceptional service to our country. We offer his family, friends, and community our heartfelt sympathy and will work to ensure that the loss of Staff Sergeant Lemm will serve as a reminder of the heroic sacrifices of our service members. I offer my deepest condolences to Christine, Brooke and Ryan on the passing of their husband and father, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Staff Sergeant Lemm's service and sacrifice.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GARRET GRAVES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, on roll call nos. 34–35, my absence was attributable to numerous parish, legislative and state-wide inauguration ceremonies in Louisiana. In addition, I met with emergency response officials related to flood waters in the Atchafalaya River system. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On Roll Call Number 34: H.R. 598, Taxpayer Right to Know Act—yea.

On Roll Call Number 35: H.R. 3231, Federal Intern Protection Act of 2015—yea.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to be present for the following Roll Call votes on January 11, 2016 and would like to reflect that I would have voted as follows:

Roll Call Number 34: YES

Roll Call Number 35: YES

TRIBUTE TO KATHY A. HOLTZMAN

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate from time to time we take the opportunity to recognize contributions that everyday citizens have made to our community and our nation. It is in that spirit that today we remember Kathy A. Holtzman of Richland Township, Cambria County, Pennsylvania.

Kathy served her community, her church, and her family with dedication and joy. When

she died at age 75 on December 6, 2015, she was survived by her husband, Robert, her daughter, Brenda, her grandchildren, Devin and Lea, her sister, Margery, and numerous nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her son, Brian.

Mrs. Holtzman was a devoted member of her parish, St. Benedict Catholic Church in Geistown, where she served as an usher.

A model citizen and public servant, she served as a Cambria County Commissioner for twelve years, four of those years as President Commissioner.

Before serving in this capacity, she fulfilled a variety of other important roles in her community: Co-Founder, along with Bill Stewart, of Penn Highlands Community College; Richland Township School Director; Republican State Committee Women; President of Cambria County Senior Citizens and Turner Apartments in Ebensburg; board member of the Salvation Army, Peniel Drug and Alcohol Program, and Johnstown Sportsmen's Club; and member of the Geistown-Richland Lions Club.

Mrs. Holtzman's family can be very proud of her legacy in the community where she without a doubt left a positive, lasting impact. Likewise, the citizens of Cambria County will continue to reap the benefits of Kathy's community engagements for years to come. Kathy Holtzman's life was a well-lived one in the service of others. It is an honor to recognize her today.

A TRIBUTE TO ROGER MAXWELL

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Roger Maxwell. Roger has been chosen for induction into the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) School of Music ''Jazz Hall of Fame''. He will be inducted on April 8, 2016 in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Roger was a graduate of the Iowa State Teachers' College, now known as the University of Northern Iowa. His years as an advocate for music and higher education, his talents as a composer of music educational materials, and his hard work as a founding member of the jazz program at UNI are all examples of his dedication to the art of music. It is a great honor to be chosen as a member of the ''Jazz Hall of Fame'' at UNI.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Roger for this award and for sharing his musical talents and knowledge. I am proud to represent him in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Roger and wishing him nothing but continue success.

SIX-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF HAITI EARTHQUAKE

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, every year on January 12th we pause to remember the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010 and the 200,000 Haitians' lives claimed by the disaster. The United States has stood firmly with the people of Haiti as they have endeavored to recover and rebuild.

As the Ranking Member of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, I remain deeply committed to the close relationship between our two countries and to economic development, democratic governance, and the promotion of human rights on the island.

For these objectives to be achieved, the people of Haiti must have their voices heard through free, fair, and transparent elections. The current political impasse serves no one. Haiti's leaders and its people must work together to complete the electoral process and ensure a peaceful transfer of power next month.

I am proud to represent many Haitian Americans in Rockland and Westchester Counties, and I will continue to work with my constituents on our shared goals of democracy, prosperity, and success for the Haitian people.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GREGG HARPER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, on January 8, 2016, I was detained in my district attending a memorial service for Loyd Lewis Matthews who was killed while on active duty with the Air Force in 1952. His remains were only recently discovered.

On roll call numbers 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32, had I been present, I would have voted NO. On roll call number 33, I would have voted YES.

IN HONOR OF NICHOLAS A. TOUMPAS, COMMISSIONER OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the significant contributions Nicholas A. Toumpas has made to the State of New Hampshire during his tenure as the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services is the states' largest department, and, as the agency responsible for many of the States' vulnerable citizens, one of its most important. During Nick's time as the commissioner, the Department faced many challenges, from shrinking budgets to growing demand for the Department's services. In true Granite State fashion, he saw these challenges as opportunities and tackled them straight on. Nick played a leading role in the implementation of Medicaid expansion, helping to increase access to health insurance for thousands of Granite Staters. New Hampshire is a healthier state because of Nick's time as commissioner.

Commissioner Toumpas' commitment to the Granite State has made it a better place for all of its residents. As one of New Hampshire's representatives in Congress, I am honored to commend him for his distinguished service, and wish him the best of luck in the next chapter of his life.

RECOGNIZING MR. GABRIEL CAMARILLO

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Gabriel ''Gabe'' Camarillo, as he transitions to a new role as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. In his new role, Mr. Camarillo will be responsible for a four-division department that develops policy and provides oversight of manpower, military and civilian personnel, Reserve component affairs, and readiness support for the Department of the Air Force.

Mr. Camarillo has served in the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology) since 2010, as a Special Assistant to the Honorable Heidi Shyu, and later as her Principal Deputy. In this role, he has been responsible for assisting the Assistant Secretary in overseeing the Army's 5,000-person acquisition workforce, managing over 600 Army programs, and overseeing contracts in excess of $125 billion.

In addition to working for Assistant Secretary Shyu, Mr. Camarillo is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute where his classes focus on political participation.

Mr. Camarillo is a proud native of El Paso, Texas' Vista Hills neighborhood on El Paso's East side. He attended J.M. Hanks High School, where he was a debate champion.

As Mr. Camarillo transitions to his new role with the Department of the Air Force, I know that he will provide our nation's Airmen with the same quality support that he has provided to our Soldiers for the last six years. I am thankful for the service of this effective and capable leader and wish him the best of luck during his upcoming transition and in all future endeavors.

HONORING MR. TOM DEBLASS

HON. THOMAS MacARTHUR

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Tom DeBlass of New Jersey's Third Congressional District, and to express my sincerest commendation as to all of his accomplishments.

Mr. DeBlass has been named to the New Jersey Martial Arts Hall of Fame as a Grappler. He has won titles such as the Pan American and World Championships. Beyond his personal feats on the mat, Mr. DeBlass has devoted his time to giving back to his community by opening his own Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Academy.

Mr. DeBlass has used his expertise to produce his own world champion students. He has created a legacy of martial arts success in his community and has given young athletes the opportunity to develop and excel.

Mr. Speaker, the people of New Jersey's Third Congressional District are tremendously proud to have Mr. Tom DeBlass as an involved member of their community. It is my honor to recognize both his personal athletic accomplishments and his lasting contributions to our community before the United State House of Representatives.

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL JAMES MONTGOMERY BREEDLOVE

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and sacrifice of Major General James Montgomery Breedlove, who passed away on January 9, 2016 in Lubbock, Texas at the age of 93.

General Breedlove was a true American hero who dedicated his life to serving our nation. Upon graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., General Breedlove attended pilot training at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. After completing pilot training in 1948, General Breedlove married his wife Mary Ann Gossett.

General Breedlove's service in the Air Force took him all across the United States, as well as to England, Germany, Korea, Thailand, and the Canal Zone.

In 1951, during the Korean War, General Breedlove flew 39 combat missions and served with the 601st Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron at Kimpo as a controller. General Breedlove went on to graduate from the Imperial Defence College in London, and in 1969, assumed command of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base—flying 162 combat missions.

In 1970, General Breedlove assumed command of the 3500th Pilot Training Wing at Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas. He was promoted to Major General on May 1, 1973 and assumed command of the U.S. Air Forces Southern Command in the Canal Zone in 1974. In 1976, when the Tactical Air Command assumed responsibility for USAFSO, he was appointed commander, U.S. Air Force Southern Air Division of the Tactical Air Command and deputy commander in chief, U.S. Southern Command.

General Breedlove's military decorations and awards include the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal with nine oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Unit Citation Emblem, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award Ribbon with oak leaf cluster, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, and the Royal Thai Supreme Command Forward Master Badge.

General Breedlove leaves behind a proud and distinguished legacy of military service. His life's work has made America a safer and stronger nation for generations to come. I ask all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring and remembering the life of this American patriot.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PERNER FAMILY

HON. WILL HURD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Melissa Williams Perner and Paul Christian Perner IV of Ozona, Texas on the birth of their first-born son, Paul Christian Perner V. He was born on Thursday, December 24th, 2015, at 10:47 PM Central Time, just in time to give his parents the best Christmas present they could ever ask for. He was born at the San Angelo Community Medical Center, weighing 7 pounds, 2 ounces and was 20 inches long. His proud grandparents include Ginger and Paul Christian Perner III and Allen and Susan Williams, who also live in Ozona. This new addition to the Perner family is sure to be a blessing to the entire Ozona, Texas community. On behalf of the 23rd Congressional District of Texas, congratulations to Melissa and Paul Perner.

HONORING BARBARA A. BENNETT ON HER RETIREMENT FROM FEDERAL SERVICE AFTER 45 YEARS

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a tireless civil servant and a true American patriot, Ms. Barbara A. Bennett of Virginia.

Barbara retired on December 31, 2015, after 45 years of Federal service. Most recently, Barbara served as Director of the Office of Legislative Affairs at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Those of us who had the opportunity to work with her during her long career witnessed first-hand Barbara's vast knowledge of foreign affairs and international development, her understanding of the detailed legislative processes, her unparalleled passion for the institution of Congress, and her singular dedication to the mission of USAID in uplifting those around the world from extreme poverty.

Arriving at USAID as a recent graduate of the College of Mary Washington in the fall of 1970, Barbara steadily rose through the ranks during her first 15 years at USAID while working on procurement, financial management, and management support in the Office of the Deputy Administrator.

In 1985, Barbara came to Capitol Hill to work for my former colleague David Obey (D–WI) during his tenure as Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations. In 1988, Barbara returned to USAID and joined the Bureau for Legislative Affairs, where she served for 27 years prior to her retirement as Office Director.

Barbara has left an indelible impression on both the programmatic and management realms of USAID as well as the broader foreign affairs interagency collaborative process. Barbara's hard work is evident in the Agency's adoption of innovative approaches to development financing, increased global health investments, efforts to combat international tuberculosis, implementation of the President's Malaria Initiative, and the establishment of an HIV/AIDS Working Capital Fund. These are just some of the higher-profile issues to which Ms. Bennett contributed considerable experience and expertise.

Barbara's efforts have not only benefited recipients of USAID's investments abroad, but generations of our Nation's international development leaders have profited from her guidance and mentorship.

I urge my colleagues to join me in commending Barbara for her service as she pursues new opportunities in this new year.

A TRIBUTE TO VIOLET ANTISDEL

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Violet Antisdel on the celebration of her 102nd birthday. Violet celebrated her birthday on December 24, 2015 in Creston, Iowa.

Our world has changed a great deal during the course of Violet's life. Since her birth, we have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television, cellular phones, and the internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism, and witnessed the birth of new democracies. Violet has lived through seventeen United States Presidents and twenty-one Governors of Iowa. In her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent Violet in the United States Congress and it is my pleasure to wish her a very happy 102nd birthday. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Violet for reaching this incredible milestone and in wishing her nothing but the best.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Orlando Science Center as it celebrates 60 years.

Orlando Science Center has undergone many transformations over the past 60 years. In 1955, the Central Florida Museum, the original namesake of the Orlando Science Center, was officially chartered. The ''museum without walls'' borrowed spaces in bank lobbies, clubs, and the public library to host exhibits. Interest in the museum grew after the arrival of the Glenn L. Martin Company, now known as Lockheed Martin, sparking the Central Florida community's interest in science and technology.

On July 2, 1960, the museum opened the first planetarium in Florida. The planetarium

was a technological feat in its day; NASA astronauts used it for briefings. On March 23, 1970, the museum displayed a moon rock brought back by the crew of Apollo 11. The rock drew over 4,200 visitors making it the museum's largest single-day attendance to-date. Over the past 60 years, Orlando Science Center has achieved significant growth and continues to inspire learning.

Today, Orlando Science Center hosts workshops to engage students in the Central Florida community. In partnership with Orlando Utilities Commission, Project AWESOME hosts STEM workshops for fifth grade students in Central Florida. The in-classroom workshops, focusing on renewable resources and water conservation, immerse students in real-life scenarios. Since 2010, Project AWESOME has reached 48,779 fifth graders. Sponsored by Siemens, Universal Studios, Bright House Networks and Northrop Grumman, Destination STEM is an 18-week program for middle school students focusing on STEM disciplines and career paths. The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!), a year-long program for middle and high school students, teaches them the tools and skills needed to start and manage their own business. In partnership with Orlando, Inc., Orlando Science Center is the first and foremost science center in the nation to facilitate such a program.

On behalf of the people of Central Florida, it is my pleasure to recognize and congratulate Orlando Science Center on this momentous occasion. May their 60 years of dedication to inspire science learning in the classroom and the community inspire many to follow in their footsteps.

RECOGNIZING GENERAL JOHN F. KELLY FOR 45 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE U.S. MARINE CORPS

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a great American and fearless leader of Marines—General John Kelly, who is retiring this week after 42 years of honorable service to this nation. Few officers can claim General Kelly's long list of accomplishments, but that's just a part of what he's known for. He's also one of the savviest and most proficient officers among a very deep bench of leaders within the American military. And because of his talents and acumen, he's also among the most respected.

I really got to know General Kelly during my first Iraq deployment in 2003. He had a reputation as someone who was willing to get his hands dirty, which isn't always true of many officers at that level. Looking back at that deployment, I am proud and honored to call General Kelly a mentor, and I am especially grateful that I was able to see up-close the value and significance of true leadership.

General Kelly also has a way with words. He can honor or even memorialize Marines in one breath, and then motivate and inspire in the next. In fact, in one of his many inspirational moments, General Kelly eulogized two Marines who died as a result of a suicide vehicle. That speech, now known by the title ''Six Seconds to Live,'' is widely cited by Marines, military leaders and veterans alike, and exists as a testament to Marine combat ethos and dedication to duty.

General Kelly also experienced an enormous hardship of his own when his son, Marine First Lieutenant Robert Kelly, was killed in action in Sangin, Afghanistan. We know, Mr. Speaker, that there is no greater sacrifice a Marine and his or her family can make—and as a nation, we are forever grateful for such a sacrifice. Some people might have walked away from their military careers at that point, but not General Kelly, whose oldest son is also a Marine. The Kellys are a military family—more importantly, they are Marine Corps family, and service to the nation is in the Kelly bloodline. General Kelly's resolve and courage, during the toughest of times, is a testament to his character, his strength and his commitment to his nation and his family.

Mr. Speaker, the Marine Corps and the entire nation benefited from General Kelly's service and his many contributions, from a commander in Iraq to the head of U.S. Southern Command, where he's closing out his career. He leaves behind him a trail that he blazed over 40-plus years—and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, there will continue to be many Marines who will aspire to walk down that same path. He would have been a great Marine Corps commandant, and he could have served anywhere and done anything—without limits. But as his Marine Corps career ends, knowing General Kelly, he'll be spending lots of quality time with friends and family—and it's time that's well deserved for his contributions as one of my generation's top military leaders.

To General Kelly, I say Semper Fi. Thank you, on behalf of this entire institution and the nation. We are grateful for your service.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

House and Senate met in Joint Session to receive a State of the Union Address from the President of the United States.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S39–S75

Measures Introduced: Six bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2438–2443, and S. Res. 344–345. **Page S72**

Measures Reported:

S. 2021, to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–200)

S. 1579, to enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States. (S. Rept. No. 114–201)

S. 1761, to take certain Federal land located in Lassen County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Susanville Indian Rancheria. (S. Rept. No. 114–202)

S. 1822, to take certain Federal land located in Tuolumne County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 114–203)

H.R. 387, to provide for certain land to be taken into trust for the benefit of Morongo Band of Mission Indians. (S. Rept. No. 114–204)

H.R. 487, to allow the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma to lease or transfer certain lands. (S. Rept. No. 114–205) **Page S72**

Measures Passed:

Congratulating the North Dakota State University Football Team: Senate agreed to S. Res. 345, congratulating the North Dakota State University football team for winning the 2015 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title. **Page S75**

Measures Considered:

Federal Reserve Transparency Act: Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 2232, to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States. **Pages S52–63**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 53 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 2), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Pages S54–55**

Subsequently, the motion to proceed was withdrawn. **Page S63**

American Safe Act—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 4038, to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees. **Page S63**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Tuesday, January 12, 2016, a vote on cloture will occur at 2:30 p.m., on Wednesday, January 20, 2016, and that if cloture is invoked, then the time be counted as if it had been invoked at 6 p.m., on Tuesday, January 19, 2016. **Page S63**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting the report on the State of the Union delivered to a Joint Session of Congress on January

12, 2016; which was ordered to lie on the table. (PM–36) **Pages S64–68**

Wright Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m., on Tuesday, January 19, 2016, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Wilhelmina Marie Wright, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota; that there be 30 minutes of debate on the nomination, and that following the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination, without intervening action or debate; and that no further motions be in order to the nomination. **Page S75**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Donald Karl Schott, of Wisconsin, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Myra C. Selby, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Winfield D. Ong, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana. **Page S75**

Messages from the House: **Page S68**

Measures Referred: **Page S68**

Executive Communications: **Pages S68–71**

Petitions and Memorials: **Pages S71–72**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S72**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S72–73**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S73–74**

Amendments Submitted: **Page S74**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S74–75**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—2) **Pages S54–55**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:17 p.m., until 11 a.m. on Friday, January 15, 2016. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S75.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Michael Joseph Missal, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs, who was introduced by Senator Tester, and Carolyn N. Lerner, of Maryland, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, who was introduced by Senator Cardin, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Robert McKinnon Califf, of South Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Michael Joseph Missal, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

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: 11 public bills, H.R. 4365–4375, were introduced. **Pages H330–31**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H331–32**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 3584, to authorize, streamline, and identify efficiencies within the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–396). **Page H330**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative LaMalfa to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H283**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:08 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H292**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend Nathaniel Demosthene,

First Timothy Christian Church, Spring Valley, New York. **Page H292**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, January 13th. **Page H297**

STREAM Act: The House passed H.R. 1644, to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure transparency in the development of environmental regulations, by a recorded vote of 235 ayes to 188 noes, Roll No. 42. **Pages H308–23**

Rejected the Kildee motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Natural Resources with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 186 ayes to 237 noes, Roll No. 41. **Pages H321–22**

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule. **Page H315**

Agreed to:

Lamborn amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 114–395) that makes a technical fix to a U.S. Code citation and addresses a concern regarding copyrighted scientific products. **Page H316**

Rejected:

Kildee amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 114–395) that sought to prevent the rules in the underlying bill from being delayed if it protects drinking water quality (by a recorded vote of 189 ayes to 223 noes, Roll No. 38); **Pages H316–17, H319–20**

Cartwright amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 114–395) that sought to direct funding from AML certified states for use in revitalizing economically distressed communities which have been adversely affected by discharge from abandoned mine lands (by a recorded vote of 203 ayes to 219 noes, Roll No. 39); and **Pages H317–18, H320**

Sewell (AL) amendment (No. 4 printed in H. Rept. 114–395) that sought to address the exemption clause in Sec. 530; lower the threshold of postponing the delay of a rule if there is a threat that a delay would cause or significantly contribute to the development of negative chronic or long-term health conditions (by a recorded vote of 190 ayes to 235 noes, Roll No. 40). **Pages H318–19, H320–21**

H. Res. 583, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1644), the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 22), and the bill (H.R. 3662), was agreed to by a recorded vote of 239 ayes to 183 noes, Roll No. 37, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 233 yeas to 173 nays, Roll No. 36. **Pages H297–H308**

Suspension—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure which was debated on Monday, January 11th:

North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act of 2016: H.R. 757, amended, to improve the enforcement of sanctions against the Government of North Korea, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 43. **Pages H323–24**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:08 p.m. and reconvened at 8:33 p.m. **Page H324**

State of the Union Address: President Barack Obama delivered his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress, pursuant to the provisions of H. Con. Res. 102. He was escorted into the House Chamber by a committee comprised of Representatives McCarthy, Scalise, McMorris Rodgers, Walden, Messer, Jenkins (KS), Foxx, Pelosi, Hoyer, Clyburn, Becerra, Crowley, Israel, and DeLauro, and Senators McConnell, Cornyn, Thune, Barrasso, Blunt, Wicker, Reid, Durbin, Schumer, Murray, Leahy, Tester, Stabenow, and Klobuchar. The President's message was referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–84). **Pages H324–29**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H297.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and six recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H307, H307–08, H319–20, H320, H320–21, H322, H323, and H323–24. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

Committee Meetings

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF SNAP: ADDRESSING SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Committee on Agriculture: Subcommittee on Nutrition held a hearing entitled "Past, Present, and Future of SNAP: Addressing Special Populations". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

OUTSIDE VIEWS ON THE U.S. STRATEGY FOR IRAQ AND SYRIA AND THE EVOLUTION OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Outside Views on the U.S. Strategy for Iraq and Syria and the Evolution of Islamic Extremism". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

NATIONAL ACADEMIES STUDY ON PEER REVIEW AND DESIGN COMPETITION IN THE NNSA NATIONAL SECURITY LABORATORIES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces held a hearing entitled ''National Academies Study on Peer Review and Design Competition in the NNSA National Security Laboratories''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Energy and Power held a hearing entitled ''H.R. ——————, the EPS Improvement Act of 2016''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''A Legislative Hearing on Four Communications Bills''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance held a hearing entitled ''Opportunities and Challenges Facing the National Flood Insurance Program''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES; HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA: THE 2015 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a markup on H. Res. 339, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the 25th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia; H. Res. 343, expressing concern regarding persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People's Republic of China, including from large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups; and H. Res. 374, recognizing the 50th anniversary of Singaporean independence and reaffirming Singapore's close partnership with the United States; and a hearing entitled ''Human Rights in China: The 2015 Annual Report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China''. The following resolutions were forwarded to the full committee, as amended: H. Res. 339, H. Res. 343, and H. Res. 374. Testimony was heard from Representatives Smith of New Jersey and Walz.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 3406, the ''Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2015''; H.R. 4240, the ''No Fly for Foreign Fighters Act''; and H.R. 1854, the ''Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act of 2015''. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 3406 and H.R. 4240. H.R. 1854 was ordered reported, without amendment.

EXPLORING ENERGY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING PUERTO RICO

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled ''Exploring Energy Challenges and Opportunities Facing Puerto Rico''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1671, the ''Government Neutrality in Contracting Act''; H.R. 3023, to amend title 5, United States Code, to modify probationary periods with respect to positions within the competitive service and the Senior Executive Service, and for other purposes; H.R. 4358, the ''Senior Executive Service Accountability Act''; H.R. 4360, the ''Official Personnel File Enhancement Act''; and H.R. 4359, the ''Administrative Leave Reform Act''. The following bills were ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 1671, H.R. 3023, and H.R. 4358. H.R. 4360 was ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 4359 was considered and withdrawn.

WASSENAAR: CYBERSECURITY AND EXPORT CONTROL

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Information Technology; and the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies of the House Committee on Homeland Security, held a joint hearing entitled ''Wassenaar: Cybersecurity and Export Control''. Testimony was heard from Kevin J. Wolf, Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Department of Commerce; Phyllis Schneck, Deputy Under Secretary for Cybersecurity and Communications, National Protection and Programs Directorate, Department of Homeland Security; Vann H. Van Diepen, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, Department of State; and Ann K. Ganzer, Director of Conventional Arms Threat Reduction, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, Department of State; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4084, the ''Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act''. H.R. 4084 was ordered reported, as amended.

SBA MANAGEMENT REVIEW: OVERSIGHT OF SBA'S ACCESS TO CAPITAL OFFICES

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''SBA Management Review: Oversight of SBA's Access to Capital Offices''. Testimony was heard from Ann Marie Mehlum, Associate Administrator of Capital Access, Small Business Administration; and Linda Rusche, Director of Office of Credit Risk Management, Small Business Administration.

OVERSIGHT OF THE OFFICE OF INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT AT THE SBA

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Health and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Office of Innovation and Investment at the SBA''. Testimony was heard from Mark Walsh, Associate Administrator, Office of Investment and Innovation, Small Business Administration.

1988 TO 2016: VETSNET TO VBMS; BILLIONS SPENT, BACKLOG GRINDS ON

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''1988 to 2016: VETSNET to VBMS; Billions Spent, Backlog Grinds On''. Testimony was heard from Beth McCoy, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Department of Veterans Affairs; Valerie C. Melvin, Director, Information Technology, Government Accountability Office; and Brent Arronte, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2016

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''Effects of Reduced Infrastructure and Base Operating Support Investments on Air Force Readiness'', 9 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel, hearing entitled ''Views on Commissary Reform'', 10:30 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, hearing entitled ''How to Create a More Robust and Private Flood Insurance Marketplace'', 9:15 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled ''The U.S. Response to North Korea's Nuclear Provocations'', 9 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice, hearing entitled ''The Original Meaning of the Origination Clause'', 9 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 4341, the ''Defending America's Small Contractors Act of 2016'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

11 a.m., Friday, January 15

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will meet in a pro forma session.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Wednesday, January 13

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 3662—Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of S.J. Res. 22—Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency relating to the definition of ''waters of the United States'' under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Subject to a Rule).

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