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House of Representatives

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

PRAYER

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

Merciful God, thank You for giving us another day.

Your care and wisdom are shown to us by the way You extend Your kingdom into our world down to the present day. Your word reveals every aspect of Your saving plan. You accomplish Your designed purpose in and through the hearts of the faithful who respond to You.

Today convert our minds and hearts that we may become the great Nation You hope us to be.

Help the Members of this people's House to seek Your presence in the midst of their busy lives. Animate them with Your holy spirit, and help them to perform their appointed tasks to come to solutions that will redound to the benefit of our Nation.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. VEASEY 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

HONORING THE LIFE OF GUNNERY SERGEANT MICHAEL D. STANTON II

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, as cochairman of the Congressional Explosive Ordnance Disposal Caucus, today I rise to honor the life and service of Gunnery Sergeant Michael D. Stanton II, United States Marine Corps, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Retired.

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Gunny Stanton was born on January 27, 1963, and passed on February 6, 2016, in Dunedin, Florida.

At the start of his career, Gunny Stanton was a telephone technician, but he soon took those technical skills and put them to work as an explosive ordnance disposal technician. When Gunny Stanton first began his training, he attended the basic EOD course at Eglin Air Force Base. While in training, his block tests and final examination scores were so high that his records remain intact to this day.

In the course of his 18 years in the Marine Corps, Stanton earned many awards too numerous to list in this space. He is preceded in death by his father, Michael Dale Stanton Sr.; and a brother, Brian Stanton. Gunny Stanton is survived by his loving family: his wife, Terri Stanton; his mother, Gloria Mueller; and a brother, Timothy Stanton.

While I know that his family and friends will remember him in their own personal way, I would like all of us here in the House of Representatives to remember him as a courageous leader and a fine marine who each day bravely faced the challenges inherent in the life of an explosive ordnance disposal technician.

IMMIGRANTS ARE PART OF AMERICA'S BACKBONE

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, later today House Republicans will forward a resolution authorizing the Speaker to file an anti-immigrant amicus brief with the Supreme Court.

While Speaker RYAN has called for a vote, House Republicans refuse to reveal what the plan may say; but then again, given House Republicans' extensive record on anti-immigrant actions, little is left to the imagination.

Time and time again, GOP leadership has failed to bring a comprehensive immigration reform vote to the floor. Instead, they have favored deporting DREAMers. They have done all they can to undermine President Obama's executive actions on immigration.

Later this week, this gimmick that they are proposing will do nothing to

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fix our broken immigration system. Instead, it sends a message that the GOP intends to continue confining hard-working immigrants and their families to the shadows. Families who currently live in fear of deportation should be afforded the opportunity to fully contribute to the only country they call home.

As 5 million DACA/DAPA-eligible immigrants anxiously await the Court's final decision, I remind my House Republican colleagues that immigrants are part of America's backbone, and their contributions should not be discounted.

FRIVOLOUS ADA LAWSUITS ARE FLOODING OUR COUNTRY

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a wave of frivolous lawsuits flooding my district. These lawsuits use the Americans with Disabilities Act, a law that has done tremendous good in our Nation, as legal cover to sue small mom-and-pop businesses for often unnoticed and easily correctible ADA violations.

Businesses that have passed local inspections are often unaware that any ADA violation exists until a lawsuit arrives in their mailbox. Instead of demanding the violation be fixed, these lawsuits try to make a quick buck by settling out of court. The businesses have little choice: pay the settlement or pay expensive business-ending attorney fees to fight the charge.

Often these attorneys, as in my district, don't even live in the State. Some use Google Earth to find violations and then file these lawsuits remotely. This is wrong. It takes advantage of the ADA, those with disabilities, and small businesses that thought they were in compliance.

That is why I have cosponsored the ADA Education and Reform Act, which we believe will fix this problem. I will work to get this bill passed so west Texans won't be abused by predatory attorneys who care more about money than helping those with disabilities.

FREE SPEECH IS UNDER ASSAULT IN TURKEY

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, free speech and the freedom of the press are under assault in Turkey.

No longer can the United States turn a blind eye as an increasingly authoritarian regime continues to crack down on virtually all critical voices. The harassment, intimidation, and prosecution of dissenting journalists and citizens as well as the government takeover of critical media outlets represents the antithesis of free speech and a free press. These are not the actions of a nation that respects democratic values.

Beyond the obvious consequences, by continuing on this path, the regime risks destabilization and pushing the persecuted into the arms of Islamist extremism. Right now, today, Turkey's leadership should embrace the marketplace of ideas that is a part of any vibrant, real, and sincere democracy.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL FORAN, GRAND MARSHAL OF SAVANNAH'S 2016 ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

(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 recognize Savannah's St. Patrick's Day parade as well as Mr. Michael Foran, the 2016 grand marshal of the St. Patrick's Day parade.

The St. Patrick's Day parade is a family tradition for all Savannahians and many tourists alike. After 190 years of the St. Patrick's celebration, the Savannah parade has grown into the third largest in the world.

I would like to congratulate the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee on 192 years of festivities. I know this year's committee will present an excellent parade.

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Foran as the 2016 grand marshal. Holding all the characteristics of a great grand marshal, he fits the bill of a true Savannahian. As a member of a proud Irish family, Mr. Foran is the perfect person to receive this distinction.

I want to thank Mr. Foran and his family for their continued service to the entire Savannah community.

REMEMBERING HOWARD COBLE

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

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my dear friend, mentor, and former colleague, Congressman Howard Coble. Howard was a proud son of Greensboro, who for 30 years served the people of North Carolina's Sixth District with honor, integrity, and kindness.

While he is no longer with us, we will always remember Howard fondly. We miss his unique style, including madras jackets, colorful suspenders, and distinctive hats, his humble sense of humor and his personality that drew people to him.

As a matter of fact, Howard never met a stranger, and he set a standard for legendary constituent service. His constituents knew they had a friend in Congressman Coble. I work every day to live up to that example.

Howard's 85th birthday would have been tomorrow. I want to ask my colleagues and my fellow North Carolinians to join me in celebrating his remarkable life. It was a privilege to get to know Howard Coble, to call him a friend, and to continue his legacy of service to the people of North Carolina.

I know there will be no shortage of celebration in Heaven tonight.

Happy birthday, Congressman Coble.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 639, AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO APPEAR AS AMICUS CURIAE ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 649 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 649

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the resolution (H. Res. 639) authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15-674. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution to its adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Rules; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), 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. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members of the House have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule, which will provide for consideration of House Resolution 639. I believe the underlying resolution is imperative to protecting the balance of power that our Founders so carefully enshrined in the United States Constitution.

I would also like to point out that the House Committee on Rules held an original jurisdiction hearing and markup yesterday in which we received testimony and consideration of an amendment from the minority.

Mr. Speaker, over 25 States or State officials have filed suit challenging the Obama administration's expansion of DACA and the creation of DACA-like programs for aliens who are parents of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.

On February 16, 2015, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas entered and the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit affirmed a preliminary injunction prohibiting further implementation of these programs on the ground that States are likely to prevail in their argument for the programs that have run afoul of the law.

The Supreme Court indicated that they will begin hearing oral arguments on United States v. Texas in April of 2016 and that it will consider the plaintiffs' claims under the Take Care Clause. Because of this timely consideration by the highest court in the land, it is imperative that the House consider this underlying resolution.

I want to make it very clear that this resolution is not about policy. If you spoke with every single Member of this body, you would find a wide spectrum of opinions regarding how to handle the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States unlawfully. This resolution is not about those viewpoints. It is about the fundamental separation of power ingrained in our founding document, the Constitution.

Article I, section 8 gives Congress, not the President, the authority ''to establish a uniform rule of naturalization.'' The administration simply cannot ignore certain statutes and selectively enforce others or bypass the legislative process to create laws for executive fiat.

This administration has failed in its duty under Article II, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and the Supreme Court has specifically indicated that it will consider the plaintiffs' claims under the Take Care Clause. Clearly, the Court views this case as an important review of Article I and Article II issues and the balance of power between the branches.

□ 0915

For that reason, and that reason alone, the United States House of Representatives is uniquely suited to speak to this underlying question that has been raised by the court.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans in the House can't agree on a budget. They take futile vote after futile vote to kill ObamaCare. They waste millions of dollars and thousands of hours on the futility. Children are drinking lead-tainted water from aging pipes criss-crossing the country. Young people are saddled with crushing student loan debt. Bridges are crumbling. Our schools are falling apart. Obviously, the Metro system in Washington is in serious condition. Our airports are struggling to function, and we have no high-speed rail.

But what do we do here? We vote 64 times to take health care away from people. We have Benghazi hearings, which come to nothing. We have had eight in the House. Many chairs of those committees have said there is nothing there, so we set up a Select Committee to look at it again and spend millions of dollars to see what they can find.

We go after Planned Parenthood, investigate them, set up a Select Committee to do that—despite the fact that a case in Texas against Planned Parenthood found in favor of Planned Parenthood and indicted the people who made the film which created such a sensation in this House. We waste congressional time with duplicative, baseless investigations. Today, the crusade against President Obama reaches new heights.

This resolution surrounding United States v. Texas adds to the already overwhelming list of baseless political tactics that the House majority has used to discredit, undermine, and disrespect President Obama.

This resolution makes a political statement, one that represents the House majority—not the entire House of Representatives or even the entire Congress, since a major part of it has been left out of this altogether.

This resolution seeks to put this whole Chamber on record when there is significant, vocal, and strong opposition. In fact, 186 House Democrats, along with 39 Senate Democrats, have joined together for our own amicus brief in support of the President's executive actions.

Not only were the President's actions constitutional, they are in line with decades of bipartisan action by Presidents on immigration itself, including action by President Ronald Reagan and President George H.W. Bush.

This is a rarely seen ploy, seeking to file an amicus brief as the whole House, leaving out completely the voice of the minority. I hope the American people will see it for what it is: purely political. This shows us, once again, that the Republicans are willing to prioritize their party over their country.

Adding insult to injury, Speaker RYAN has said:

''The president is not permitted to write law—only Congress is.''

How true, indeed. So why don't we, the Congress, do what we were sent here to do: write laws.

Republicans have reached for a tool that is not in their constitutional tool box: running to the courthouse. Rather than allowing Congress to do its job, the Republicans insist on telling other branches of government how to do theirs.

It is quickly becoming clear that this is a dangerous moment in our country and in our political system. The Presidential primary field on the Republican side is resorting to demagoguery and nativism, fanning the flames of dangerous anti-immigrant anger and anger in general.

What the President rightly called ''vulgar and divisive rhetoric'' in the Republican contest is a logical and foreseeable consequence of the anger and fear carefully and deliberately cultivated by decades of Republican campaign strategy, as Republicans went beyond principled advocacy for smaller government to the outright encouragement of people to think of government as the problem and their an enemy to be hated.

This debate would not have even been an issue if, last Congress, the House had taken up the bipartisan Senate immigration bill, which they were asked time and time again to do but it never saw the light of day here. That was an opportunity for our country to come together in a bipartisan way, instead of further dividing us.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the argument we are making today is that this President has a repeated history of needing to have his actions resolved through the court system.

The Supreme Court has acted over 13 times to rule against the Obama administration. This President is an activist President that works around the legislature. As a matter of fact, even Members of this body have implicated that they don't even know who their White House contacts are.

We have repeatedly tried to work with the President. We hold hearings. They ignore and rebuff the things that we do. They disallow what are considered to be normal rules of law.

So this is an action that has been brought by the States, not by the United States Congress. We were simply asked to give an opinion, and that is what we are doing today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) one of our bright, new members of the Rules Committee.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the rule and the underlying resolution.

I disagree with the gentlewoman from New York. This is not about politics. This is about the Constitution of the United States. And it is very clear. It says the President ''shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.''

Now, some people may argue about what that may mean. But in 1792, President Washington, who was the chair of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, wrote this:

''It is my duty to see the Laws executed—to permit them to be trampled upon with impunity would be repugnant to'' my duty.

Fast forward to 2010. In response to those arguing for executive amnesty at that time, President Obama himself stated:

> I am President. I am not king. There's a limit to the discretion that I can show because I'm obliged to execute the law. I can't just make the laws up myself.

Six months later, the President went further. He said this:

There are enough laws on the books by Congress that are very clear in terms of how we have to enforce our immigration system that for me to simply, through executive order, ignore those congressional mandates would not conform with my appropriate role as President.

Unfortunately, in 2012, President Obama reversed course and unilaterally imposed a massive program of executive amnesty in violation of this country's immigration laws. In 2014, he doubled down with a second, more expansive executive amnesty program.

According to an analysis by the Migration Policy Institute, 87 percent of all illegal aliens will be exempted from immigration enforcement actions under this President's amnesty policies. Thus, immigration laws, as actually written by Congress, will apply to a mere 13 percent of violators.

In the upcoming case of the United States v. Texas, the Court will consider whether the President's executive amnesty violated the Constitution. Consequently, that case has the potential to be one of the most important constitutional decisions on executive power ever decided.

This resolution authorizes the filing of an amicus brief on behalf of this House in legal opposition to the President's unconstitutional actions.

As a lawyer, I can tell you amicus filings are important. They allow the court to obtain information and arguments from nonparties who have an important bearing on this case.

This resolution will allow this body to be heard before the Supreme Court.

This is not about immigration policy. This is about ensuring that this President and future Presidents, regardless of their political party, do not have the authority to ignore or change the laws through executive fiat. Ultimately, this is about the Constitution and protecting the rule of law.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule and this important resolution.

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

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up Representative LOFGREN's resolution expressing the position of the House in support of the Obama administration in United States v. Texas.

If the House is going to take a vote on weighing in on an anti-immigrant lawsuit filed against the President, we should at least have the option of voting to support the President's executive actions, which are a worthwhile and temporary first step toward reforming our broken immigration system.

I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN), the distinguished ranking member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, to discuss our proposal.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I think it is worth reflecting why we are here.

When we had the bipartisan bill passed by the Senate last Congress, the Congressional Budget Office calculated that it would mean almost a trillion dollars to the positive for the American economy, not to mention the human toll that our current broken system inflicts on people.

Now, we failed to act. And when we did, the President went to the Office of Legal Counsel, an independent group, and asked them what he could do, if anything. I thought they were rather conservative, but one of the things they said he could do was to give temporary reprieve to children who had been brought here without their concurrence and to the parents of American citizens. So he did that.

How could he do that? Because the Congress has delegated to the executive the authority to act. In 1952, we did so—it can be found at 8 U.S.C. 1103(a)(3)—and again in 2002. When we created the Department of Homeland Security, we told the Department Secretary that he should establish immigration policies and priorities for removal.

Now, why would that happen? We have only appropriated 4 percent of the funds necessary to remove everyone who is here without their proper papers. So clearly, there needs to be some prioritization. We recognize that. We told the Secretary to do it, and that is exactly what he did. We delegated the authority.

On work authorization, again, we delegated that authority. In 1981, President Reagan went to rulemaking and established that authority, which is actually in practice; it has been in place. And Congress, in 1986, explicitly recognized the authority to give work authorization to those who are in deferred action status.

But even without that delegation, the President has long had the authority to take the action that the President has in this case. It is called prosecutorial discretion and foreign policy.

In United States v. Arizona, Justices Roberts and Kennedy noted that when the executive has broad discretion, a principal feature of the removal system is that it extends, and it extends to whether it makes sense to pursue removal at all.

This isn't new with President Obama. When President Reagan held that office, he sponsored a bill that gave relief—amnesty, if you will—to several million people; but the Congress—and it is reflected in the Judiciary Committee report—specifically excluded the spouses and children of those who had relief. What did Reagan do? He gave deferred action to the spouses and the children who had been specifically excluded from relief by the Congress because he didn't want to break up families. That was about 40 person of the undocumented people at the time—about the same amount that President Obama has dealt with.

Not only is this resolution wrong, it is the wrong process. Democrats went to the Ethics Committee. We got approval to get a volunteer to write a brief, which I will later include in the RECORD. We read it before we signed it.

In contrast, what are you asking Members to do? You have no idea what you are signing onto, just that you are against it.

Now, does this mean that you are saying that the Administrative Procedure Act applies whenever the President takes a discretionary action? Well, good luck fighting ISIS then. Good luck getting disaster relief if there is a flood.

It is defective for process, too. There is a group called the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group. I have been involved with that in the past. That group is consulted when there is an issue that relates to the prerogatives of the House. For example, is there a speech or debate issue before the court?

□ 0930

This did not come before the BLAG because this is political. This is not about the prerogatives of the House.

Now, all Members of the House had an opportunity to file a brief, and Republican Members still can if they can meet the time deadlines. But using this process, I think there is a reason why CRS was unable to tell us any other instance where a process like this was used about the prerogatives of the House.

So this is a radical procedure and a radical act because it says the House cannot delegate to the executive, as we have done, because it could cripple the President by requiring the Administrative Procedure Act whenever he takes a discretionary act, because it violates the procedures the House has always used.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. LOFGREN. But finally, the net result could be this: if the Republicans prevail, we could end up with a roundup of a million kids who did nothing wrong, who were brought here as infants, who don't even remember the country of their birth.

When all is said and done, that is what this is about.

I would urge that our colleagues vote ''no'' on this radical resolution. We will attempt to offer a resolution that, instead, is something you know what you are buying into, not a pig in a poke, but a thoughtful, reasoned brief that outlines what the House has done to delegate to the executive, outlines what the executive's authority has been since Eisenhower.

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

Mr. Speaker, if you listen to our colleagues, they make wild accusations. They are swinging widely rather than understanding the essence of the case. The essence of the case is more than 25 States have gone to Federal Court in Texas, at the heart of the border, and argued the laws of the United States of America.

The process that comes about and that we agree with is we do not believe that the President of the United States, not any President, has the authority, the responsibility, or the legal standing to do what this President has done.

The President repeated that, evidently, some 21 times, that he did not have that standing either to do what he eventually did, which was purely political, and that is what we are being accused of today.

We believe that rule of law is the most important attribute, and we simply in the House of Representatives are supporting what the Supreme Court has asked at the time the oral arguments will be done here before the Supreme Court, probably in the next month or so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK), an esteemed district attorney in Colorado and currently a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, the Constitution lays out a very clear picture of how our government works. In Article I, section 8, the Founding Fathers gave Congress the duty to create laws. More importantly, Article I gave Congress the authority to ''establish a uniform rule of naturalization.''

Rather than enforcing the laws Congress created, the President has failed to execute them. Through his executive actions, he has even bypassed this building, rewriting the laws on immigration to his liking.

Sadly, this is not the only time our President has bypassed Congress and, by extension, the will of the people. On energy regulations, health care, war powers, gun rights, and even judicial nominations, all have faced Presidential work-arounds. Through executive actions, failure to enforce laws, and administrative regulations, the executive branch is slowly becoming a monarchy.

I founded the Article I Caucus last year to fight executive overreach and reassert the power of Congress. Today we have an incredible opportunity to speak to not just one, but two of the other branches of government.

Speaker RYAN has a duty to stand up for Congress and the people of this Nation by filing a friend of the court brief in this case. I urge my colleagues to vote today to give him that prerogative.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, in April, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the United States v. Texas, a case that has been repeatedly litigated by our colleagues in the halls of Congress. And this resolution is absolutely about immigration policy. Let's be clear.

Numerous hearings have been held in our committee challenging the constitutionality of Deferred Actions for Parents of Americans. Our colleagues, instead of moving forward on comprehensive immigration reform and fixing our broken immigration system, have instead insisted on putting forth a resolution, a resolution that has no substantive findings, makes no legal arguments against the executive action, and exists only in the hopes of securing time before the Court during oral arguments.

If our colleagues do find themselves before the Court in this case, it would be helpful if they remember the settled Constitutional law on this subject.

DAPA is a lawful exercise of executive discretion well within the bounds of the Constitution. It is based on laws enacted by Congress that grant broad discretion to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Since 1952, Congress has authorized the executive branch to establish such regulations, issue such instructions, and perform such other acts as it deems necessary for carrying out its authority. And within that authority, it is a reasonable exercise of the discretion delegated by Congress to do what it is doing.

The executive action focuses the limited resources of the Department of Homeland Security on public safety priorities, ensuring that we are deporting felons, not families.

It is important to recognize that Congress appropriates enough to remove less than 4 percent of the unauthorized immigrants now in our country. The Secretary of Homeland Security has the statutory responsibility to set enforcement priorities and to adopt policies necessary for meeting these priorities.

It is consistent with the actions of Presidents of both parties for the last decades, including President Eisenhower, President Reagan, and President George Herbert Walker Bush. In fact, the strongest historical precedent for DAPA was the Family Fairness program implemented by President Reagan and President Bush.

These executive actions will strengthen our communities, keep families together, and grow our economy.

This resolution is not about limiting executive authority. It is about attempting to reverse immigration policy set by the executive branch.

I understand why my friends on the other side of the aisle don't want to admit that, or they want to frame it in the context of a Constitutional question, but it is really about changing policies that are keeping families together, that are making sure that we properly allocate resources to the most serious individuals who should be deported, those who have committed crimes, and keep families together while we work to fix our broken immigration system.

This is about a fundamental change in immigration policy that will rip families apart, that will undermine our values as a country. We ought to call it what it is.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the rule and vote against this resolution.

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

I would remind this body, Mr. Speaker, that over 13 times the highest court in this land, the Supreme Court, has ruled against this activist President for exceeding his constitutional authority.

This President, in his own concoction of the way the country ought to be run, does not follow the rules, not the rule of law, not the rule of providing enough information for people by properly delineating the way rules and laws should be executed.

That is why we are here today. It has everything to do with our belief that the President of the United States has not well and faithfully properly executed the laws of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this important situation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 639.

Mr. Speaker, we are here again discussing the President and his executive actions. Back in November of 2014, President Obama announced a series of executive actions that would have provided amnesty to approximately 5 million additional illegal immigrants.

Amnesty for these 5 million illegal immigrants would have been in addition to the millions who were provided amnesty under the administration's 2012 actions.

The President continues to degrade the rights of American citizens and ignores the U.S. Constitution which this country was founded on.

The checks and balances that our Founding Fathers established made it specifically clear that they wanted Congress to enact laws that shape our country, not the President. That is why I am supporting House Resolution 639.

House Resolution 639 will allow the Speaker of the House to submit to the U.S. Supreme Court its opinion, arguing that the President's executive action on amnesty for illegal immigration is unconstitutional. Congress must be able to express its arguments that the President's executive order on amnesty is unconstitutional so we can continue to maintain the balance of power between Congress and the President.

I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 639 so we can continue to deny the President's overreach of power and uphold the rights and responsibilities given to this body by the Constitution.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I think context is important in this debate we are having today. I can't get it out of

my head, as we look at House Resolution 639, that our Senate has just announced that it is going to shut down the Supreme Court nomination process.

Only a few years ago, the House shut down the government for 16 days.

We have had 62 ACA repeals.

MITCH MCCONNELL once said, famously, that his goal was to make Obama a one-term President. He failed at that.

The fact is that here we are again with Republican efforts to undermine, thwart, and shut down President Obama. This is outrageous, in my opinion.

House Resolution 639 is nothing but a continuation of the politics of obstruction, just one more way to say you are not really the President, you are not legitimate. That is what this represents today. That is the exercise we are taking on this floor.

President Obama's action will bring relief to millions of families who live in fear. Families shouldn't be torn apart because House Republicans refuse to work together with Democrats to pass an immigration bill which would make executive action unnecessary.

While the Republicans held up progress, President Obama worked within his authority and took courageous steps needed to address the problems of millions of Americans.

The Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and the expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program is an important step toward fixing an immigration system that is inhumane and cruel, and it is within the right of the President to prioritize removal proceedings for certain people. We have to prioritize them. We cannot remove everybody at the same time.

Furthermore, it is consistent with the action of past Presidents, dating back to President Eisenhower, including George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan, who both took executive action to keep immigrant families together.

The Republicans offer no substantive findings and no legal arguments in their resolution. This is a delay tactic. This is a political tactic. This does not serve the interests of the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. ELLISON. The fact that executive action is right for American families, and right for our economy, and right for our society, is what should guide our actions today, not political delay tactics.

Republicans won't acknowledge that immigration and immigrants are an important part of the society that we live in. I stand with the families that President Obama is trying to keep together within his authority.

Vote ''no'' on House Resolution 639.

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

There is a lot of good debate here today. The facts of the case are real simple. The Supreme Court of the United States will be deciding this.

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The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and the Federal District Court of the Southern District of Texas have let their answer be known, and that is they believe that the President is wrong. But we have a process to follow, and the good part is it is not whether something House Republicans are doing is trying to delay or to stop something that might be a decision-making that has been made by someone else. We are simply trying to support an action that was asked as a result by the Supreme Court: Do we have an opinion about this issue? And it is thus that we are asking the House of Representatives to come together today to hear the facts of this issue and to then render a decision.

That, to me, Mr. Speaker, is normal and regular, and our Speaker, PAUL RYAN, is most meticulous in looking at this issue. His advice and judgment comes from the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the gentleman from Virginia, BOB GOODLATTE. Both of these gentlemen are not only well balanced, but really doing what is being asked of them by the third branch of government, which is the judiciary. The judiciary has asked the House of Representatives and parties to this suit if they would please discuss this issue.

We believe our ideas are material to the question at hand, and that is why the United States House of Representatives, through the Rules Committee, is here for this rule today and the underlying legislation in just a few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE), an exciting young member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of Speaker RYAN's House Resolution 639.

Like many of my colleagues, I continue to oppose President Obama's illegal amnesty program, and I have long believed that the proper venue to challenging the President's overreaching actions is primarily in the courts of this country. To this end, I was 1 of 68 Members of Congress—and the only member from the New Jersey delegation—to sign an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit brought by a coalition of 26 States against the President's executive order on immigration.

As a lawyer who has practiced constitutional law in my home State of New Jersey, I have tried to study these issues closely. There is no gray area: Congress writes the laws, and the executive branch enforces them.

The executive overreach consistently taken by this administration demonstrates not only contempt for law, but a disregard for the critical balance of powers central to our Constitution. The American system of self-governance would not be as strong as it is if it were not for these bedrock principles.

Today, we have unelected officials in Federal agencies writing our laws. The executive branch is appropriating taxpayer funds without authorization from Congress, and departments are selectively deciding which laws to enforce. Prosecutorial discretion cannot be expanded to break the rule of law, as I am confident the Supreme Court of the United States will rule.

I applaud Speaker RYAN for pursuing an amicus brief to defend our Article I powers under the Constitution. Given the President's gross executive overreach, it is essential for this institution to respond as a whole. This action today is not only prudent, but an important and necessary step in defense of the Constitution and the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support House Resolution 639.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, this is a political act because this action only comes with President Obama. We never did this with Republican Presidents.

Let me give you an example. After Tiananmen Square, the House of Representatives passed a bill to preclude the deportation of Chinese students. President Bush vetoed that bill. Do you know what he did then? He deferred the deportation of the Chinese students because he had the executive authority.

In 1999, a letter was sent to Janet Reno. It was signed by Henry Hyde, LAMAR SMITH, SAM JOHNSON, and many others asking her to use her prosecutorial discretion and citing the fact that the prosecutorial discretion is clear in removal proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, I will include that letter in the RECORD.

I was shocked to hear Mr. SESSIONS say that the Court had solicited a brief—maybe I misunderstood him—had asked the House for a brief. If that is the case, I would respectfully request to see a copy of the document soliciting a brief from the House of Representatives. That is a procedure that would be an extraordinary one, and it is certainly news to me.

Finally, I would like to add that the fact that Mr. GOODLATTE doesn't agree with the President has nothing to do with the fact that the procedures were not followed in this case. The Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group is the process established in the House to be used when the House takes a step in Court to defend its prerogatives, which is what the majority is suggesting is at play in this case.

This is clearly a political act, and if it succeeds, who will be punished? One million children who did nothing wrong, who will be rounded up and taken from their homes.

I don't know what Republicans think they are doing if they sign on to this resolution because it doesn't give any findings nor does it say what, in fact, they are signing on to.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), my dear friend.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman from Texas for yielding and for leading on this issue.

As I sit and listen to this debate, a number of things come to mind, and they start with this: I am hearing a lot of policy discussion over on the other side of the aisle, but this is about a constitutional question.

We have just said good-bye to one of the great, great Justices in the United States Supreme Court, Justice Scalia, who often said that, when he made a decision based on the Constitution and he was uncomfortable with the policy that resulted from that constitutional decision, he was most comfortable that he had made the right constitutional decision when he disagreed with a policy result of that decision.

That is also how we should view this case. Every one of us that has the privilege to speak and address you on the floor of this House has taken an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. This is about the President's oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, except his says take care to ''preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States,'' and it is referenced in the Take Care Clause in the Constitution that requires him to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Now, I don't know that there is a schoolchild in this land that is going to get that wrong. They don't think that the President should execute the law itself and then conduct himself in the fashion that he sees fit. I think they understand that the President, multiple times, has lectured the country in his adjunct constitutional law professorship that he didn't have the constitutional authority to do what he did.

So this issue is about the Take Care Clause, the President keeping his oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, and it is about prosecutorial discretion, as the gentlewoman from California said; except that, it was a clear understanding, when they wrote the Morton Memos, that they were creating groups of people, classes of people, and categories of people, and the Morton Memos were the beginning of this. They created four different categories of people, and as far as I know, anyone who fit into those categories was essentially maybe individually dealt with because they processed their paperwork, but they were automatically exempted from the application of the law. That is when this began.

We should not think, Mr. Speaker, that the House hasn't weighed in on this. It goes back to this. March 2, 2011, was the introduction of the Morton Memos. That was the first executive overreach on immigration that is starkly on paper. The first opportunity to push back on that was a hearing in which Janet Napolitano asserted that it was on an individual basis only and repeated herself. And Morton Memos themselves have several references to an individual basis only, except that they create four categories of people. So the words don't mean what the rules do. They abuse prosecutorial discretion by granting it to vast groups of people that were defined first in the Morton Memos.

So I brought an amendment June 7, 2012, that cut off all the funding to the Morton Memos. That passed 238–175 on a bipartisan vote. The next opportunity was the Morton Memos in DACA, another King amendment, June 6, 2013, that passed 224–201, another bipartisan vote in the House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas.

So we addressed the Morton Memos in this House and voted to defund them in 2012. That was the first opportunity.

The next opportunity was 2013. We addressed the Morton Memos in DACA and defunded them in this House of Representatives. That was also a bipartisan vote.

Then August 1, 2014, we addressed DACA alone, defunded it, a vote of 216–192, another bipartisan vote, Mr. Speaker.

Not to be completing it there, January 14, 2015, the House addressed, separately, DAPA and Morton Memos in an amendment to defund. That passed 237–190. And we picked up the DACA in a separate amendment, same day, and that passed 218–209.

The House has voted time and time again. And if that was not enough for the voice of the House to weigh in on this, we came back again on June 3, 2015, another King amendment, and defunded the DOJ lawsuit we are talking about here now because we said: Step back, Mr. President; keep your oath of office. We stood up, and we defended ours.

I will say this. Despite all of these votes, the government and Democrat Members claim Congress has acquiesced to the unconstitutional actions when the House has a clear voting history of opposing each step in the President's path to amnesty.

So the House has now exhausted our remedies, with the exception of the omnibus spending bills, where everything gets packaged up in one vote. Except for that, the House has done all it can, Mr. Speaker, except for this opportunity to introduce an amicus brief that will be the voice of the House keeping our oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Ms. LOFGREN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. LOFGREN. Is it the gentleman's proposition that a vote in this House that does not become law voids an action of the House that does become law, to wit, the 2002 Department of Homeland Security Act that directed the Secretary to establish priorities for removal?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. SESSION. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

I am asserting that the House needs to do all it can to keep our oath to support and defend the Constitution, and we are doing this today with this endorsement of the Speaker's amicus brief so that the House can weigh in in defending our constitutional obligation.

I thank the gentlewoman from California and the gentleman from Texas.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the gentlewoman from New York for her courtesies.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to take note, in light of the previous debate and comments that were made, that this is a House divided. This amicus brief more than likely will be supported by a number of Members, but it will not be supported by the entirety of the House. So whether or not it is a majority, which is the other party, it is not going to be the voice of the entirety of the House.

As far as I am concerned, and as the Constitution has made clear, that responsibility that the President has exercised is a constitutional authority. So I oppose the resolution because it is nothing more than our Republican majority's latest partisan attacks on the President and a diversionary tactic to avoid addressing some of the more important issues such as the broken immigration system.

Just a few years ago, the Senate Republicans and Democrats came together to produce and pass a very thorough assessment of the immigration system, and they actually passed laws, the intent of the Nation, represented by Senators, and that came to the House and never saw the light of day to be able to be voted on. But yet the Homeland Security Committee, in an extensive series of hearings and then, of course, legislation, then wrote legislation that passed by voice vote in a bipartisan manner to protect the border, everything that the Republican side is asking for.

But lying at the heart of the plaintiff's misguided and wholly partisan

complaint is a specious claim that President Obama lacked the constitutional authority and statutory authority to take executive action. This frivolous and partisan lawsuit seeks to have DACA and DAPA declared to be invalid and to permanently enjoin the Obama administration from implementing those salutary policies.

Let me briefly speak about these actions by the President. They are reasonable. The reason they are reasonable is because, in addition to establishing the President's obligation to execute the law, the Supreme Court has consistently interpreted the Take Care Clause as ensuring Presidential control over those who execute and enforce the laws and the authority to decide how best to enforce the laws.

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Arizona v. United States, Bowsher v. Synar, Buckley v. Valeo, Printz v. United States, Free Enterprise Fund v. Public Company Accounting Oversight Board.

Let me also say to you that this is a Texas case that they are submitting the amicus on. These are Texas DREAMers. Many of us have worked with them. They are in our institutions of higher learning. They are going to be contributing to society. This is what this amicus brief is, to turn them back and to turn their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Texas an additional 15 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. How would DACA and DAPA impact domestic violence? DACA provided a sense of peace, knowing that this woman would not be deported.

I would argue to my friends that whatever the vote is today, it is not the sense of the House. It is a divided House, and we are not supporting an amicus to turn back the President's constitutional authority.

With that, I ask my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the underlying resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to both the rule governing debate of H. Res. 639, and the underlying resolution, which authorizes the Speaker to appear as Amicus Curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674.

I oppose the resolution because it is nothing more than the Republican majority's latest partisan attack on the President and another diversionary tactic to avoid addressing the challenge posed by the nation's broken immigration system.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 639, if adopted, would vest in the Speaker alone the power to file on behalf of the full House an amicus brief with the Supreme Court supporting the constitutionally untenable position of 26 Republican-controlled states in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674.

Lying at the heart of the plaintiffs' misguided and wholly partisan complaint is the specious claim that President Obama lacked the constitutional and statutory authority to take executive actions to implement Administration policy with regard to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of American Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents, the creation of (DAPA).

This frivolous and partisan lawsuit seeks to have DACA and DAPA declared invalid and to permanently enjoin the Obama Administration from implementing these salutary policies, both of which are intended to keep law-abiding and peace loving immigrant families together.

The purely partisan nature of the resolution before us is revealed by its text, which authorizes the Speaker to waste precious taxpayer funds and file on behalf of every Member of the House an amicus brief that no Member has seen in support of a position opposed by virtually every member of the Democratic Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, let me briefly discuss why the executive actions taken by President Obama are reasonable, responsible, and within his constitutional authority.

Pursuant to Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution, the President, the nation's Chief Executive, ''shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed.''

In addition to establishing the President's obligation to execute the law, the Supreme Court has consistently interpreted the ''Take Care'' Clause as ensuring presidential control over those who execute and enforce the law and the authority to decide how best to enforce the laws. See, e.g., Arizona v. United States; Bowsher v. Synar; Buckley v. Valeo; Printz v. United States; Free Enterprise Fund v. PCAOB.

Every law enforcement agency, including the agencies that enforce immigration laws, has ''prosecutorial discretion''—the inherent power to decide whom to investigate, arrest, detain, charge, and prosecute.

Thus, enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), properly may exercise their discretion to devise and implement policies specific to the laws they are charged with enforcing, the population they serve, and the problems they face so that they can prioritize our nation's resources to meet mission critical enforcement goals.

Mr. Speaker, to see the utter lack of merit in the legal position to be supported by the amicus brief permitted by H. Res. 639, one need take note of the fact that deferred action has been utilized in our nation for decades by Administrations headed by presidents of both parties without controversy or challenge.

In fact, as far back as 1976, INS and DHS leaders have issued at least 11 different memoranda providing guidance on the use of similar forms of prosecutorial discretion.

Executive authority to take action is thus ''fairly wide,'' and the federal government's discretion is extremely ''broad'' as the Supreme Court held in the recent case of Arizona v. United States, 132 S. Ct. 2492, 2499 (2012), an opinion written by Justice Kennedy and joined by Chief Justice Roberts:

''Congress has specified which aliens may be removed from the United States and the procedures for doing so. Aliens may be removed if they were inadmissible at the time of entry, have been convicted of certain crimes, or meet other criteria set by federal law. Removal is a civil, not criminal, matter. A rincipal feature of the removal system is the broad discretion exercised by immigration officials. Federal officials, as an initial matter, must decide whether it makes sense to pursue removal at all. If removal proceedings commence, aliens may seek asylum and other discretionary relief allowing them to remain in the country or at least to leave without formal removal.'' (emphasis added) (citations omitted).

The Court's decision in Arizona v. United States, also strongly suggests that the executive branch's discretion in matters of deportation may be exercised on an individual basis, or it may be used to protect entire classes of individuals such as ''[u]nauthorized workers trying to support their families'' or immigrants who originate from countries torn apart by internal conflicts:

''Discretion in the enforcement of immigration law embraces immediate human concerns. Unauthorized workers trying to support their families, for example, likely pose less danger than alien smugglers or aliens who commit a serious crime. The equities of an individual case may turn on many factors, including whether the alien has children born in the United States, long ties to the community, or a record of distinguished military service.

Some discretionary decisions involve policy choices that bear on this Nation's international relations. Returning an alien to his own country may be deemed inappropriate even where he has committed a removable offense or fails to meet the criteria for admission. The foreign state may be mired in civil war, complicit in political persecution, or enduring conditions that create a real risk that the alien or his family will be harmed upon return.

The dynamic nature of relations with other countries requires the Executive Branch to ensure that enforcement policies are consistent with this Nation's foreign policy with respect to these and other realities.''

Exercising thoughtful discretion in the enforcement of the nation's immigration law saves scarce taxpayer funds, optimizes limited resources, and produces results that are more humane and consistent with America's reputation as the most compassionate nation on earth.

Mr. Speaker, a DREAMER (an undocumented student) seeking to earn her college degree and aspiring to attend medical school to better herself and her new community is not a threat to the nation's security.

Law abiding but unauthorized immigrants doing honest work to support their families pose far less danger to society than human traffickers, drug smugglers, or those who have committed a serious crime.

The President was correct in concluding that exercising his discretion regarding the implementation of DACA and DAPA policies enhances the safety of all members of the public, serves national security interests, and furthers the public interest in keeping families together.

Mr. Speaker, according to numerous studies conducted by the Congressional Budget Office, Social Security Administration, and Council of Economic Advisors, the President's DACA and DAPA directives generate substantial economic benefits to our nation.

For example, unfreezing DAPA and expanded DACA is estimated to increase GDP by $230 billion and create an average of 28,814 jobs per year over the next 10 years.

That is a lot of jobs.

Mr. Speaker, in exercising his broad discretion in the area of removal proceedings, President Obama has acted responsibly and reasonably in determining the circumstances in which it makes sense to pursue removal and when it does not.

In exercising this broad discretion, President Obama not done anything that is novel or unprecedented.

Let me cite a just a few examples of executive action taken by American presidents, both Republican and Democratic, on issues affecting immigrants over the past 35 years:

1. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan used executive action in 1987 to allow 200,000 Nicaraguans facing deportation to apply for relief from expulsion and work authorization.

2. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter exercised parole authority to allow Cubans to enter the U.S., and about 123,000 ''Mariel Cubans'' were paroled into the U.S. by 1981.

3. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush issued an executive order that granted Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) to certain nationals of the People's Republic of China who were in the United States.

4. In 1992, the Bush administration granted DED to certain nationals of El Salvador.

5. In 1997, President Bill Clinton issued an executive order granting DED to certain Haitians who had arrived in the United States before Dec. 31, 1995.

6. In 2010, the Obama Administration began a policy of granting parole to the spouses, parents, and children of military members.

Mr. Speaker, because of the President's leadership and visionary executive action, 594,000 undocumented immigrants in my home state of Texas are eligible for deferred action.

If these immigrants are able to remain united with their families and receive a temporary work permit, it would lead to a $338 million increase in tax revenues, over five years.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me note that the President's laudable executive actions are a welcome development but not a substitute for undertaking the comprehensive reform and modernization of the nation's immigration laws supported by the American people.

Only Congress can do that.

America's borders are dynamic, with constantly evolving security challenges.

Border security must be undertaken in a manner that allows actors to use pragmatism and common sense.

Comprehensive immigration reform is desperately needed to ensure that Lady Liberty's lamp remains the symbol of a land that welcomes immigrants to a community of immigrants and does so in a manner that secures our borders and protects our homeland.

Instead of wasting time debating divisive and mean spirited measures like H. Res. 639, we should instead seize the opportunity to pass legislation that secures our borders, preserves America's character as the most open and welcoming country in the history of the world, and will yield hundreds of billions of dollars in economic growth.

I urge all Members to join me in voting against H. Res. 639.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), who serves on the Agriculture Committee.

Mr. BOST. I thank the chairman for the time.

Mr. Speaker, whenever we take these offices—and understand, I have raised my hand and took an oath of office many times in my life, whether it was in the United States Marine Corps., local government, or here in Congress. When I take that oath and mention the fact that I am swearing allegiance to the Constitution to do my duty and do it correctly, I make that promise, and I make that promise to the American people. This document that we take an oath to, the President himself has to take that same oath.

When the President steps away from that oath, this House has no other thing that they can do but to act.

Any grade school civics student knows that Congress makes the law and the President executes them. It is called the separation of powers, checks and balances. But the President's executive amnesty proves once again that he wants to do both—both. That is not in the Constitution. It doesn't work that way.

Immigration law clearly state that individuals who are here illegally must be removed. The President does not have the power to pick and choose. That is not what the law says. He doesn't get to ignore the laws.

The outcome of this case will be determined in the Court. But I want my constituents—and I want to be on the record—to know that I will uphold the Constitution; I will stand for the Constitution; and I take my oath of office very, very seriously.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the rule and the underlying resolution so we can stop this unconstitutional move.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE).

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule and the underlying legislation. And I call on the Speaker to stop this political game and allow the vote on comprehensive immigration reform that we should have taken 2 years ago.

Everyone agrees that our immigration system is broken, but instead of voting on a solution, Congress is again wasting time on a political gimmick that does not address a single real problem.

The President took lawful action to help families being torn apart by our current system. If Republicans take issue with what current law allows, they should stop obstructing meaningful debate and get serious about comprehensive immigration reform.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I helped lead efforts last Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform by introducing the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, H.R. 15. I believe that bill would have passed if we had been given a chance to vote on it on the floor. We had 200 cosponsors and a chance to fix this problem then.

I won't blame the current Speaker for mistakes of the past, but he has a chance to lead now.

For too long, Congress has failed to take meaningful action to address our broken immigration system. As a result, we have a deeply flawed system that is not working for our communities, our businesses, immigrants, or families.

It will take Congressional action to truly repair our broken immigration system, so I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution and demand that Congress act.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, the arguments that are on the floor today evolve and revolve around the issues that we believe are very important; that is, we believe that the President of the United States has exceeded his executive authority, and the Supreme Court is going to hear the case.

But, in fact, today the question that lies before the House is about an action that will be taken by this House to support, in an amicus brief, the positions that will be needed.

I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), the Speaker of the House.

(Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I rise today to urge Members to support this measure, House Resolution 639. Let me explain why, and why everyone should support this.

This resolution authorizes me, on behalf of the House, to file an amicus brief to defend our Article I powers under the Constitution. Normally this question would be considered by what is known as the House's Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group, but I am asking the whole House to go on the record, as an institution.

I recognize that this is a very extraordinary step. I feel it is very necessary, though. In fact, I believe this is vital.

This is not a question of whether or not we are for or against any certain policy. Members who are making immigration policy arguments are missing the entire point here. This comes down to a much more fundamental question. It is about the integrity of our Constitution.

Article I. Article I states that all legislative powers are vested in Congress.

Article II. Article II states that the President ''shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.''

Those lines, that separation of powers, could not be clearer. Article I: Congress writes laws. Article II: Presidents faithfully execute those laws.

In recent years, the executive branch has been blurring these boundaries to the point of absolutely overstepping them altogether. As a result, bureaucrats responsible for executing the laws, as written, are now writing the laws at their whim.

This just doesn't throw our checks and balances off-balance, it creates a fourth branch of government. This creates a fourth branch of government

that operates with little or no accountability whatsoever. Most profoundly, this means that we the people, through our elected representatives, are not drafting the laws that we live under. This is the profound difference that is occurring here. This fourth branch of government is a danger to self-government itself.

The Supreme Court has recognized the severity of this threat. In United States v. Texas, the Court has asked whether the President's overreach violates his duty to faithfully execute the laws. This House is uniquely qualified and, I would argue, obligated to respond.

Colleagues, we are the body closest to the people. We are the ones who are directly elected by the American people every other year. And if we are going to maintain the principle of self-government, if we are going to maintain this critical founding principle of government by consent of the governed, then the legislative branch needs to be writing our laws, not the executive branch, and certainly not a branch of unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats. This is what is happening. And it is not just this administration, although this administration has taken it to whole new levels.

As Speaker, I believe the authority of the office that I have been entrusted by each and every one of you is to protect the authority of this body. I am prepared to make our case.

We must defend the principle of self-determination, of self-government, of government by consent of the governed.

This Constitution protects our rights, as people. It makes sure that the government works for us and not the other way around. It makes sure that we, as citizens, if we don't like the direction our government is going, if we don't like the laws that we are being forced to live under, that we can change that through the ballot box. And this is being undermined every day.

I am prepared to submit this defense of our Article I powers, and I ask the whole House for its support.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN), the ranking member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, obviously, we all like and honor the Speaker of the House. I was pleased to hear his recognition that this should have gone through the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group because that is how the House organizes itself before asserting a privilege of the House in court.

What he didn't say is why, since cert was granted on January 19—and today is March 17—he didn't call together the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group. Certainly, we have met in a much shorter time frame. I know because I have been a participant in that process.

The failure to follow the procedures in this instance can only lead observers to conclude that this is a more politicized action than is traditional in terms of intervening in the court.

Now, the Speaker said: ''All legislative powers are vested in Congress.'' No one can disagree with that. And that the President must ''take care that the laws be faithfully executed.'' No one can disagree with that.

Is the Speaker saying that we did not, in 2002, delegate to the Secretary of Homeland Security the responsibility to establish priorities and policies, the priorities for removal, that we did not fail to provide most of the money that would be necessary to actually remove every single undocumented person in here? I think not. In fact, the President has done exactly what we said he should do in 2002.

To approve this resolution, which says that he has acted inconsistent with his duties, is a mystery. It is a pig in a poke for the Republicans.

The District Court made a finding that in order to take a discretionary action, one would need to comply with the Administrative Procedures Act. That is a very bulky procedure—90 days posting.

Are the Members of the House being asked to say that whenever the President takes a discretionary action, he must post a rule for 90 days? We don't know because this resolution only says we are against it.

If we are saying that a rule must be adopted whenever a discretionary action is taken, that would be an extraordinary departure from the President's power to act, and it is certainly something that Members ought to know they are doing before they vote on this resolution.

Much has been said about the States that filed the lawsuit. They were all States with Republican Governors. But there are States who disagree, including my State of California.

□ 1015

There is a brief filed by the Californians which reads that the discretionary action the President took would generate 130,000 jobs in California and that it would provide $3.8 billion in taxes to California.

So if we are going to use as an excuse the fact that Republican Governors filed a lawsuit to stop it, let's think about the States that have been enjoined unfairly and that are experiencing extreme economic damage because of the Fifth Circuit's misguided opinion.

I hate to say it, because I do appreciate the Speaker of the House, but there is only one way to look at this resolution—as a highly politicized effort. This is not the way the House has traditionally proceeded when adopting a court proceeding, a court intervention, that deals with the privileges of the House.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I advise my colleague that I have come to the end of my speakers and would wait for her to offer her final comments, and I will close.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I am prepared to close.

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

If we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up Representative LOFGREN's resolution expressing a position of the House in support of the Obama administration in United States v. Texas.

If the House is going to vote on weighing in on the anti-immigration lawsuit that was filed against the President, we should at least have the option of voting to support the President's executive actions, which are a worthwhile, if temporary, first step toward reforming our broken immigration system.

Mr. Speaker, 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 gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, our immigration system is broken, as evidenced by the fact that there are 11 million undocumented persons who are living in the United States.

Instead of engaging in a bipartisan legislative process to reform the system, the House majority has decided to focus on discrediting the President rather than forming policies that benefit our country. There is ample evidence of Presidents long before this one having exercised the same executive order privilege without there having been any great rush by the House of Representatives to go to court to try to stop him. House Democrats would welcome the chance to work on a bipartisan solution to the Nation's broken immigration system, but we can't because we simply are not allowed to participate—only to show up to vote.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question. If we have a ''no'' vote on this closed rule, we then will be able to present our own resolution in support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I thank the gentlewoman from New York for her engagement on this important issue and for her leadership on the Rules Committee.

Mr. Speaker, most of all, what we are doing here is acknowledging that the Supreme Court of the United States will make this decision; but in seeking input on this important question, we feel like the House is uniquely qualified to begin answering that question, literally, with a vote. That is how we do things around here.

I do recognize and respect that the minority leader has gathered a group of those who might be Democrats—from the Democrat Party, House and Senate sides—for their own opinion, and they did file that. This is an action that will be taken today that is by the

House of Representatives, and I think the Speaker outlined why we are here and the importance of it.

Mr. Speaker, in July of 2011, President Obama stated: ''I swore an oath to uphold the laws on the books. Now, I know some people want me to bypass Congress and change the laws on my own. Believe me, the idea of doing things on my own is very tempting, I promise you, not just on immigration reform, but that's not how our system works. That's not how our democracy functions. That's not how our Constitution is written.''

I quote the President of the United States on addressing the same issue exactly that is before us today.

Article I, section 8 gives Congress, not the President, the authority to establish a uniform rule of naturalization. It is directly out of the Constitution. The President had it right at least 21 times.

Article II, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States requires the President take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us today, before this body, is not about policy. It is not about how we should handle the 11 million undocumented, illegal immigrants who are currently residing in this country. It is about our Nation's Constitution. It is about the checks and balances that our Founders labored over so intensely to ensure a government will always be by and for the people. It has even been noted that it has been taught and is taught today in elementary school that the legislature—the Congress—writes the laws. That is why we are here today. It is even taught in our elementary schools.

Mr. Speaker, this administration, as well as future administrations from either party—whoever serves—must not be allowed to ignore the Constitution and circumvent those who write the laws, and it is imperative that the House speaks as an institution on this matter.

I am pleased with the arguments that have been made today. I believe they were right and just, and I believe that our Speaker, PAUL RYAN, in his own wisdom and experience and temperament, is attempting to approach this as an important constitutional issue and as the prerogative and the right and the responsibility of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying legislation.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following amici curiae brief:

No. 15–674

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al., Petitioners,

v.

STATE OF TEXAS, et al., Respondents.

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

BRIEF OF 186 MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND 39 MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE AS AMICI CURIAE IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONERS

KENNETH L. SALAZAR.
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, LLP.
SETH P. WAXMAN, COUNSEL OF RECORD.
JAMIE S. GORELICK.
PAUL R.Q. WOLFSON.
DAVID M. LEHN.
SAURABH H. SANGHVI.
RYAN MCCARL.
JOHN B. SPRANGERS.
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, LLP.

INTEREST OF AMICI CURIAE

Amici are 186 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 39 Members of the U.S. Senate. A complete list of amici is set forth in the Appendix. Among them are:

U.S. House of Representatives:
Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader.
Steny H. Hoyer, Democratic Whip.
James E. Clyburn, Assistant Democratic Leader.
Xavier Becerra, Democratic Caucus Chair.
Joseph Crowley, Democratic Caucus Vice-Chair.
John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary.
Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security of the Committee on the Judiciary.
U.S. Senate:
Harry Reid, Democratic Leader.
Richard J. Durbin, Democratic Whip.
Charles E. Schumer, Democratic Conference Committee Vice Chair and Policy Committee Chair, and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, Committee on the Judiciary.
Patty Murray, Secretary, Democratic Conference.
Patrick J. Leahy, Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary.
Robert Menendez, Democratic Hispanic Task Force Chair.

As Members of Congress responsible, under Article I of the Constitution, for enacting legislation that will then be enforced by the Executive Branch pursuant to its authority and responsibility under Article II, amici have an obvious and distinct interest in ensuring that the Executive enforces the laws in a manner that is rational, effective, and faithful to Congress's intent. Given their institutional responsibility, amici would not support executive efforts at odds with duly enacted federal statutes. But where Congress has chosen to vest in the Executive discretionary authority to determine how a law should be enforced and the Executive has acted pursuant to that authority—as is the case here—amici have a strong interest in ensuring that federal courts honor Congress's deliberate choice by sustaining the Executive's action.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Congress understands that the Executive is often better positioned to determine how to adjust quickly to changing circumstances in complex fields, particularly ones involving law-enforcement and national-security concerns. Congress therefore regularly gives the Executive broad discretion to determine how to enforce such statutes. Rarely has it done so more clearly than in the Nation's immigration laws.

Recognizing the Executive's institutional advantages in the immigration context, Congress has for more than sixty years granted the Executive broad discretionary authority to ''establish such regulations; . . . issue such instructions; and perform such other acts as [the Secretary] deems necessary for carrying out his authority'' under the Immigration and Nationality Act (''INA''). 8 U.S.C. 1103(a)(3). And in 2002, in the face of a yawning gap between the size of the unauthorized immigrant population and the amount of resources reasonably available for enforcement, Congress charged the Secretary of Homeland Security with ''[e]stablishing national immigration enforcement policies and priorities.'' 6 U.S.C. 202(5). Congress thereby encouraged the Executive to focus its resources in a rational and effective manner on cases in which the Nation's interest in removal is strongest, to provide the maximum return on Congress's sizeable but necessarily finite investment in immigration enforcement.

As representatives of diverse communities across the United States, amici have witnessed how an approach to enforcement of the immigration laws that does not focus on appropriate priorities undermines confidence in those laws, wastes resources, and needlessly divides families, thereby exacting a severe human toll. Amici thus regard the DAPA Guidance as exactly the kind of ''enforcement polic[y]'' that Congress charged the Secretary with establishing. Building on the Secretary's decision to prioritize for enforcement threats to national security, border security, and public safety, the DAPA Guidance establishes a ''polic[y]'' that certain nonpriority immigrants may be considered for ''deferred action,'' i.e., memorialized temporary forbearance from removal, which triggers eligibility for work authorization upon a showing of economic need.

This Court has observed that deferred action is a ''commendable exercise in administrative discretion.'' Reno v. American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Comm., 525 U.S. 471, 484 (1999) (''ADC''). Deferred action is not just a humanitarian exercise. Like other uses of deferred action, the DAPA Guidance facilitates the implementation of the Secretary's priorities and promotes the efficient and effective execution of the immigration laws consistent with the limited enforcement resources available. The Guidance does this by encouraging eligible persons to submit to a background check so they can be identified and classified according to removal priority, and by enabling those with an economic need to support themselves lawfully.

That the Secretary's guidance is within his statutory authority should not be open to doubt. For half a century, the Executive has used deferred action and other forms of discretionary relief in a variety of circumstances, even when not specifically authorized by statute. Congress has approved of those practices, repeatedly amending the immigration laws without foreclosing the Executive's broad discretion to use them—and even enacting provisions that presume the Executive will continue its discretionary practice of deferred action. Similarly, Congress has explicitly recognized the Executive's broad discretion to determine which removable individuals qualify for work authorization and has never disturbed the Executive's decades-long practice of providing work authorization to those granted deferred action.

The court of appeals' holding that the DAPA Guidance is ''manifestly contrary to the INA'' reflects a misreading of the INA

and a faulty approach to interpreting complex regulatory statutes like the immigration laws. The court reasoned that the immigration laws' specific references to discretionary relief from removal and work authorization under certain circumstances implicitly foreclosed discretionary relief and work authorization under others. But deferred action is not a substitute for specific statutory statuses and forms of discretionary relief, as it grants none of the legal rights that lawful status provides. Moreover, the court's expressio unius analysis disregards the broad grants of discretion that are explicit in the immigration laws and the long history of undisturbed executive exercise of that discretion. The court's approach would make it virtually impossible for Congress to grant the Executive the broad authority and discretion required to tackle urgent and unforeseen immigration challenges, while retaining the ability to direct specific enforcement action it deems appropriate. More generally, it would hamper Congress's ability to allocate to the Executive the combination of broad discretion and specific responsibilities so often needed to administer sprawling statutory schemes effectively.

Finally, even if a claim under the Take Care Clause is justiciable, and even if such a claim may be asserted against an Executive officer other than the President, the claim must fail here. The States' challenge rises and falls on the proper interpretation of the immigration laws, and thus should be viewed as presenting only a statutory claim. In any event, the Take Care Clause surely does not prevent an agency faced with the task of removing hundreds of thousands of individuals each year from pursuing such removals in a rational rather than haphazard manner in light of its limited enforcement resources.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letter:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, November 4, 1999.

Embargoed for release Monday, November 8, 1999.

Contact: Allen Kay, Rep. Lamar Smith.

Re Guidelines for use of prosecutorial discretion in removal proceedings.

Hon. JANET RENO,
Attorney General, Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

Hon. DORIS M. MEISSNER,
Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, DC.

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO AND COMMISSIONER MEISSNER: Congress and the Administration have devoted substantial attention and resources to the difficult yet essential task of removing criminal aliens from the United States. Legislative reforms enacted in 1996, accompanied by increased funding, enabled the Immigration and Naturalization Service to remove increasing numbers of criminal aliens, greatly benefitting public safety in the United States.

However, cases of apparent extent hardship have caused concerns Some cases may involve removal proceedings against legal permanent residents who came to the United States when they were very young, and many years ago committed a single crime at the lower end of the ''aggravated felony'' spectrum, but have been law-abiding ever since, obtained and held jobs and remained self-sufficient, and started families in the United States. Although they did not become United States citizens, immediate family members are citizens.

There has been widespead agreement that some deportations were unfair and resulted in unjustifiable hardship. If the facts substantiate the presentations that have been made to us, we must ask why the INS pursued removal in such cases when so many other more serious cases existed.

We write to you because many people believe that you have the discretion to alleviate some of the hardships, and we wish to solicit your views as to why you have been unwilling to exercise such authority in some of the cases that have occurred. In addition, we ask whether your view is that the 1996 amendments somehow eliminated that discretion. The principle of prosecutorial discretion is well established. Indeed, INS General and Regional Counsel have taken the position, apparently well-grounded in case law, that INS has prosecutorial discretion in the initiation or termination of removal proceedings (see attached memorandum). Furthermore, a number of press reports indicate that the INS has already employed this discretion in some cases.

True hardship cases call for the exercise of such discretion, and over the past year many Members of Congress have urged the INS to develop guidelines for the use of its prosecutorial discretion. Optimally, removal proceedings should be initiated or terminated only upon specific instructions from authorized INS officials, issued in accordance with agency guidelines. However, the INS apparently has not yet promulgated such guidelines.

The undersigned Members of Congress believe that just as the Justice Department's United States Attorneys rely on detailed guidelines governing the exercise of their prosecutorial discretion, INS District Directors also require written guidelines, both to legitimate in their eyes the exercise of discretion and to ensure that their decisions to initiate or terminate removal proceedings are not made in an inconsistent manner. We look forward to working with you to resolve this matter and hope that you will develop and implement guildelines for INS prosecutorial discretion in an expeditious and fair manner.

Sincerely,

Henry J. Hyde; Lamar Smith; Bill McCollum; Bill Barrett; Barney Frank; Sheila Jackson Lee; Martin Frost; Howard L. Berman; Brian P. Billbray; Charles T. Canady; Nathan Deal; David Dreier; Eddie Bernice Johnson; Patrick J. Kennedy.

James P. McGovern; F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.; Henry A. Waxman; Gene Green; Corrine Brown; Barbara Cubin; Lincoln Diaz-Balart; Bob Filner; Sam Johnson; Matthew G. Martinez; Martin T. Meehan; Christopher Shays; Kay Granger; Ciro D. Rodriguez.

The material previously referred to by Ms. SLAUGHTER is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 649 OFFERED BY MS. SLAUGHTER

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

SEC. 2. Immediately upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the resolution (H. Res. 646) expressing the position of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

SEC. 3. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of House Resolution 646.

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. SESSIONS. 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.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. 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 234, nays 181, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 127]

YEAS—234

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)
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
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
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
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
Palazzo
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
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
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
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—181

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
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
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
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—18

Buchanan
Comstock
DeSantis
Fincher
Frankel (FL)
Graves (MO)
Himes
Jordan
Kirkpatrick
Lieu, Ted
Rooney (FL)
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Smith (WA)
Westmoreland
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

□ 1043

Mr. McDERMOTT, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Messrs. RUIZ, COHEN, TONKO, and HINOJOSA changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. COFFMAN and Mrs. LUMMIS changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

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.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 234, nays 180, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 128]

YEAS—234

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)
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
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
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
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
Palazzo
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
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
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
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—180

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn

Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
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)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
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)
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
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—19

Buchanan
Comstock
DeSantis
Fincher
Frankel (FL)
Graves (MO)
Jordan
Kirkpatrick
Lieu, Ted
Quigley
Rooney (FL)
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Sherman
Smith (WA)
Stutzman
Westmoreland
Young (IN)

□ 1050

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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1831. An act to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 719. An act to rename the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Great Falls, Montana, the Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center.

AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO APPEAR AS AMICUS CURIAE ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 649, I call up the resolution (H. Res. 639) authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15674, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, is the Speaker not already authorized by way of the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group to offer an amicus brief with current authority without the need to pass the resolution under consideration?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may consult clause 8 of rule II for the role of the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will please state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Is it in order to offer an amendment to amend section 2 of the resolution to make the text of any amicus brief to be filed available for all Members to review for 3 days previous to its filing?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 649, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution to its adoption without intervening motion, except for a motion to recommit.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Is it in order to amend section 2 of the resolution to formally include the amicus brief prepared by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) and signed by more than 200 Democrats?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair just stated, the previous question is ordered without intervening motion, except on a motion to recommit.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. So it is not in order?

Mr. POLIS. Is or isn't?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. No intervening motions are in order except as provided in House Resolution 649.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Okay. Mr. Speaker, further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Is it in order to offer an amendment to section 3 that would make available all names of outside counsel that will be providing services to the Office of General Counsel; that way the American public can know who all the outside counsel is?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair's response remains the same.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, further inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Is it in order to offer an amendment to include a CBO report on the costs of the Office of General Counsel that would occur under this resolution?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair's response must remain the same.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Isn't it true, Mr. Speaker, that every President since President Eisenhower and up through President Obama has used powers granted to them by Congress to set aside the deportation of certain immigrants?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has not stated an inquiry related to the pending proceedings.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. I thought I was.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I have a further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, is it true that Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush protected in excess of 1 million undocumented immigrants by executive action?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is not stating a parliamentary inquiry related to the pending proceedings.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Further parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I believe that what we are seeing here are some dilatory moves on behalf of the minority. While I respect every bit of that, we have decorum that is established in this House, and I believe the Speaker has adequately responded to the questions thereon by the gentlemen, and I ask that we move on forward.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask unanimous consent——

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend. All Members will suspend.

Pursuant to House Resolution 649, the resolution is considered read.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 639

Resolved, That the Speaker is authorized to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the Supreme Court in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674, and to file a brief in support of the position that the petitioners have acted in a manner that is not consistent with their duties under the Constitution and laws of the United States.

SEC. 2. The Speaker shall notify the House of Representatives of a decision to file one or

more briefs as amicus curiae pursuant to this resolution.

SEC. 3. The Office of General Counsel of the House of Representatives, at the direction of the Speaker, shall represent the House in connection with the filing of any brief as amicus curiae pursuant to this resolution, including supervision of any outside counsel providing services to the Speaker on a pro bono basis for such purpose.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The resolution shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Rules.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes, once again, the gentleman from Texas.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will please state her parliamentary inquiry.

Ms. LOFGREN. Under the rules of the House, in order to accept volunteer efforts, one must be cleared by the Committee on Ethics. The resolution purports to seek pro bono assistance, but the inquiry is whether this comports with the rules of the House requiring the Committee on Ethics to preclear the acceptance of such assistance to avoid unseemly or potentially illegal assistance?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will not interpret a pending measure. That is a matter for debate.

The gentleman from Texas is recognized.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. 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 Texas?

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H. Res. 639, authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al.

Mr. Speaker, as we have earlier stated, as we were debating and discussing the rule, over 25 States or State officials have filed suits challenging the Obama administration's expansion of DACA and the creation of DACA-like programs for aliens who are parents of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.

The States allege that these administrative actions run afoul of the Take Care Clause of the Constitution. Article II, section 3 declares that the President ''shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed,'' which requires any President to enforce all constitutional valid acts of Congress, regardless of the administration's views of the wisdom or the policy.

The States in this case that brought the case in southern Texas allege that these actions run afoul of the separation of powers set forth in the Constitution Article I, section 8, which gives Congress—not the President—the authority to establish a uniform rule of naturalization. That is directly from the Constitution.

Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, which clearly specifies the limited cases in which the executive branch can suspend the removal of unlawful aliens.

Mr. Speaker, this administration has sought review on this case from the Supreme Court, which granted its petition, and that is because this administration lost in the Federal District Court in the Southern District of Texas and lost its case in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

In doing so, the Court indicated that it would also consider the plaintiffs' claims under the Take Care Clause.

I include in the RECORD the official document from the Supreme Court.

UNITED STATES, ET AL. V. TEXAS, ET AL.

The petition for a writ of certiorari is granted. In addition to the questions presented by the petition, the parties are directed to brief and argue the following question: ''Whether the Guidance violates the Take Care Clause of the Constitution, Art. II, §3.''

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, the questions presented in the case are really extraordinarily significant to the House of Representatives. In particular, this case raises issues related to the limits on executive discretion not to enforce laws enacted by Congress as well as the point at which the exercise of such discretion turns into lawmaking, thereby infringing on Congress' Article I legislative powers.

□ 1100

It is precisely because of these constitutional questions pending before the highest court in our land, the United States Supreme Court, that the U.S. House of Representatives—which, I believe, will present a side which we believe is important from a constitutional perspective—will consider this resolution. The House, I believe, will and must protect its Article I legislative powers on behalf of the American people and on behalf of Representatives who believe in self-governance.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, today there are a lot of legal arguments and talk. I want to make sure the American people listening at home and watching at home know exactly what we are talking about here today.

I want to talk about somebody whose life is on pause, waiting for the DAPA program to clear the courts. The brief that the Republicans are seeking to file is the exact opposite. It is saying that DAPA cannot occur. And this gentleman and his family, Colorado constituents of mine—just to put a human face on it—show what DAPA means for so many families across our country.

Mr. Edin Ramos of Colorado—he is pictured there next to his three lovely kids and his wife—is a native of Honduras. He has been in the United States for over 13 years. His kids are American citizens, were born here, don't know any other country. He fled his home country to avoid persecution and extortion at the hands of local, corrupt officials and gangs.

He is married to a U.S. citizen. They have three young children together. He is a very successful business owner in my district. He and his wife employ 12 people. They make investments in our local community. We rely on them for jobs, for the services they provide. Yet the lack of any peace of mind prevents families like Edin Ramos' from reaching their full potential.

Every day his kids come home from school, and his wife worries over something as minor as a taillight being out or a speeding ticket, that Mr. Ramos could find himself in detention for an indefinite period of time, removed from his family, or even deported to another country which he doesn't have any ties to.

I would also like to talk about the case of Ms. Mercedes Garcia. Mercedes is a long-time resident of my hometown, Boulder, Colorado. Her life has been greatly affected by the arbitrariness of an immigration system that is immoral and has lacked meaningful priorities.

She has been in the United States for close to 20 years. She is the mother of three American children, U.S. citizen children. But you know what happened? Her husband was removed from the United States in 2011 over a traffic citation, forcing her to be the sole provider for her three children.

Now, Mercedes is undocumented herself, and she fears contact by immigration authorities on a daily basis. DAPA was a ray of hope for her. What DAPA would do is provide Mercedes with a meaningful level of certainty, the ability to legally seek employment, the ability to provide her family with expanded opportunities here in the U.S., and would help make her American citizen children as successful as they are able to be.

Her children are just as American as you or me, Mr. Speaker, as is anyone born in the United States. Don't they deserve to have their mother help them succeed with all the great promises that this country offers? Why can't we give that certainty to their mother?

DAPA is a legal, commonsense, lawful exercise of discretion. It is consistent with the actions of Presidents, both Democratic and Republican, for decades. It directs, very simply, with the limited amount of enforcement resources we have in the Department of Homeland Security, that we want to focus on removing undocumented immigrants who pose a threat to public safety or national security—not Mr.

Ramos, not Ms. Garcia. We want to remove those who represent a danger or a threat to our country.

To somehow misfocus those limited resources on tearing apart families instead of going after criminals would put the American people at risk. The President has acted to make the American people safer by ensuring that our limited law enforcement resources are focused where they will have the biggest impact.

These policies are very simple. They create a process for low-priority enforcement immigrants who come forward, submit to a background check, register, be able to get a provisional work permit, and work legally. It enhances our public safety and national security.

Yet we hear people from the other side saying: Well, this is something Congress should have done. I agree. This is something Congress should have done. You know what? It is not my fault Congress didn't do it.

I have talked about immigration every week and every month here on the floor of the House. I cosponsored a comprehensive bill. I signed a discharge petition last Congress to try to bring it forward. Yes, I agree.

You know what? Congress didn't do it, Mr. Speaker. And that is on the Republican majority that Congress failed to act.

So the President moved forward with the legal authority he has and that Republican and Democratic Presidents in the past have used to say that Ms. Garcia is not the same risk to this country as a dangerous criminal.

It is common sense, and it is about time that we move forward with DAPA and DACA.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, at this time you will see that our Republican Members that will come and speak are men and women not only with extensive legal experience, grounded in the law and the Constitution of the United States but will make their arguments from a professional nature that are directly related to the law.

I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), who served as a judge in Texas, and is a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the issue before us today is whether the U.S. Constitution will be followed by the President or not. That is the issue. That is why we have this unusual situation, where the House of Representatives, by this resolution, is joining in on a legal action to let that be resolved by the judiciary branch of government.

It all started in November of 2014, when the Department of Homeland Security wrote out a memo and sent it out to the fruited plain and said that the Department of Homeland Security would no longer enforce U.S. immigration law.

The Department of Homeland Security is a branch, a portion of the administration.

This unprecedented, unilateral action by the executive branch was a nullification of immigration law of the United States. And it was not done by Congress. It was done by administrative edict that came from the White House.

Article I, section 8, clause 4 states that Congress—that is us—has the power ''to establish an uniform rule of naturalization'' in the United States.

So what value is the law or the Constitution if the executive, who is supposed to enforce the law—not make it, as we all learned in ninth grade civics—sends out a memo saying it will no longer enforce the law?

The law of the land is repealed by the administrative pen because the President doesn't like the law, as written.

Repealing a law is supposed to be a legislative action—that is Congress—and is not supposed to be an executive action; that is, if the Constitution is followed, which it is not under these circumstances.

This illegal executive action will place a burden on the States that the action is taking place against, such as my home State of Texas, where the amnesty proclamation by the executive branch, through its memo, has been in effect.

The Federal Government is not going to pay for the benefits of these 5 million-plus folks. The States will be forced, required, and obligated to pay for that.

So the States will pay for the driver's licenses, government benefits, and health care benefits for these newly legalized individuals. All of the money the State spends will be taken away from the ability to provide services for U.S. citizens and residents who are already legally in the U.S.

This action is in direct contravention of U.S. law. Texas, my State, will be one of the hardest-hit. That is why the Governor of the State of Texas was the first to file a lawsuit—this lawsuit—against the unconstitutional action by the executive branch of government. And that occurred in 2014.

The Constitution, to me, is very simple. It lays out an outline for democracy. Congress makes the laws; the executive branch faithfully executes the laws; and the judiciary resolves disputes between government, other entities, and between the branches of government.

So, if U.S. immigration law is going to be changed, the Constitution states that it should be changed by the U.S. Congress. That is us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. POE of Texas. Even if the Congress doesn't act, that doesn't give the executive branch Burger King authority.

The Burger King philosophy is: the President wants it his way. He can't have it his way. He has got to follow the Constitution. He is a former constitutional law professor. He ought to know better.

That is what this lawsuit is about. That is why it is a constitutional issue. And that is why we should join in with those other Governors in filing this lawsuit with an amicus brief to support the Constitution of the United States against executive memos from the executive branch.

The executive branch should take care of the Constitution, not tear up the Constitution.

That is just the way it is.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ), a great leader on the issue of uniting families.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, we shouldn't even be here today. This is partisan politics at its worst. And using the resources of the Federal Government and the legislative branch of government to promote a political agenda is just an affront to all Americans.

Why don't you just say it clearly? This is your: I want to deport 4 to 5 million people. I wish the majority would stop talking about the Constitution and really talk about what it is they mean to achieve here.

If you want to see people deported, why don't you all stand up and say it? Be men and women of integrity and of your word and say: I want 4 to 5 million unprotected, and amend this to say, ''this is a mass deportation for 4 to 5 million people.''

You keep saying that the candidates out there on the Presidential trail do not represent your values, do not represent who you are politically, and then you come back here and stoke the fire even more.

What you are demonstrating here is that you should be doing immigration reform. What you are demonstrating here is your impotence at being able to get it done. Why don't you just say that this is what it is all about?

Because out on the campaign trail, on immigration, we get lots of demagoguery from the majority. The debate has sunk to a level where people are actually throwing punches, and worse.

Two refugees from Southeast Asia and a gentleman from Puerto Rico were shot and murdered in front of their children in Milwaukee because they didn't have the right accent in their voice.

□ 1115

Two students, a Muslim and a Latino, were attacked by a man when they encountered him beating a Black man in Kansas this week, and he turned to them and shouted racist threats and said they should just go and leave the country.

We have Go Back to Africa and Hitler salutes, and all of this is becoming more and more what we expect, the reality we see in 2016.

And now the Republicans in the House are stoking the same anti-immigrant fears and mass deportation fantasies some more. No, they are not

leading. They are not calling for calmer rhetoric, let alone more rational policies. They are playing politics with immigrants, plain and simple. Shame on them.

If Republicans are so secure in the validity of their arguments, they should write a brief and submit it, just like the 259 Democrats did last week, without politicizing and using this august body to bring about your partisan political hatred against immigrants.

The vote is a political stunt disguised as a legal brief. This is not a legal brief. This is a political stunt. The Republican majority sees a crass political opportunity to stand with the anti-immigrant wing of their party.

I guess the Speaker thinks, hey, why play it straight when you can force a purely political vote on immigration, designed to deepen the partisan line and validate the very angry people who go around showing their hatred, their bigotry, and their prejudice in the political process in America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

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

I recognize that there are people in this body who are frustrated, and I have engaged a number of those people very thoughtfully, and they have tried to engage me, I think, thoughtfully.

But the essence of what today's argument is about is actually a legal exercise because, in fact, the Federal District Court in southern Texas, Judge Andy Hanen, looked at the law, and he, in a judicial sense, heard evidence that would be presented from all of the some 25 States, as well as the Federal Government; and findings of facts and conclusions of law, not upon hyper-political accusations or bombastic comments that are made to attack another side, is what actually prevailed in the case.

I am well aware that a number of our colleagues want to talk about politics, politics, politics, and make accusations. This is about the foundation of law, and it actually goes to direct words out of the Constitution of the United States.

A Federal District Court is particularly in tune with those arguments as they handle constitutional issues and questions, and the Court clearly found in favor of these States. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, in reviewing that case, came to that same conclusion.

Mr. Speaker, I believe you will see that the Supreme Court will also rule on the law, not upon political sound bites that come back and forth from this body.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the distinguished gentleman who, I believe, represents not only thought and balance, but who is trying to work within the constitutional confines and the laws of this country.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the chairman for his leadership on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, without enforcement of the law, there cannot be accountability under law, and political accountability is essential to a functioning democracy. We in the House of Representatives who face re-election every 2 years, under the Constitution, are perhaps reminded of that more than others. And while there is at least one political branch willing to enforce the law, we will not fail to act through whatever means by which we can successfully avail ourselves.

When the President fails to perform his constitutional duty that he take care that the laws be faithfully executed, the Congress has appropriations and other powers over the President. But none of those powers can be exercised if a sizable Senate minority controlled by the President's own political party refuses to exercise them, or in the absence of veto-proof majorities in both Houses. Nor would the exercise of those powers solve the problem at hand because they would not actually require the President to faithfully execute the laws.

Of course, the most powerful and always available means of solving the problem at hand is to vote out of office a President who abuses his power. In the meantime, however, the need to pursue the establishment of clear principles of political accountability is of the essence.

So today we consider a resolution to authorize the Speaker to file on behalf of the House in litigation brought by a majority of the States challenging the constitutionality of the President's unilateral immigration amnesty program.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court agreed to hear that constitutional challenge to the President's immigration plan, which the people's legislative representatives never approved.

So far, a Federal judge in Texas has issued a preliminary injunction in the case blocking the enforcement of the President's unilateral immigration amnesty. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld that injunction.

Importantly, the Supreme Court granted certiorari in the case and, rather than limiting the issue the way President Obama requested, it took the State's suggestion and requested briefing on the following question: ''whether the President's action violates the Take Care Clause of the Constitution, Article II, section 3.''

That clause of the Constitution requires the President to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

The Founders would have expected Members of the House of Representatives, known as the people's House for its most direct connection to the will of the people, to aggressively guard their role in the constitutional legislative process. The resolution before us today will provide another means of doing just that.

The stakes of inaction are high. The lawsuit challenges the President's failure to enforce key provisions of the immigration laws.

We should all support this resolution today as it aims to help deliver a simple message: Congress writes the laws, under Article I, section 1, the very first sentence of the United States Constitution.

We should all support this resolution today. Our own constitutionally required oath to support the Constitution of the United States requires no less.

What is required of the President of the United States is found in Article II, section 3, which says, ''he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.'' That is the issue before us.

For the Court to pay attention to this institution's concern, the Court requires that the Congress take a vote, and that is what we should do today in order to let the Court know that this brief is not just a collection of a group of Members; this is an actual vote of the United States House of Representatives to ask the Court to consider our very well-founded concerns and protect the people's House, protect the people's rights under the Constitution, protect the Constitution itself, and Article I, section 1, which said very simply, ''All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States.''

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

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of Latin used on the other side. But the plain English is this vote is about ripping apart the families of my constituents, Mr. Ramos, Ms. Garcia, countless others, millions across the country. And this vote would weigh in from the House of Representatives that the House of Representatives, those who vote for this, want those families ripped apart.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA), the chairman of the Democratic Caucus.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

So last week, 186 Members of this House and 39 Senators from the Senate filed an amicus brief. We filed it before the Supreme Court in this very case that is being discussed, United States v. Texas. But we filed it without using taxpayer dollars. We filed it individually, separately from our official duties.

The brief that we submitted supports the actions which President Obama took because he is our Nation's chief executive and he has the right to try to make our laws work as best as possible.

In the case of our immigration laws, everyone agrees that they are broken, they are fractured, and it is a system that does not work coherently. There are more than 4 million people who will be impacted by the decision that the Supreme Court reaches in the case of United States v. Texas. President

Obama took his actions exercising his authority under the Constitution to execute and implement the laws of the land.

So here we are today. Speaker RYAN and my colleagues on the House side, on the Republican side, will force this House to vote on a resolution authorizing the House to file a similar type of amicus brief, albeit in this case opposing the President's position in the case of United States v. Texas.

But there is a big difference between the amicus brief that was filed by 186 Members of this House and 39 Members in the Senate and what the Republican majority in the House is intending to do today—a big difference. They are looking to use taxpayer money to push forward their political partisan agenda and their position in this case of United States v. Texas; so they are injecting every American who pays taxes into this fight, even though most Americans support a comprehensive fix to our immigration system.

Why would we want to use taxpayer dollars to go litigate? These days it seems that my Republican colleagues in Congress spend more time and taxpayer money filing partisan lawsuits and legal briefs than working to pass the country's must-do legislation. We have got a budget to do. We should be passing jobs legislation, and, yes, we should be fixing a broken immigration system by passing comprehensive immigration reform.

Congress doesn't need to file a legal brief lobbying the Supreme Court to fix our broken laws. Most Americans know from their high school civics classes that the Constitution vests the Congress with the power to make or change any law without having to hope or wait for the Supreme Court to bail out Congress for not doing its work.

In fact, today, Speaker RYAN said: ''The legislative branch of government needs to be the branch making our laws, not the executive.'' He is absolutely right. So rather than doing legislation to file a lawsuit, let's do our job, which is to make the laws.

This Republican Congress, unfortunately, is completely out of step with the interests and expectations of the American people. It is time to legislate, not to litigate.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, consistent with the Republican message today, one of our other senior Members who is a former chairman of the Judiciary Committee now serves as the chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. He is a gentleman who has devoted himself and his life to the rule of law, a gentleman who is in the thick of the understanding of the immigration issue, being from San Antonio, Texas. He has seen for a long time the need and the desire for not just Congress to work with the executive branch, but the rule of law. He has believed in that in his years of service to the Judiciary Committee. He stands as a testament to his belief in constitutional law—including Federal court and Supreme Court decisions—and how important they are. I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that this gentleman has, for a long time, spoken with balance and credibility on the issue, not just to rule of law, but also about this Nation and how we do treat those who come to this country with dignity and respect.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the young chairman from Texas.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the chairman of the Rules Committee and my Texas colleague for yielding me time and also for his very generous comments.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution authorizing the Speaker to submit an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in support of the Texas-led lawsuit challenging the President's amnesty policies.

It is critical that the House of Representatives defend the Constitution, which specifically gives Congress, not the President, the power to enact immigration laws.

Regrettably, the President's policies have ignored laws, undermined laws, and changed immigration laws. The President's policies have led to a surge of tens of thousands of illegal immigrants across our borders, allowed unlawful immigrants to compete with unemployed Americans for scarce jobs, and established sanctuary cities that release dangerous criminal immigrants into our neighborhoods where many go on to commit other crimes.

The House of Representatives must reinforce the rule of law and protect the lives and livelihoods of the American people. Mr. Speaker, that is why I support this resolution.

□ 1130

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democratic leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, happy St. Patrick's Day to you. What a way House Republicans have chosen to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Today we pay tribute to the contributions of generations of Irish immigrants and their descendants to the fabric of America. Today we are reminded that ours is truly a nation of immigrants—that immigrants have truly made America more American with their optimism, their hope, and their courage to come to America, and to make a future better for their families. That is what America is all about, and that is what immigrants have strengthened.

We have spent this entire week with our Irish friends celebrating the heritage of immigrants in America. The Taoiseach—that would be the Prime Minister of Ireland—was here in the Capitol earlier in the week. He spoke about immigration last night at the dinner. In the letter that was read by the Irish Ambassador from the Taoiseach, he talked about immigration. Here on the floor of the House, we are talking about immigration in a totally negative way.

Why would House Republicans want to spend St. Patrick's Day in this insulting manner to Irish immigrants?

House Republicans have brought forward a resolution authorizing the Speaker to file an anti-immigrant amicus brief with the Supreme Court, but they won't tell the House or the American people what they are planning to say in it. Given Republicans' past positions and rhetoric, that raises serious questions:

Will the Republicans yet again call for tearing apart families?

Will they call for deporting DREAMers?

Will they yet again suggest a religious test for prospective immigrants?

Will they ask the Court to explore ending birthright American citizenship, as they did in their Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee hearing?

Sadly, there is not much difference between the rhetoric of the Republican candidate for President and House Republicans when it comes to a record of appalling anti-immigrant statements—an agenda of discrimination.

Furthermore, Republicans have denied House Democrats the opportunity to have a meaningful vote on our alternative amicus brief in support of the President's immigration executive actions, which we filed with the Court last week, 225 House and Senate Democrats.

The fact is the President's immigration actions fall within the legal and constitutional precedent established by every administration, Republican and Democrat, since President Eisenhower.

The fact is the President has the right to take these administrative actions under the law, and he also is following in the precedents of former Presidents to do so.

I don't know if the Republicans were silent or didn't know what was going on when President Reagan went further in his administrative actions on immigration in terms of affecting a higher percentage of immigrants than President Obama's actions have affected.

The President is acting because Congress has refused to act to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Even when the Republicans in the Senate had a bipartisan bill, it did not get the chance to have a vote in this House. So the President has acted.

President Reagan, to his credit, acted even after Congress acted, and he signed their bill into law, and then he said back to Congress that you didn't go far enough to protect families. So he initiated, by executive action, Family Fairness. That was carried on by President George Herbert Walker Bush, and the spirit of all of that was carried on by President George W. Bush, all of those, including President Clinton in between and President Obama, were

strong, strong advocates for comprehensive immigration reform and respecting the role that immigrants play as a consistent reinvigoration of America.

So, by law, legal authority and by precedent, legal authority, the President has the right to do this. If it was okay when President Reagan did it and President George Herbert Walker Bush did it, why isn't it okay when President Obama takes these same administration acts and, as I said, affecting a smaller percentage of people than President Reagan did?

So here we go. It is long past time for us to have comprehensive immigration reform that honors our heritage and our history. Immigration has always been the reinvigoration of America. Each wave of immigrants brings their hopes, their aspirations, their faith, their work ethic, and their determination to succeed to our shores.

Let us not tear families apart and deport young DREAMers and their parents. Let us oppose this radical, narrow-minded, anti-immigrant resolution. This St. Patrick's Day, let us recognize the immense contributions that immigrants of all cultures and all creeds have made to the past, to the present, and to the greatness of America.

Happy St. Patrick's Day.

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

Mr. Speaker, consistent with what we have seen for the last 8 years by a White House and administration, so we see here on the floor of the House of Representatives a denial of trying to follow the law but, rather, to blame people, including using the word ''discriminatory'' and trying to attach that to a party.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, this issue is far different. This is based upon rule of law. In the Federal District Court in the Southern District of Texas, during the trial, there was a determination that was being pushed about whether DACA would be characterized as an exercise of prosecutorial discretion. In fact, when challenged, because this was a claim that the administration made, that Federal district court examined the operation of the DACA process, and despite the claim or the reason why the President had this authority, that DACA was applied on a case-by-case basis, the administration could not provide one piece of evidence in the Federal district court, no examples of DACA applicants who would meet the program's criteria.

Mr. Speaker, it does matter why you do something, how you do something, and, if you are going to be a professional, how you sustain that which you have done, in a Federal district court, when asked directly to sustain what the assertions are, could not even sustain their answers.

This is why we are talking about rule of law, Mr. Speaker, and to come here and ascribe insults to a party, to a Presidential process, or to a rule, a body that operates under rule of law, I believe misses the point.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY) in order to further this example of why Republicans are on the floor at this time, and he will so adequately explain our case.

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, the issue in this case actually implicates the very existence of the House. The law is the reason we exist. We do not exist to pass ideas or to pass suggestions. We make law with the corresponding expectation that that law will be enforced, respected, and executed.

We do so because the law is the thread that holds the tapestry of this country together. It is the most unifying, equalizing force that we have. It makes the rich respect the poor, and it allows the powerless to challenge the powerful. Attempts to undermine the law, Mr. Speaker, regardless of the motivation, are detrimental to the social order.

In 2014, President Obama declared unilaterally that almost 5 million unlawful immigrants would receive deferred action under some tortured definition of ''prosecutorial discretion.''

I can't help but note the word ''discretion'' means sometimes you say yes, and sometimes you say no. But, of course, the administration has never said no. The Court found not a single time has the administration said no. So that is not prosecutorial discretion, Mr. Speaker. That is lawlessness.

You may like what the President did. I take it from some of the speakers that they do, and you may actually wish what the President did was actually law. You may wish—Mr. Speaker, you may wish that when Democrats controlled the House, the Senate, and the White House for 2 years that they had lifted a finger to do a single, solitary thing about what they are talking about this morning. You may wish that. You may wish that all these grandiose policies that we are talking about this morning on the other side, that they cared enough about them to actually make law when they had a chance, but they did not.

They know now that one person doesn't make the law in a republic. You may want to live in a country where one person makes the law, but that would not be this country. You would have to look for another one.

The President knows this because, more than 20 times, Mr. Speaker, he said he could not do the very thing that he eventually did. His power didn't change. The law didn't change. The politics is all that changed.

We should have seen this coming, Mr. Speaker. He warned us. On this very floor, he warned us that he didn't need the people's House. He said he would do it with or without Congress. Many of you cheered when he said that. Many of you cheered because you benefit from the nonenforcement of the law today.

But tomorrow will be different. Tomorrow is coming, and tomorrow will be different. Tomorrow you will cry out for the enforcement of the law. Tomorrow you will want others to follow the law.

We are here, Mr. Speaker, because this administration violated one law in its haste to allow others to violate yet another law. The administration lost, and then they appealed. So here we are before the Supreme Court.

For too long, Mr. Speaker, Congress has let the executive branch engage in constitutional adverse possession. Today it is immigration. Tomorrow it will be some other law. One day, I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, one day your party may not control the gears of enforcement. One day a Republican President might decide that he or she doesn't like a law and is going to ignore it and fail to enforce it.

For more than two centuries, Mr. Speaker, the law has been more important than any political issue. It has been more important than any election, and it has been more important, frankly, than any one of us. It binds us together, and it embodies the virtues that we cherish like fairness, equality, justice, and mercy.

We symbolize our devotion to the law with this blindfolded woman holding a set of scales and a sword. That blindfold keeps her focus on the law. But I want you to understand this, Mr. Speaker: once that blindfold slips off, it is gone forever. You can want to put it back on, but it is gone forever, because once you weaken the law, good luck putting it back together.

So once you decide that some laws are worth enforcing and some are not, once you decide that some laws are worth following and others are not, then you have weakened this thing we call the law, and you have weakened it forever.

Let me just say this. I will say this, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't take any courage to follow a law you like. That doesn't take any courage, following a law you like? What takes courage, which makes us different, is we follow laws even that we don't like, and then we strive to change them—legally. That is the power and the fragility of the law. But once it is abandoned, it is weakened in the eyes of those we expect to follow it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes

Mr. GOWDY. I will say this, Mr. Speaker. In conclusion, in the oath of citizenship that we require new citizens to take—and I am sure the Speaker already knows this, and perhaps some of my colleagues on the other side may know this as well—but in that oath, it references the law five separate times, five separate references to this thing we call the law—in the very oath that we want new citizens to take, five times in a single paragraph.

Mr. Speaker, good luck explaining why new citizens should follow the law when those in power do not have to.

Good luck explaining the difference between anarchy and the wholesale failure to enforce the law simply because you do not like it. Good luck stopping the next President from ignoring a law that he or she does not like.

If the President can pick and choose which laws he likes, then so can the rest of us, and you have undermined the very thing that binds us together. So be careful what you do today. Tomorrow is coming.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO).

□ 1145

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, even 100 years ago, if you asked somebody who was living in Asia or Latin America or Europe where on Earth they would want to go if they were going to leave their home country, the answer was very clearly the United States of America.

We proudly say, as Americans, that we are a Nation of immigrants, yet throughout the generations, immigrants from different corners of the world have encountered resentment and scapegoating here in our land.

Today we celebrate St. Patrick's Day for the Irish. When the Irish came in the 1800s, they were greeted by signs that said ''No Irish need apply'' in cities like New York and Boston. The Chinese, for many decades, were excluded from admission into the United States. The Japanese and Germans were interned through World War II.

There was an operation called ''Operation Wetback'' in the Eisenhower administration that rounded up and deported thousands, if not over a million, Mexicans and Mexican Americans back to Mexico.

The latest iteration of those politics, the latest attempt to relive our worst mistakes started when a man—who may become President—called Mexican immigrants rapists and murderers.

There are times in our Nation's history when our politics become a race to the bottom, and it takes people of good faith, of different political stripes and beliefs, to stand up and put the brakes on it. Sometimes we have, and sometimes we have fail to do that. But make no mistake that we are in one of those eras now, and this resolution represents just the beginning.

My colleague from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ), about 45 minutes ago referenced talk of mass deportations. That is not just talk. That is coming from the leading Republican frontrunners for President.

Do you know what that means? That means that you are going to go pull 2- and 3- and 4-year-old kids out of homes, from their parents forcibly, and send them out of here. It means that you are going to take parents and drag them away from their kids, leaving them alone.

I know that there are people of very good faith who disagree with Democrats on this issue. In fact, many have spoken today, and I respect their opinions. But I would ask all of us, as Americans, to ask ourselves whether this represents the very best of our Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 1 minute.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. The fact is we are a Nation of immigrants, we have always been a Nation of immigrants, and we will always be a Nation of immigrants. It is what has made us strong, it is what has made us powerful around the world, it is what has earned us friends, and it is what has made us the envy of the world.

All of us have to make sure, in governing, that 50 years from now, when somebody in Europe or Latin America or Asia is asked where on Earth they would want to move, if they were going to leaving their home country, that the answer is still the United States of America.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his courtesy.

And to my fellow Texan who is managing on the other side, the chairman of the Rules Committee, it is a moment in history that we are speaking of, and it is powerful to follow my fellow Texan on the moment in history that we have.

Earlier today, I said that as my friends on the other side were debating about the will of the House, I indicated that it is a divided House, and that is not the will of the American people. It is evidenced in the rules.

So to go and suggest that any brief that would wish to overcome, if you will, the President's constitutional authority is bogus; it is not true. If this was a consensus, the brief would be prepared, and all Members would sign onto the brief. That is not the case.

As I come from Texas, let me say that much of what is being done is out of fear. You don't understand it. You don't understand DREAMers.

We do in Texas. We have a State law that allows our DREAMers to go to college, and they are making good. I see them in my office. And I know their parents, of whom we are speaking about, because some of their parents' children are, obviously, children who are citizens and who are able then at a point in time to be able to be under the DACA and the DAPA.

So let me reinforce the fact that the President has acted under executive orders that squarely fall under the Take Care Clause, as ensuring Presidential control over those who execute and enforce the laws. You can rely on Arizona v. United States, Bowsher v. Synar, Buckley v. Valeo, Printz v. United States, and Free Enterprise Fund v. PCAOB.

The enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, properly may exercise their discretion to devise and implement policies specific to laws they are charged with enforcing, the population they serve, and the problems they face so that they can prioritize our Nation's resources.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Texas an additional 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Are we to kick out children who are on their way to success and then their parents?

And the reason why I want to dispel this myth of fear: These parents are working. Maybe they are working in positions that others would not have; maybe they are working alongside of fellow Americans. I don't adhere to in any way to think of people displacing Americans looking for jobs. That is not this issue.

A principal feature of the removal system is the broad discretion exercised by immigration officials. Federal officials, as an initial matter—we have prioritized criminals and those who would do us harm.

But we are operating out of fear, just as was earlier said. When someone who—the world does not know whether he is a Presidential candidate or whether he is a spokesman for America—blocks and puts his hand up to stop all Muslims from coming in. Who will be next? Would it have been the Irish in the 1800s? Would it have been the Italians in the 1900s?

America has to get back to reasonable lawmaking, pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill, and make a difference.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying I don't want the next victim of domestic violence to be thrown out.

Vote against this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to both the rule (governing debate of H. Res. 639, and the underlying resolution, which authorizes the Speaker to appear as Amicus Curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674.

I oppose the resolution because it is nothing more than the Republican majority's latest partisan attack on the President and another diversionary tactic to avoid addressing the challenge posed by the nation's broken immigration system.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 639, if adopted, would vest in the Speaker alone the power to file on behalf of the full House an amicus brief with the Supreme Court supporting the constitutionally untenable position of 26 Republican-controlled states in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No.15–674.

Lying at the heart of the plaintiffs' misguided and wholly partisan complaint is the specious claim that President Obama lacked the constitutional and statutory authority to take executive actions to implement Administration policy regard to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents

of American Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents, the creation of (DAPA).

This frivolous and partisan lawsuit seeks to have DACA and DAPA declared invalid and to permanently enjoin the Obama Administration from implementing these salutary policies, both of which are intended to keep law-abiding and peace loving immigrant families together.

The purely partisan nature of the resolution before is revealed by its text, which authorizes the Speaker to waste precious taxpayer funds and file on behalf of every Member of the House an amicus brief that no Member has seen in support of a position opposed by virtually every member of the Democratic Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, let me briefly discuss why the executive actions taken by President Obama are reasonable, responsible, and within his constitutional authority.

Pursuant to Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution, the President, the nation's Chief Executive, ''shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed.''

In addition to establishing the President's obligation to execute the law, the Supreme Court has consistently interpreted the ''Take Care'' Clause as ensuring presidential control over those who execute and enforce the law and the authority to decide how best to enforce the laws. See, e.g., Arizona v. United States; Bowsher v. Synar; Buckley v. Valeo; Printz v. United States; Free Enterprise Fund v. PCAOB.

Every law enforcement agency, including the agencies that enforce immigration laws, has ''prosecutorial discretion,'' the inherent power to decide whom to investigate, arrest, detain, charge, and prosecute.

Thus, enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), properly may exercise their discretion to devise and implement policies specific to the laws they are charged with enforcing, the population they serve, and the problems they face so that they can prioritize our nation's resources to meet mission critical enforcement goals.

Mr. Speaker, to see the utter lack of merit in the legal position to be supported by the amicus brief permitted by H. Res. 639, one need take note of the fact that deferred action has been utilized in our nation for decades by Administrations headed by presidents of both parties without controversy or challenge.

In fact, as far back as 1976, INS and DHS leaders have issued at least 11 different memoranda providing guidance on the use of similar forms of prosecutorial discretion.

Executive authority to take action is thus ''fairly wide,'' and the federal government's discretion is extremely ''broad'' as the Supreme Court held in the recent case of Arizona v. United States, 132 S. Ct. 2492, 2499 (2012), an opinion written Justice Kennedy and joined by Chief Justice Roberts:

''Congress has specified which aliens may be removed from the United States and the procedures for doing so. Aliens may be removed if they were inadmissible at the time of entry, have been convicted of certain crimes, or meet other criteria set by federal law. Removal is a civil, not criminal, matter. A principal feature of the removal system is the broad discretion exercised by immigration officials. Federal officials, as an initial matter, must decide whether it makes sense to pursue removal at all. If removal proceedings commence, aliens may seek asylum and other discretionary relief allowing them to remain in the country or at least to leave without formal removal.'' (emphasis added) (citations omitted).

The Court's decision in Arizona v. United States, also strongly suggests that the executive branch's discretion in matters of deportation may be exercised on an individual basis, or it may be used to protect entire classes of individuals such as ''[u]nauthorized workers trying to support their families'' or immigrants who originate from countries torn apart by internal conflicts:

''Discretion in the enforcement of immigration law embraces immediate human concerns. Unauthorized workers trying to support their families, for example, likely pose less danger than alien smugglers or aliens who commit a serious crime. The equities of an individual case may turn on many factors, including whether the alien has children born in the United States, long ties to the community, or a record of distinguished military service.

Some discretionary decisions involve policy choices that bear on this Nation's international relations. Returning an alien to his own country may be deemed inappropriate even where he has committed a removable offense or fails to meet the criteria for admission. The foreign state may be mired in civil war, complicit in political persecution, or enduring conditions that create a real risk that the alien or his family will be harmed upon return.

The dynamic nature of relations with other countries requires the Executive Branch to ensure that enforcement policies are consistent with this Nation's foreign policy with respect to these and other realities.''

Exercising thoughtful discretion in the enforcement of the nation's immigration law saves scarce taxpayer funds, optimizes limited resources, and produces results that are more humane and consistent with America's reputation as the most compassionate nation on earth.

Mr. Speaker, a DREAMER (an undocumented student) seeking to earn her college degree and aspiring to attend medical school to better herself and her new community is not a threat to the nation's security.

Law abiding but unauthorized immigrants doing honest work to support their families pose far less danger to society than human traffickers, drug smugglers, or those who have committed a serious crime.

The President was correct in concluding that exercising his discretion regarding the implementation of DACA and DAPA policies enhances the safety of all members of the public, serves national security interests, and furthers the public interest in keeping families together.

Mr. Speaker, according to numerous studies conducted by the Congressional Budget Office, Social Security Administration, and Council of Economic Advisors, the President's DACA and DAPA directives generate substantial economic benefits to our nation.

For example, unfreezing DAPA and expanded DACA is estimated to increase GDP by $230 billion and create an average of 28,814 jobs per year over the next 10 years.

That is a lot of jobs.

Mr. Speaker, in exercising his broad discretion in the area of removal proceedings, President Obama has acted responsibly and reasonably in determining the circumstances in which it makes sense to pursue removal and when it does not.

In exercising this broad discretion, President Obama not done anything that is novel or unprecedented.

Let me cite a just a few examples of executive action taken by American presidents, both Republican and Democratic, on issues affecting immigrants over the past 35 years:

1. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan used executive action in 1987 to allow 200,000 Nicaraguans facing deportation to apply for relief from expulsion and work authorization.

2. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter exercised parole authority to allow Cubans to enter the U.S., and about 123,000 ''Mariel Cubans'' were paroled into the U.S. by 1981.

3. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush issued an executive order that granted Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) to certain nationals of the People's Republic of China who were in the United States.

4. In 1992, the Bush administration granted DED to certain nationals of El Salvador.

5. In 1997, President Bill Clinton issued an executive order granting DED to certain Haitians who had arrived in the United States before Dec. 31, 1995.

6. In 2010, the Obama Administration began a policy of granting parole to the spouses, parents, and children of military members.

Mr. Speaker, because of the President's leadership and visionary executive action, 594,000 undocumented immigrants in my home state of Texas are eligible for deferred action.

If these immigrants are able to remain united with their families and receive a temporary work permit, it would lead to a $338 million increase in tax revenues, over five years.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me note that the President's laudable executive actions are a welcome development but not a substitute for undertaking the comprehensive reform and modernization of the nation's immigration laws supported by the American people.

Only Congress can do that.

America's borders are dynamic, with constantly evolving security challenges.

Border security must be undertaken in a manner that allows actors to use pragmatism and common sense.

Comprehensive immigration reform is desperately needed to ensure that Lady Liberty's lamp remains the symbol of a land that welcomes immigrants to a community of immigrants and does so in a manner that secures our borders and protects our homeland.

Instead of wasting time debating divisive and mean spirited measures like H. Res. 639, we should instead seize the opportunity to pass legislation that secures our borders, preserves America's character as the most open and welcoming country in the history of the world, and will yield hundreds of billions of dollars in economic growth.

I urge all Members to join me in voting against H. Res. 639.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN), the ranking member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, we have heard some very eloquent comments

today. I was particularly taken by my colleague from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY), the chairman of the committee, his passionate speech about the rule of law. In fact, we all do agree about the importance of the rule of law in American life and in the vitality of our country.

Unfortunately, the facts of this case have nothing to do with the speech given by Mr. GOWDY.

On November 20, 2014, a number of memoranda were issued by the Secretary of Homeland Security. One of them is titled: ''Policies for the Apprehension, Detention and Removal of Undocumented Immigrants.'' That was pursuant to the 2002 action of this Congress, creating the Department of Homeland Security and directing the Secretary to establish priorities for removal. And it is worth pointing out that this memorandum has not been enjoined. Nobody sued to stop it. It is in effect. Nobody has challenged its legality. It is what is happening right now.

In fact, the only things that have been enjoined temporarily are the DAPA, the relief for parents, and the expansion of relief for children.

My colleague, who I respect and like, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), did mention that the deferred action provides benefits, health care, and education. In fact, the deferred action provides no such benefits. It is not a legal status. It is a deferral of deportation. It is revocable at any time.

Here is what the memorandum establishing this said:

''This memorandum confers no substantive right, immigration status or pathway to citizenship. Only an act of Congress can confer these rights. It remains within the authority of the executive branch, however, to set forth policy for the exercise of prosecutorial discretion and deferred action within the framework of existing law. This memoranda is an exercise of that authority.''

In fact, the exercise of that authority is nothing new. We have mentioned earlier that President Reagan deferred action on the deportation of the wives and children of those who got relief through the 1986 IRCA Act that Congress passed, despite the fact that Congress told him not to do it, because he had the authority to do it.

We have also had instances where wives of American soldiers were going to be deported. Do you know what? The President gave them deferral from deportation because it was unconscionable to us that a soldier fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan would have his wife deported while he is over in the battlefield.

We have private bills that we take up, egregious cases. Do you know what? If we ask for a report from the Department about that bill, the Department defers action on it. They defer deportation for the person who is the subject of that bill.

We, on the committee, thank them for doing that. We know that they do that, and we agree and like that they do that.

I mentioned earlier that the Congress, after Tiananmen Square, passed a bill to prevent the deportation of Chinese students who had been murdered, some of them, in Tiananmen Square. President Bush vetoed that bill. Why did he veto it? He vetoed it so he could give deferred deportation to the students because it was his position—and no one challenged that—it was the President's authority to do that.

I want to raise another issue. My friend, the Chairman of the Rules Committee, mentioned earlier this morning that the House had received a request to brief this issue. I was very surprised by that. It was the first I had heard of it. It is my understanding from the paper submitted that what he was referring to was the Petition for Writ of Certiorari, which was granted. This is what it says:

''In addition to the questions presented by the petition, the parties are directed to brief and argue the following question—''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LOFGREN. I know that Mr. SESSIONS is not a lawyer and I would not suggest he intended to mislead this House. But the comment was, in fact, misleading because that is not a requirement for the House to brief that point. It is simply directed to the parties in the litigation, which we are not.

This is about whether we deport kids or not, but it is also about whether we engage in rhetoric that is injurious to the public because it distorts the actual facts of this case.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has repeatedly and explicitly passed laws delegating enforcement authority to the executive branch in the immigration context.

Through DAPA and the expansion of DACA, the Secretary of Homeland Security is simply enforcing these existing laws that have previously been passed.

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Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Words matter.

In talking about the families, like Ms. Garcia's from my district, we really know that, especially during a campaign season or when there is rhetoric on the floor, the words that those of us in elected office say matter. I found that out firsthand as I talked to some of the families in my district who have mixed status children who turn on to VTV and see some of our national politicians rail against them.

I asked permission to use stories from some of our families here today. In the past, it has always been very customary that they have said, ''Yes. If it will help to share my story, please share it with the American people. The American people will understand that I want to be with my child. What is more family oriented than that?''

Those are the values of the people. Yet, when I asked over the last few days and when my staff asked, there were many families who said no to having their stories told on the House floor.

Why? Because major, national political figures, like Donald Trump, are running for higher office and are trying to win votes by promising that they will do everything in their power to break up families like Ms. Garcia's. They promise to do everything in their power to rip apart our communities at the core, to separate American children from one or both parents. By any means necessary, they say, we will deport mothers and fathers of American children.

We are better than that, Mr. Speaker. We are better than that. DAPA and DACA are an enormous step forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself an additional 1 minute.

I find it so annoying that they argue this is Congress' job; yet the very people arguing that it is Congress' job are the people who are preventing Congress from doing its job. Thank goodness the President used his executive authority, which already exists, to move forward in prioritizing immigration cases just as President Reagan did, just as President Bush did.

If those on the other side believe that Congress should solve this, let them stop standing in the way.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY).

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, four really quick points.

I would say to my friend from Colorado, through the Speaker, that one reason Congress may not enact new laws is that we have absolutely zero confidence they will actually be enforced. Maybe if this President enforced current law, we would be more willing to embark on new ones.

Secondly, I think Judge POE was right. I do think part of the opinion deals with the conferring of benefits, but I would invite people to read it for themselves.

Thirdly, on this issue of prosecutorial discretion, Mr. Speaker, all law enforcement agencies have limited resources, but they don't hold press conferences ahead of time and announce ''you are not going to be prosecuted or investigated if you just steal 'this' amount of money. You are not going to be prosecuted or investigated if you just possess 'this' amount of controlled substances.'' This is not prosecutorial discretion. This is a political decision to not enforce the law.

Lastly, I want to say—and she is my friend—I have great respect for Ms.

LOFGREN, and I am actually not including her in what I am getting ready to say because I will bet you, in 2008, she was ready, Mr. Speaker, to move on comprehensive immigration reform when nobody else was. From 2008 to 2010, when they had all the gears of government, they didn't lift a finger Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, they did not lift a finger. So with all of the ideas I hear my friends talking about, it just makes me wonder: Where were you when you had the House? Where were you when you had the Senate? Where were you when you had the White House? You had all three of them, and you didn't do any of the things you are talking about doing this morning.

In conclusion, yes, you are right. It is Congress' job to pass the law. As soon as you show us that you are willing to enforce it, maybe we will be willing to pass some new ones; but asking us to trust an administration, Mr. Speaker, that is deciding, wholesale, certain categories not to enforce, we may not be smart, but we are smarter than that.

In the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue about the constitutional equilibrium. The House needs to speak up for itself, and I applaud Speaker RYAN for doing exactly that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members, once again, to please direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend from Colorado.

Where we were was doing a lot of business unlike we are doing now.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution.

I say to my friends across the aisle, who are so passionate about Congress having a role in this case: where was that enthusiasm when Congress had ample opportunity to prevent this case by doing its job and enacting real, bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform?

The only reason this case exists is that Congress did not do its job, and then President Obama had no choice but to act in the limited capacity that he could under the law. He acted within his legal authority—something I am confident the Court will affirm. He acted because it would have been inhumane not to do anything while families were being torn apart by our broken immigration policies and this Congress' failure to act.

The Democratic-controlled Senate passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill in June of 2013, and House Republicans did nothing for more than 500 days before President Obama resorted to the power of his pen. Now to authorize the Speaker to file an amicus brief opposing the President's actions rather than acting through the office known as the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group is a break from the usual procedure by which the House weighs in on a matter before the courts in which it may have an interest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentleman an additional 20 seconds.

Mr. HOYER. In other words, this is not regular order, as is so often the cry of my Republican colleagues. This is regular disorder. I am a member of the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group. It was never brought to us. We never considered it.

Mr. Speaker, we ought to oppose this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution.

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This amicus brief, which no one has even yet seen, reflects this majority's policy of opposing the administration's legal, policy determinations to help immigrant families after having earlier abandoned its reponsibility to do so through statute.

I was proud to be one of 225 Democratic members of the House and Senate to sign our own amicus brief last week supporting the administration's position.

I'm also among the Democratic members of the House proud to cosponsor a reslution today in support of the President's executive actions and offering our amicus brief as an alternative to the one Republicans are putting forward to represent the views of the House.

And I will continue to work toward the goal of comprehensive immigration reform legislation that offers an earned pathway to citizenship, keeps families together, and makes it easier to recruit and retain talented innovators and entrepreneurs from abroad to contribute to our economy and create jobs here in America.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this resolution.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I inquire as to how much time remains on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 1 minute remaining. The gentleman from Colorado has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This discussion is about my constituents, Mr. Ramos and his family. It is about keeping them together. As Mr. GOWDY says, it is about Congress not doing its job, Democrats and Republicans. In the absence of Congress doing its job, thank goodness this President or any President has used his executive authority that exists under the law, most recently in the form of DAPA and DACA, to provide some certainty to Mr. Ramos and his family so that his American kids come home from school to a loving family and so that those 12 jobs Mr. Ramos and his wife have created in our community are protected and preserved and their business is given every ability to expand.

Rather than doing the right thing by debating how to fix our broken immigration system, this Chamber is working, once again, to undermine the only significant progress that has been achieved in recent years.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution, to support the families of Ms. Garcia, of Mr. Ramos, and of so many others who are scared to be named, and to reject this approach we see today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I believe what happened up in the Rules Committee was going through regular order—regular order to hear the original jurisdiction and regular order as we were discussing, debating, and voting on the rule. Going through regular order here on the floor of the House of Representatives is important, and I appreciate the American people and the Speaker in understanding what we are attempting to accomplish.

I also reiterate that this resolution is not about policy. It is about the law. It is about the Constitution of the United States. It is about the fabric of our democracy and the checks and balances which are demanded by every single Member of not only this House of Representatives, but also by the American people. It is about our American Constitution.

The House, I believe, must speak, will speak, and will defend its Article I legislative powers on behalf of the American people. Today you have watched Republicans argue thoughtfully and carefully on behalf of this, and I urge my colleagues to join me and the Speaker in support of this important resolution.

While we have consulted with the Committee on Ethics and been advised that this

resolution complies with its guidance in the House Ethics Manual, section 3 of the resolution provides further authorization for the Speaker to accept pro bono assistance so there is no question as to its propriety.

Mr. Speaker, the relevant portion of the House Ethics Manual states:

''[A]s detailed below, Members and staff may accept pro bono legal assistance for certain purposes without Committee permission.

''As to pro bono legal assistance, a Member, officer, or employee may accept such assistance without limit for the following purposes:

''To file an amicus brief in his or her capacity as a Member of Congress;''

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my support for the President's executive actions on immigration to expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the creation of the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program.

Soon, the Supreme Court will consider U.S. v. Texas, the case concerning President Obama's executive actions on immigration to extend temporary relief from deportation for undocumented immigrants who arrived in the U.S. when they were children and eligible parents of American citizens or legal permanent residents. These crucial programs have been halted as this litigation continues and our families, our businesses, and our economy hang in the balance.

Today, the House Republicans brought a polarizing resolution to the floor authorizing the Speaker to file an anti-immigrant amicus brief with the Supreme Court opposing these executive actions. I am disappointed that House Republicans are attempting to block the President's executive actions on immigration from taking effect.

The President acted to keep hard-working immigrant families together and to ensure that DREAMERS can continue to live in the only country they've ever known. As co-chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Immigration Task Force, I'm hopeful that the Supreme Court will recognize the legality and importance of President Obama's executive actions for our immigrant families. We compromise our nation's family values when we tear apart families and instill fear and mistrust among communities.

With so much at stake, we can't rely on the courts to correct this injustice. America deserves a fair and just immigration system, and our hard-working immigrant families have waited long enough. It's time for Congress to do its job and pass comprehensive immigration reform immediately.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H. Res. 639, a misguided resolution forced on all Members of the House of Representatives in an attempt to block President Obama's execution action on immigration. This is yet another partisan effort by House Republicans to tear families apart and separate children from their parents.

This amicus brief that Speaker RYAN will file on behalf of the entire House of Representatives not only goes against well-established Constitutional precedents but also against our economic interest. The Congressional Budget Office and numerous other researchers have found that immigration raises average wages for U.S. born workers and grows our economy by billions of dollars. In my State of California alone, the President's Executive action will generate 130,000 jobs and lift 40,000 Californian children out of poverty.

The actions taken by the President on the subject of immigration are within authority of the executive branch. I am proud to join 186 of my House colleagues in support of the President's immigration executive actions.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to House Resolution 639, which would allow the Speaker to file an amicus brief on behalf of the entire House of Representatives in United States v. Texas.

This case deals with critical executive actions implementing immigration initiatives that will strengthen our communities, protect the dignity of families, enhance public safety and national security, raise average wages for U.S.-born workers, and grow our economy by tens of billions of dollars.

Unfortunately, the majority opposes these initiatives and now seeks to influence this pending appeal before the Supreme Court.

I oppose this resolution for several reasons.

First, it is entirely unnecessary. Earlier this month, 185 of my colleagues and I filed an amicus brief in this case with the Supreme Court.

And other individual Members of this body are already free to file their own amicus briefs as well.

The Speaker, however, has chosen to expend legislative time on this measure instead of focusing on what Americans truly care about. Americans are worried about jobs, about overwhelming student loan debt, and in my State, the safety of the drinking water.

Another problem with this resolution is that it authorizes the filing of an amicus brief on behalf of the entire House of Representatives in United States v. Texas when in fact it would not reflect the views of the entire legislative body.

The amicus brief authorized pursuant to House Resolution 639 would represent the views of only the Republican majority.

The majority should not be able to bind the minority to this ill-conceived and misleading undertaking.

Finally, we have already thoroughly debated the constitutionality of the President's executive actions and it is clear that the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals immigration programs are lawful exercises of executive discretion.

Presidents from both parties, including George H.W. Bush and Ronald Regan, have routinely used similar deferred deportation policies to promote family unity in our immigration system.

These programs are commonsense solutions to our broken immigration system that has divided families for decades.

The Supreme Court is the proper venue to resolve this issue, and I am confident the Court will find these actions consistent with the law and the Constitution.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to oppose this ill conceived and wasteful resolution.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution. H. Res. 639 is an unprecedented measure by the House Majority to make its opposition to deferred action the official policy of the United States House of Representatives.

A resolution offering the full House to file an amicus has never been done before. Last week, I proudly joined 222 congressional colleagues in sending a amicus brief to the Supreme Court in support of immigrant communities and deferred action. House Republicans are welcome to do the very same. However, to send a brief in the name of the full House and the American people is unprecedented and unwarranted.

DAPA, Deferred Action for Parental Accountability, and expanded DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, created by the President's 2014 Executive Order, would give over 5 million immigrants living in our country today—including an estimated 182,000 immigrants living in Harris County, Texas—the opportunity to no longer live in fear and a shot at the American Dream.

The President's Executive Order that created DAPA and expands DACA is entirely within the Department of Homeland Security's legal authority to grant or deny applications for deferred action. Congress has explicitly passed laws delegating broad immigration enforcement authority to the Executive Branch.

There is a strong historical precedent for DAPA: During the administrations of President Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, deferred action was granted to hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the 1980's and early 1990's.

All of this would be completely unnecessary, Mr. Speaker, if the House Majority had stood with the American people in the last Congress and passed comprehensive immigration reform. Instead, we will be voting on an unprecedented resolution that has little, if anything, to do with fixing our nation's broken immigration system and everything to do with the political season.

I sincerely hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, many of whom I have worked with for years and consider good friends, will not allow the People's House, or their party, to adopt the anti-immigrant views of Donald Trump. Mr. Trump's demagoguery and fearmongering against immigrants who came to this country for a better life—just like our forefathers and foremothers before us—must not be allowed to become the sanctioned policy of Congress.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand with me and vote against this needless and unprecedented resolution.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 639. This bill would allow Speaker RYAN, on behalf of the House, to file an amicus brief in the Supreme Court case on expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA). An amicus brief submitted by the House of Representatives should convey the sentiments of the entire House and not just those of the Republican party—a party whose frontrunner in the presidential campaign has maligned our immigrant communities with hateful and demeaning rhetoric. The Speaker and his party do not speak for the whole House on this matter, and they certainly do not speak for me.

I support the president's executive actions to expand DACA and implement DAPA. Every president for more than fifty years, regardless of party, has taken executive action on immigration, including Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. President Obama's

actions are a step forward in allowing more people to come out of the shadows to participate more fully in our communities.

If Speaker RYAN and House Republicans are serious about reforming our broken immigration system, they should not waste time and taxpayer money on partisan political stunts. Instead, I call on the Speaker to bring his caucus to the table to help negotiate a sensible, bipartisan immigration reform package that will enhance our national security, protect the dignity of families, grow our economy, and put millions of immigrants on a path to citizenship.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express frustration and disappointment in my Republican colleagues' obstinate and insulting discussion about President Obama's Executive Action on Immigration. We are a nation built on the shoulders of immigrants. For most of us, our family trees will reflect a history with roots in other nations—making us the sons and daughters of immigrants ourselves. It has become profoundly clear, however, that many of us today have forgotten this.

The arguments being made on the House floor today not only disrespect the legacy of the immigrants who helped shape this nation, but it undermines the authorities we entrust to our nations President. Simply put, the Executive Action taken to address the immigration crisis in this country fall wholly and legally into his executive authority. DACA and DAPA are necessary in approaching our immigration policy in a compassionate and humane way. We are not prepared to rip babies from the arms of their mothers and deport them. We do not support destroying the families of hardworking men and women who came here looking for a better life. We are better than that. America is better than that.

We all recognize that the President is responsible for upholding and executing the laws passed by this Congress. The actions taken on immigration policy are not only legal but necessary, yet my friends on the other side of the aisle appear to ignorantly and vehemently disagree. So to them I ask, if this approach to immigration reform does not sit well with you, why don't you instead do your job and bring forward legislation on comprehensive immigration reform and let us vote on it in this House? You've made it clear in this discussion today that you understand that it is Congress' job to create immigration law and yet, all I see is a Party content to sit on its hands and scream at the administration for taking the action that they refuse to take themselves. This nation is ready for comprehensive immigration reform. Our constituents deserve answers, our hardworking immigrant families deserve relief and our undocumented guests, who work tirelessly to contribute to the economy of this country, deserve a clear and fair pathway to citizenship.

I support comprehensive immigration reform. I do not support this ill conceived resolution. I urge a no vote.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, today, the House is taking up H. Res. 639, authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States v. Texas concerning the creation of the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program and the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. I adamantly oppose H. Res. 639. Congress needs to prioritize and pass comprehensive immigration reform instead of wasting precious time with partisan, backwards legislation like H. Res. 639.

For over a decade, Democrats and Republicans in both houses have been trying to pass immigration reform. My colleagues and I have voted repeatedly against Republican attempts to defund DACA and have signed a discharge petition requesting a vote on comprehensive immigration reform. Because Arizona is a border state, we have suffered from years of federal inaction to fix our broken system. It's time for leadership to stop trying to obstruct programs like DAPA and DACA, which are keeping Arizona families together, and pass comprehensive immigration reform to address border security in our state, offer a fair but tough pathway to citizenship and provide an effective system to meet Arizona's and the country's labor needs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 649, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

The question is on the resolution.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the resolution will be followed by a 5-minute vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 234, nays 186, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 129]

YEAS—234

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)
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
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
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
Palazzo
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)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
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
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—186

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
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
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
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
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
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	Walz	Welch
Veasey	Wasserman Schultz	Wilson (FL)
Vela	Waters, Maxine	Yarmuth
Velázquez	Watson Coleman	
Visclosky		

NOT VOTING—14

Bass	Frankel (FL)	Rush
Buchanan	Graves (MO)	Sanchez, Loretta
Chaffetz	Jordan	Scalise
Comstock	Kirkpatrick	Smith (WA)
Fincher	Lieu, Ted	

□ 1233

Ms. BROWN of Florida changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mrs. WALORSKI changed her vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 14; Tuesday, March 15; Wednesday, March 16; and Thursday, March 17, 2016, I was on medical leave while recovering from hip replacement surgery and unable to be present for recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted:

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 111 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 2426).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 112 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H. Con. Res. 75, as amended).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 113 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H. Con Res. 121, as amended).

''No'' on rollcall vote No. 114 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 640).

''No'' on rollcall vote No. 115 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 640).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 116 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2081).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 117 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3447, as amended).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 118 (on agreeing to the Pallone Amendment No. 1 to H.R. 3797).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 119 (on agreeing to the Pallone Amendment No. 2 to H.R. 3797).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 120 (on agreeing to the Bera Amendment to H.R. 3797).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 121 (on agreeing to the Veasey Amendment to H.R. 3797).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 122 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 3797, with instructions).

''No'' on rollcall vote No. 123 (on passage of H.R. 3797).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 124 (on passage of H.R. 4596).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 125 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4416).

''Yes'' on rollcall vote No. 126 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4434).

''No'' on rollcall vote No. 127 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 649).

''No'' on rollcall vote No. 128 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 649).

''No'' on rollcall vote No. 129 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 639).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 127, 128, 129, I was unable to vote, as I was attending a funeral service for a close family friend. Roll No. 127 was ordering the previous question; Roll No. 128 was H. Res. 649, providing for consideration of the resolution H. Res. 639, which authorizes the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of U.S., et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674; and Roll No. 129 was agreeing to that resolution, H. Res. 639. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on all three rollcall votes.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

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

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING COMMISSION ACT OF 2015

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1831) to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and concur in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016''.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.

There is established in the executive branch a commission to be known as the ''Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking'' (in this Act referred to as the ''Commission'').

SEC. 3. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be comprised of 15 members as follows:

(1) Three shall be appointed by the President, of whom—

(A) one shall be an academic researcher, data expert, or have experience in administering programs;

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization; and

(C) one shall be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (or the Director's designee).

(2) Three shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(3) Three shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(4) Three shall be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(5) Three shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(b) EXPERTISE.—In making appointments under this section, consideration should be given to individuals with expertise in economics, statistics, program evaluation, data security, confidentiality, or database management.

(c) CHAIRPERSON AND CO-CHAIRPERSON.—The President shall select the chairperson of the Commission and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall select the co-chairperson.

(d) TIMING OF APPOINTMENTS.—Appointments to the Commission shall be made not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) TERMS; VACANCIES.—Each member shall be appointed for the duration of the Commission. Any vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers, and shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(f) COMPENSATION.—Members of the Commission shall serve without pay.

(g) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission.

SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) STUDY OF DATA.—The Commission shall conduct a comprehensive study of the data inventory, data infrastructure, database security, and statistical protocols related to Federal policymaking and the agencies responsible for maintaining that data to—

(1) determine the optimal arrangement for which administrative data on Federal programs and tax expenditures, survey data, and related statistical data series may be integrated and made available to facilitate program evaluation, continuous improvement, policy-relevant research, and cost-benefit analyses by qualified researchers and institutions while weighing how integration might lead to the intentional or unintentional access, breach, or release of personally-identifiable information or records;

(2) make recommendations on how data infrastructure, database security, and statistical protocols should be modified to best fulfill the objectives identified in paragraph (1); and

(3) make recommendations on how best to incorporate outcomes measurement, institutionalize randomized controlled trials, and rigorous impact analysis into program design.

(b) CLEARINGHOUSE.—In undertaking the study required by subsection (a), the Commission shall—

(1) consider whether a clearinghouse for program and survey data should be established and how to create such a clearinghouse; and

(2) evaluate—

(A) what administrative data and survey data are relevant for program evaluation and Federal policy-making and should be included in a potential clearinghouse;

(B) which survey data the administrative data identified in subparagraph (A) may be linked to, in addition to linkages across administrative data series, including the effect such linkages may have on the security of those data;

(C) what are the legal and administrative barriers to including or linking these data series;

(D) what data-sharing infrastructure should be used to facilitate data merging and access for research purposes;

(E) how a clearinghouse could be self-funded;

(F) which types of researchers, officials, and institutions should have access to data and what the qualifications of the researchers, officials, and institutions should be;

(G) what limitations should be placed on the use of data provided;

(H) how to protect information and ensure individual privacy and confidentiality;

(I) how data and results of research can be used to inform program administrators and policymakers to improve program design;

(J) what incentives may facilitate interagency sharing of information to improve programmatic effectiveness and enhance data accuracy and comprehensiveness; and

(K) how individuals whose data are used should be notified of its usages.

(c) REPORT.—Upon the affirmative vote of at least three-quarters of the members of the Commission, the Commission shall submit to the President and Congress a detailed statement of its findings and conclusions as a result of the activities required by subsections (a) and (b), together with its recommendations for such legislation or administrative actions as the Commission considers appropriate in light of the results of the study.

(d) DEADLINE.—The report under subsection (c) shall be submitted not later than the date that is 15 months after the date a majority of the members of the Commission are appointed pursuant to section 3.

(e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''administrative data'' means data—

(1) held by an agency or a contractor or grantee of an agency (including a State or unit of local government); and

(2) collected for other than statistical purposes.

SEC. 5. OPERATION AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) EXECUTIVE BRANCH ASSISTANCE.—The heads of the following agencies shall advise and consult with the Commission on matters within their respective areas of responsibility:

(1) The Bureau of the Census.

(2) The Internal Revenue Service.

(3) The Department of Health and Human Services.

(4) The Department of Agriculture.

(5) The Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(6) The Social Security Administration.

(7) The Department of Education.

(8) The Department of Justice.

(9) The Office of Management and Budget.

(10) The Bureau of Economic Analysis.

(11) The Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(12) Any other agency, as determined by the Commission.

(b) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet not later than 30 days after the date upon which a majority of its members have been appointed and at such times thereafter as the chairperson or co-chairperson shall determine.

(c) RULES OF PROCEDURE.—The chairperson and co-chairperson shall, with the approval of a majority of the members of the Commission, establish written rules of procedure for the Commission, which shall include a quorum requirement to conduct the business of the Commission.

(d) HEARINGS.—The Commission may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold hearings, sit and act at times and places, take testimony, and receive evidence as the Commission considers appropriate.

(e) CONTRACTS.—The Commission may contract with and compensate government and private agencies or persons for any purpose necessary to enable it to carry out this Act.

(f) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(g) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

SEC. 6. FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b) and the availability of appropriations—

(1) at the request of the Director of the Census, the agencies identified as ''Principal Statistical Agencies'' in the report, published by the Office of Management and Budget, entitled ''Statistical Programs of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2015'' shall transfer funds, as specified in advance in appropriations Acts and in a total amount not to exceed $3,000,000, to the Bureau of the Census for purposes of carrying out the activities of the Commission as provided in this Act; and

(2) the Bureau of the Census shall provide administrative support to the Commission, which may include providing physical space at, and access to, the headquarters of the Bureau of the Census, located in Suitland, Maryland.

(b) PROHIBITION ON NEW FUNDING.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act. This Act shall be carried out using amounts otherwise available for the Bureau of the Census or the agencies described in subsection (a)(1).

SEC. 7. PERSONNEL.

(a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission shall have a Director who shall be appointed by the chairperson with the concurrence of the co-chairperson. The Director shall be paid at a rate of pay established by the chairperson and co-chairperson, not to exceed the annual rate of basic pay payable for level V of the Executive Schedule (section 5316 of title 5, United States Code).

(b) STAFF.—The Director may appoint and fix the pay of additional staff as the Director considers appropriate.

(c) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay for a comparable position paid under the General Schedule.

SEC. 8. TERMINATION.

The Commission shall terminate not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. HURD of Texas (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

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

There was no objection.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader and my friend, for the purpose of inquiring about the schedule for the week to come.

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the House will meet at noon for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30. On Tuesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning hour and noon for legislative business, and on Wednesday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. No votes are expected in the House on Thursday or Friday.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of suspensions next week, a complete list of which will be announced by close of business tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, the House will also consider H.R. 2745, the SMARTER Act, sponsored by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD). The bill will ensure that no matter who reviews mergers and acquisitions, be it the Federal Trade Commission or the Department of Justice, there will be uniform rules so that every transaction is reviewed fairly.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information.

I did not see or hear ''the budget for this coming year.'' I know the Committee on the Budget marked up the budget yesterday. As I understand it, they completed their work, and they have reported a budget. I do not see it on the calendar for next week, which means that the earliest we could consider a budget would be April.

Speaker RYAN, as the majority leader knows so well, indicated we are going to pursue regular order, which would be the adoption of a budget, the establishment of a 302(a) allocation, which means the overall expenditure level for discretionary spending, and then the markup and consideration in this House of the 12 appropriation bills.

It would appear, if we are not going to do it next week, could we expect to see the budget on the floor, Mr. Leader, in April?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The gentleman is correct that the Committee on the Budget successfully reported a budget resolution last night. I want to take a moment to thank Committee on the Budget Chairman TOM PRICE for his work, and the whole committee.

There are more conversations among Members which will be required before moving the budget to the floor, and therefore it will not be scheduled for the upcoming abbreviated week, but I will let the gentleman know as soon as we do schedule it.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for that information.

As the gentleman probably recalls, back in January Majority Whip Scalise was quoted as saying: ''We will forge ahead with spending bills and other initiatives in the coming year.'' He implied that the House would start early on its appropriation bills.

Now, I can remember, as a long-time member of the Committee on Appropriations, that early for us was early

May for actual appropriation bills to be on the floor. In December, Speaker RYAN stated: ''By having this budget agreement that my predecessor put in place, we no longer have a dispute over the sequester.''

Now, it is my understanding, Mr. Leader, that the budget that is being proposed is inconsistent with and does not carry out the agreement that was made between the Speaker and our leader and on which the House voted, a significant majority of the House voted to pass a budget deal. It is my understanding this budget does not carry it out.

After saying: Let's set aside the dispute over the sequester, the Speaker went on to say: ''By getting the slate cleaned now''—Mr. Leader, this was December 22 that the Speaker said this. ''By getting the slate cleaned now''—which meant this argument over sequester, which of course your chairman of the Committee on Appropriations has said is unreasonable and unworkable, in effect, and ''ill-advised'' was the word that he specifically used.

The Speaker said: ''By getting the slate cleaned''—by making that deal—''by getting this behind us, we can start our appropriations process early next year''—now, we are beyond early next year, of course—''and do it the right way, individual bills, all 12 bills, open up the process . . . do it the way the Founders intended in the first place.''

My question to you is, Mr. Leader, do you expect that we will start considering appropriation bills on or before the end of April? Does the majority leader contemplate the consideration of all 12 appropriation bills, as the Speaker indicated he wanted to do, with full consideration open to amendment prior to the July adjournment, for essentially 6 weeks, coming back in September?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank my friend for yielding.

You always make me smile when you come with your quotes. At times they seem selective.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time just for a second, it always gives me great pleasure to bring a smile to your face, Mr. Leader.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Well, if the gentleman just wished me happy St. Patrick's Day, that would have done the same thing.

Mr. HOYER. I will wish you happy St. Patrick's Day, and I congratulate Kelly on that beautiful green blouse she is wearing.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for his mood today, but I do want to correct the RECORD; and this is probably a good reason why we are not bringing the budget to a shortened week next week, because you have some misinformation.

□ 1245

The budget that passed the committee abides by the exact number of what the agreement was. So I would find that you would probably be very supportive.

Secondly, one thing that I would find is that it is our full intention to do all the appropriations bills on the floor. We believe in regular order. I remember a time here when I was in the minority that we didn't have any appropriations bills on the floor. I did not spend the time to get the old quotes about that, because I think America wants us to move forward.

We want to allow time for conversations on the budget.

Appropriations have been going through with their committee meetings. So we are in line to get them done on time and moving them forward.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate the gentleman's comments and observations.

He and I, frankly, have a factual disagreement on whether or not the budget that was reported out does, in fact, reflect the agreement. Technically, he may be accurate.

But, of course, the problem with this budget taking so long to present—which I know the majority leader and the Speaker were hopeful it would have been done either in very late February or very early of this month—clearly, the disagreement, as everybody knows, is that so many of your caucus did not want to abide by the agreement that the three leaders of their party voted for back in December. And we understand there are additional actions going on to placate those on your side of the aisle who don't want to follow the agreement; and, in fact, they are looking for cuts beyond to return to sequester. That is why I referred to the sequester in my opening remarks, although the Speaker said we have gotten beyond that argument. Well, obviously, we haven't gotten beyond that argument. And that is, obviously, why your budget has been delayed and why we are not considering it before we leave here for the Easter break and, therefore, will not consider the budget in March.

So I understand that we have a different perspective perhaps—not a disagreement necessarily, but a different perspective on what the budget process is presenting.

If I can go on, Mr. Leader, let me ask you this. Very frankly, we are concerned about adjourning next week. We are very concerned, Mr. Leader, that we have a brief week. Essentially, in the 2 weeks that we have been here—this week and next—we are going to be meeting 3 full days. We come in at 6:30 on one day. We will leave early today. We will leave early on Wednesday of next week.

We have three crises confronting Americans, and we ought to be dealing with those, Mr. Leader. We would urge that we not adjourn next Wednesday. We would urge that we meet Thursday. Friday, of course, is Good Friday; and Sunday is Easter. Those are very serious holidays for an overwhelming number of us, and we ought to observe those.

But in the spirit of that holiday—of Good Friday and of Easter—we ought to at least sacrifice some of our time in the week following that to address these three crises.

Mr. Leader, I just had the opportunity to meet with a young man, who is in the eighth grade, and his brother, who is in the sixth grade. They are from Flint, Michigan. They have to pay for the water that they drink at school because the water at school is unsafe for them to drink.

Now, the administration has dealt with that, partially. Those of us who have been to Flint, Michigan, have seen a lot of people on the ground—from Health and Human Services to the CDC to the Health Department, from a lot of agencies of the Federal Government there to help. We should be acting on giving some direct help to Flint, Michigan, and assisting.

It is, I think, unfathomable why the State of Michigan that caused this problem by shifting the water supply from Lake Huron through Detroit to the city of Flint—controlled by a receiver, appointed by the Governor, not the mayor or council of Flint, Michigan. It is unimaginable to me that we would be charging children for water that they ought to be supplied, as almost every school in America does.

So, we ought to be dealing with Flint.

Secondly, Mr. Leader, we have a crisis for a large number of Americans. Both of these crises are somewhat related but are separate and distinct issues we ought to be dealing with, and you and I have had the opportunity to discuss them. I appreciate your leadership and concern.

You and I convened a joint meeting with the Department of Health and Human Services; with the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; NIAID and NIH's Tony Fauci; Secretary Burwell; and Dr. Frieden were there talking to us about Zika.

Zika is a health crisis for America and for Americans, and we ought to be dealing with that. We ought to be dealing with it by giving to the administration the resources it needs to respond to this to make sure that America's health is safe and to make sure that the Americans who are living in Puerto Rico have the resources to deal with the eradication of the mosquito that transmits this disease and is a threat to health generally, but particularly the health, as the gentleman knows, of pregnant women or women who may become pregnant.

So Flint and Zika.

Lastly, I would mention that we ought to be dealing with the crisis that confronts Americans in Puerto Rico who are going to be unable to pay their bills. On May 1, they will have another large indebtedness due.

We have been considering for many months now the authorization for Puerto Rico to be able to declare bankruptcy so that it can, in a reasonable, ordered fashion, settle that which they owe in a way that they can accomplish.

All three of these issues, Mr. Leader, we believe are critically important for us to address now. They have been pending for months—some for as long as a year, in terms of Puerto Rico's prospective bankruptcy.

I would ask the leader if he would consider coming back after Easter and doing the work that we ought to be doing to meet these three crises. I believe if we did so, the American people would say that we are a responsible body doing the work that needs to be done.

Frankly, Mr. Leader, over the last 3 weeks, we have done things that could have mostly been done under suspension. We are filling time. We need to fill that time with policies addressing the crises that confront us.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

There are three questions in there, and I want to answer each and every one of them.

As the gentleman did note, next week is Holy Week. We have Holy Thursday; we have Good Friday, and, of course, Easter.

Now, the gentleman spoke with great passion, but there is one thing I think you missed in this. I hope you have the same passion for those at the EPA who knew of Flint and stayed silent, who did not warn those of the water that had been poisoned.

The gentleman talks very boldly about wanting things done, but we should talk about what has happened.

As we speak today, we just had a hearing on Flint, Michigan, where you had Gina McCarthy in; you had the Governor of Michigan in.

Secondly, the gentleman knows that, when it comes to Zika, we had a meeting together, where we pulled in all those in government who are dealing with this issue. And they will tell you, there is no short answer for it. They will tell you the mosquito is not as easy as just spraying. And they will tell you, each and every day, they are learning something more.

The White House did not send us a supplemental until just a few weeks ago. We have done nothing but move even faster. There is no agency—from the NIH or the CDC—lacking in money to be acting today, and they will answer that question for you. They have money to go forward and do the work that they need to do and that we believe needs to happen. We can argue later about where that money comes from. But in no way have we stopped or slowed down. We have actually been in front of this.

If I recall correctly, it was me who approached you on the floor and requested that we work together on this. It was me who called you and said: Let's make this bipartisan. So we brought all the committee members in with the Secretary and Directors. So in no way do I want the American public to think for one moment that we are not doing the work.

Now, there is not one easy answer for it. You can look around the world to Australia; they have been battling this for quite some time. There are challenges, but we want to make sure we get it done. I want to work with you to make that happen, but I don't want to play political games with it.

You know as well as I do, if you think we are here just on Good Friday and there is going to be a fundamental change, there won't be. But we are making change on the work we are doing.

When it comes to Puerto Rico, we have been working on Puerto Rico. We have been working on Puerto Rico so much, the committee chairman just went there the last time we had a district work period to investigate. So did Congressman SENSENBRENNER and Chairman BISHOP.

Yesterday the Speaker, myself, the committee chair from the Judiciary Committee, Congressmen GOODLATTE, SENSENBRENNER, and BISHOP, all met. After that meeting, Congressman SENSENBRENNER directly went to speak to Leader PELOSI on what we are doing because we are doing this in a bipartisan manner. I think you are going to see hearings being scheduled very shortly. We want to get this right.

I understand your frustration because my frustration is across the Chamber over here with the Senate, because we have acted many times on the direction of where we are going.

The last part I would bring up is that we are going to have disagreements on the budget. And maybe your argument is thinking the budgets are different. They are different. We have brought a budget to the floor every year we have been in the majority here, and they have balanced. Every time the President has sent a budget here and we have put this on the floor, there have only been two votes on the other side of the aisle for the President's budget.

So, yes, we are going to have disagreements on the budget because we are going to fight over here to balance the budget and give us a brighter future. And, yes, maybe philosophically, you think we need to spend more money. But that is a disagreement that I think the American public expect you and I to have a disagreement on and fight for what we philosophically believe in.

I just firmly disagree with your last question on all three—not from a basis of politics, but a basis between you and I knowing what we are doing. You and I both know personally what we have been working on. We haven't hidden the fact. We haven't made it partisan. We have been very open with it. We are going to solve the problem.

I am not going to play political games with you and say, if you come on a Saturday, we are going to solve it. I am going to put us in a room on the exact day that we should be. I am going to have the experts in the room as well. We can disagree with where we want to go. But at the end of the day, we are going to solve the problem.

And I welcome working with you as we solve them.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I want everybody to know that he is correct. He came to me to work in a bipartisan fashion. In fact, we have come to one another at various times to work in a bipartisan fashion. And I am pleased to work with the majority leader.

I think the majority leader—as I have said with him not present and I will say it here today—is someone with whom I can work, have worked, and expect to work. I think he is honest and straightforward when he makes his representations to me, Mr. Speaker, so I want to thank him for that.

But I want to reference all three of the issues that you just discussed. I am going to go in the opposite direction you went. The gentleman started out with the EPA. I am going to start out with the budget.

As the gentleman I am sure knows, there is a $1.5 trillion asterisk in this budget: savings to be determined at some time in the future. Hooray. What courage.

□ 1300

What I am saying about the budget is we had a deal. We agreed, in a bipartisan fashion, an agreement that you and I both voted for.

Mr. Speaker, we both voted for it. It wasn't what either of us probably wanted, Mr. Speaker, but it was an agreement. It was compromise. It was how this body should and does work.

And the problem is we have had such great difficulty saying we are going to implement that agreement, notwithstanding what Speaker RYAN said just a few months ago.

So from the budget standpoint, A, I don't share the gentleman's optimistic view, Mr. Speaker, that it is balanced. It is easy to put an asterisk in there and say we are going to get $1.5 trillion somewhere, somehow, from someplace. It is much more difficult to say where you are going to get it. And what the American people have seen is that asterisk is never realized.

So he and I disagree on the fact that, A, we haven't worked in a bipartisan fashion. We did. It was very tough. The Speaker, you, Mr. SCALISE, Leader PELOSI, and I, all five of us voted for an agreement.

Very frankly, it is our perception, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader's side of the aisle has not been able to carry out their agreement because of internal divisions within your party. Frankly, that is reported on. It seems to be self-evident, and that is our view. Our view is we had a number agreed upon.

It is not about spending more money. It is what we agreed to spend, in a bipartisan fashion, that is not being adhered to.

Secondly, when the gentleman says there is money somewhere, of course there is money somewhere, but it is not a zero sum game. Somebody will be

disadvantaged and hurt and left behind if we take money from the program that this Congress appropriated to be spent on Ebola.

The gentleman came to me, we did have a bipartisan meeting, which I have referred to and the gentleman has referred to. Tony Fauci was there, Secretary Burwell was there, Dr. Frieden was there from the Centers for Disease Control.

All of them said that the suggestion that we take money from Ebola and put it towards Zika would harm the effort to ensure that Ebola does not come back to our shores and, in fact, is controlled overseas as well, because if it is overseas, it will ultimately come on shore here in America; so that they have asked for the resources to deal with Zika now. The longer we wait, the more difficult it will be.

I agree with the gentleman entirely, that we are finding out new things as each day goes by, as each week goes by. But the fact of the matter is we need to give them the assurance that they will have the resources to deploy the kind of effort that we need to make sure that Zika does not become an epidemic here in this country, in Puerto Rico, in the Virgin Islands, and in other places in the world.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, it is, to me, very ironic. I have heard this year, in years past, EPA, get out of our lives. EPA, stay out of our communities. EPA, we don't need your advice and counsel.

Mr. Speaker, the Governor of Michigan, knowing full well that the water from the Flint River was not the kind of water that we ought to be feeding to our children and to our adults, and refusing to spend the money to treat the pipes so that they would have been lined and the lead from the pipes would not leach into the water and adversely affect the health of the children of Flint, nevertheless, went ahead.

In January of last year, the EPA advised the Governor of Michigan and the Department of Environmental Quality in Michigan, you are getting lead in your water. It is dangerous. January 15, 2015.

Notwithstanding that advice, the Receiver, appointed by the Governor of Flint—the mayor wasn't in charge, the city council wasn't in charge. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, appointed by a Republican Governor, kept feeding the water to the people of Flint. And we have now determined that EPA kept after them after January 15, and their advice was ignored and, in fact, said, look, we have got it. We can handle this. We have experts.

Frankly, a professor from Virginia Tech started testing the children and found that, tragically, the lead levels in the blood of the children of Flint were going up to dangerous and harmful levels.

So, Mr. Leader, very frankly, your party has made it very clear repeatedly on the bills that you have brought to the floor, you don't want EPA involved. I don't mean you personally. Let me make that clear, Mr. Speaker.

But the votes on this floor have been to reduce EPA's authority, to reduce their involvement, to reduce reliance on EPA's wisdom on behalf of the health and environment of our country.

So then on all three of those issues, Mr. Speaker, let me say something in conclusion.

I know it is Holy Week. And what Holy Week teaches us is that we need to care for one another; that we need to make sure, Mr. Speaker, when there are those in trouble and at risk, that we act. If that is not what Holy Week is about, I don't know what it is about.

We ought to be about the business of responding, Mr. Speaker, to these three crises. Now, we don't have to do it on a Saturday, and I agree with my friend, the majority leader.

We say that all the time, ''my friend,'' but KEVIN MCCARTHY is my friend, Mr. Speaker. I have great respect for him. He is hardworking, he is honest, and he cares about our country. Let there be no mistake.

But what I am trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is simply to elevate a sense of urgency to respond to two emergencies that confront Americans; and that we, therefore, have a responsibility to act, act promptly, decisively, and effectively. I am urging that we do that, and I am urging that we not waste time in accomplishing that objective.

I am through, unless the majority leader would like to respond further. I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I just want to respond to a few points you made.

The money that we are talking about using for Zika, so nobody is delayed, is leftover money from the emergency supplemental voted in 2014. I know it is dealing with Ebola, but it is $3 billion sitting over there. They have some leftover money that they should make sure that they don't wait 1 day to start working.

Now, you talk of the budget. We just passed a budget out of the Budget Committee that had a discretionary number of $1.07 trillion. Nowhere does it show that that is not the agreement.

Now, you and I can debate a lot, but since Republicans took the majority, if you look at the numbers of—and I know in your last year in the majority, you didn't produce a budget. But we have saved America tremendous, more than $800 billion by taking the majority.

Now, you and I both know that the real challenge for America is the mandatory spending, and we have to get to that.

Now, when you talk about the EPA, the challenge that I find, and nobody should ever have water like Flint had. But I am very passionate about this issue. I am passionate that the children have drinking water. You know why? Because that same thing is happening in my State because of lack of water.

Every year we have been in the majority, we have passed a bill here dealing with California water, but it goes nowhere in the Senate.

I want the same for children across the country, because it is not just these two areas, there are lots of places we have to deal with this.

But if I remind the gentleman, I think it was just a month ago, bipartisan on this floor, the vote was 416–2, telling the EPA not to hold information because, when it came to Flint, they knew of it and they waited months before they brought that information forward.

So you and I work together, just as both sides of the aisle in here. They said the EPA needs to stop. If they have information on any community, don't hold that, release it. People need to be warned. People need to be advised.

I was proud of the fact that both sides joined together, and I look forward to our being able to work on the other issues.

Now, you and I may have a disagreement on the timing, because what I have found, these committees have been working. We want to get it right. And in no way, in no shape, have we not kept you, one, a part of it, or if we even have a meeting, advised of it.

Congressman SENSENBRENNER walked from a meeting with the Speaker, the committee chairs, and me directly over to your Leader PELOSI, the same time that we have been dealing with this within the committee, showing all what is being worked on, and I hope we can keep that same working together as we solve the problem.

I wish the gentleman from Maryland good luck in his NCAA bracket. But as he knows, Cal State Bakersfield has never lost in the tournament. Now don't take it we have never been in it, but we have never lost yet.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate his wishes of good luck, and I hope they result in many Maryland victories. I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, obviously, we don't have a difference on objectives. And yes, the gentleman from Wisconsin did walk across yesterday, yesterday.

The Puerto Rican bankruptcy challenge has been confronting us for more than two-thirds of a year. This is not something new. Zika is new, but Puerto Rico's bankruptcy challenge is not new.

So I am simply saying, Mr. Speaker, that these are matters of urgency, of crisis, and we believe that we ought to work on those. We believe working together, as the majority leader said, we can get that done, and we would hope that we would do so.

Unless the majority leader wants to say something further, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016, TO MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2016

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the

House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Monday, March 21, 2016, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CURBELO of Florida). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

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

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, in celebration of Women's History Month, I rise to honor a pioneer for women's suffrage from my district.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in Johnstown, New York, where she attended Johnstown Academy until the age of 16. As Members of this House and people across our country know, Elizabeth would go on to be one of the true trailblazers of the women's suffrage movement for our Nation.

She helped organize the Seneca Falls Convention, where she presented a Declaration of Sentiments, a call for women's rights, proclaiming that men and women are equal, which was a revolutionary concept in 1848.

As the youngest woman ever elected to Congress, I certainly would not be here today on the House floor without the passion, activism, and dedication of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. And so it is my honor to celebrate her legacy today for Women's History Month.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND POVERTY

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate Women's History Month, but also highlight the harmful impact of poverty on women all over our Nation.

This month we celebrate Women's History Month and reflect on the generations of American women and their many contributions that have brought us to this place in our history.

For example, as Women's History Month was being created back in the 1970s, the Honorable, the late Shirley Chisholm, my mentor and friend, she was making history. She became the first African American woman to serve in Congress, and the first woman and African American to run for President of the United States.

Throughout her career, she broke many glass ceilings, while remaining unbought and unbossed.

Today we see women challenging the status quo everywhere, from sports and politics, to STEM fields and corporate boardrooms. In fact, I am proud to serve in this Congress that has 104 women, the most in history, with our very first Speaker, NANCY PELOSI.

But too many women are still fighting to break down barriers and lift themselves and their families out of poverty. It is truly a disgrace that in 2016, despite making up 50 percent of the workforce, women still earn 77 cents, on average, for every $1 a man makes.

Even worse, African American women earn 64 cents and Latina women earn 55 cents for every $1 a man makes.

□ 1315

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT'S STRATEGY TO END HOMELESSNESS

(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, in 2015, the Department of Housing and Urban Development released a new strategy that will affect ending homelessness and the programs involved. However, this top-down approach is forcing homeless shelters to change the way they serve the most vulnerable members of their communities or risk losing access to Federal grants.

In my district, at least two different homeless shelters have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant funding that they once received. The Esplanade House has provided a housing option to homeless families with children in Chico, California, for over 25 years. The programs they have put in place for their residents have achieved remarkable success rates. Because of HUD's new approach, the Esplanade House's ability to continue to help the less fortunate members of their community is in jeopardy.

I have sent a letter to Secretary Castro and plan to meet with his staff to make sure our concerns are heard and that this new approach is revised. Indeed, it has taken away accountability of their clients, and now just makes handouts.

A Washington-knows-best approach that doesn't take into consideration the impact it has at the local level is the wrong way to fight homelessness. We need to empower these local entities to be more effective in fighting homelessness in the future.

HALT ANTI-IMMIGRATION PROCEEDINGS ON AMICUS BRIEF

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

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to call on House Republicans to halt their proceedings to file an anti-immigrant amicus brief with the Supreme Court on behalf of the entire House of Representatives. The document in question hasn't even been made public, and the House of Representatives is trying to speak on behalf of the entire Chamber and our Nation without allowing us to even see the language.

What will the brief say? Will the Court tell the House of Representatives to encourage tearing families apart by rounding up and deporting DREAMers? Will they advocate ending birthright citizenship and repealing part of the 14th Amendment? Will it call for building their big, beautiful, 50-foot-tall wall along our southern border?

Comprehensive immigration reform has historically been an issue that receives bipartisan support, and I welcome this discussion. We are here as a nation of immigrants. Let's work together to fix our broken immigration system.

RECOGNIZING UALR MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Arkansas at Little Rock men's basketball team on their successful 2015–2016 season. On Saturday, February 28, the Trojans won their first outright Sun Belt Conference title after 25 seasons in the league.

In the first year under Chris Beard's leadership as head coach, the team embarked on one of the greatest turnarounds in the program's history, improving on a 13–18 record 1 year ago to a current record of 26 wins and 3 losses.

They are now moving on to victories, and I look forward to their continued success. As we see on the eve of March Madness, I look forward to seeing their big win against Purdue.

ISIL IN SYRIA

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the barrage of attacks committed by ISIL are crimes against humanity.

The administration's strategy in Syria and against ISIL up until now has been to do the bare minimum, which has only exacerbated the deteriorating situation. Assad remains in power and has, himself, committed an untold number of war crimes through the use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs against his own people, all while giving ISIL time to develop and to strengthen.

Last month, the administration failed to comply with the legally mandated deadline to submit a plan to Congress. However, just this week, the House unanimously passed a nonbinding resolution condemning the attacks as genocide; and today, Secretary Kerry determined that Christians, Yazidis, and Shiite groups are victims of genocide. Because of the Obama administration's inaction and failure to develop a comprehensive strategy, minorities continue to be targets for these atrocious attacks.

Now that the administration has begun to recognize the severity of these massacres, it is time to finally create a comprehensive strategy that will address the root causes of this conflict, including the continued presence of Assad in Syria.

HEZBOLLAH TERROR DESIGNATIONS

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, the Gulf Cooperation Council pledged to designate Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy, as a terrorist organization. This positive move was followed up with a similar designation by the Arab League. This is in stark contrast to President Obama's strategy, where he continues to appease the Iranian regime at the expense of our traditional alliances in the region.

Do problems still exist within some of the Arab League nations as it relates to support for terror and terror financing? Of course they do.

I will continue to press all of those nations to do more to curb these problems and to tackle all extremist groups, not just Hezbollah. But designating Hezbollah as a terrorist group is a step in the right direction. We must work with these nations and encourage greater cooperation to root out all extremist groups.

Mr. Speaker, instead of allowing Iran's continued provocations to pass without repercussion, the Obama administration should be holding Iran accountable for its actions. It is long past overdue.

PENN STATE FARM EMPHASIZES VALUE OF AGRICULTURE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee, I rise today to commend the efforts of students at Penn State University in their efforts to set up a student-run farm in State College, Pennsylvania, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, the university's Student Farm Club has been working toward securing ground for this farm for the past couple years, finally obtaining an acre of space at a meeting in January.

The farm will operate as a laboratory where students will have the chance to study food production as well as distribution and marketing. Food grown there will be delivered to the community through student-run, community-supported agriculture, which connects consumers with growers.

Now, I know that this is just the beginning for Penn State's Student Farm Club, as they hope the student-run farm will expand in years to come.

Agriculture is the number one industry in my State, and it is key to Penn State University's past, present, and future. I wish these students the best of luck in this endeavor.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise during National Agriculture Week to recognize the tireless work of our farmers, ranchers, and producers. I am proud to represent Nebraska's Third District, the number one agriculture district in the Nation.

As the world's population grows, demand for food is projected to increase by as much as 60 percent by 2050. This provides great opportunity for Nebraska agriculture.

Our innovative producers utilize the latest advancements in the industry, including biotechnology. When biotechnology is applied to cultivated crops, producers increase yields while using less land, less water, and fewer chemicals. Not only is this good for the environment, it also lowers the cost of food at a time when one in eight people worldwide is suffering from chronic malnutrition.

Study after study has shown the safety and vast benefits of biotech crops. I am confident our farmers and ranchers can meet growing global demand, but the Federal Government must let them do their jobs. As founder and co-chairman of the Modern Agriculture Caucus, I am committed to promoting sound policies to help producers do what they do best: help feed the world.

NO MORE UNAUTHORIZED SPENDING

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

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind all of us that those who sent us here did so because they trust us with their voice to set the priorities in the people's House, because that is the way that our Founding Fathers intended it to be—a government of, by, and for ''We, the People.''

But what was established as three branches of government has evolved into an overextended executive and an overly active court system, with the American people's voice getting lost. Americans are frustrated, and I am, too. That is why I introduced the USA Act, to promote a more effective, accountable, and timely oversight of our entire Federal Government.

Too much of the government is currently on autopilot. We must challenge the status quo by ensuring that spending and decisions made by the executive branch departments, agencies, and programs come under the citizens' scrutiny.

No more unauthorized spending. It is time to hold Federal bureaucrats accountable for being so disconnected from their mission and reclaim the power of the purse.

I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring the USA Act.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHRISTIANS IS GENOCIDE

(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, facing persecution, murder, and torture each day, Christians overseas are persecuted for their religious beliefs. These individuals are being slaughtered, raped, and sold into slavery and forced to watch as their churches are burned down.

This morning, the State Department labeled these atrocities as genocide. This is mass genocide by ISIS and other radical jihadist groups that is taking place throughout the world.

Less than a year ago, 30 Ethiopian Christian men were marched to a beach, beheaded, and shot by radical Islamist terrorists because of their religion. These killers proudly put the video of the executions on YouTube.

In total, over 1,000 Christians have been killed by the radical Islamic State. These atrocious, cold-blooded massacres are an attack on the very nature of human existence: the right to practice one's religion.

Declaring the torture, crucifixion, and murder of Christians and certain religious groups genocide is now the official position of the United States. Genocide in any form is a grave injustice to those who are persecuted for their beliefs. Those people who murder Christians and other minorities because of their religion must be brought to justice because, Mr. Speaker, justice is what we do.

And that is just the way it is.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Genocide is defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) as ''any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part1; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.''

The definition of Genocide is codified in 18 U.S. Code Sec. 1091:

(a) Basic Offense.—Whoever, whether in time of peace or in time of war and with the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in substantial part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such—

(1) kills members of that group;

(2) causes serious bodily injury to members of that group;

(3) causes the permanent impairment of the mental faculties of members of the group through drugs, torture, or similar techniques;

(4) subjects the group to conditions of life that are intended to cause the physical destruction of the group in whole or in part;

(5) imposes measures intended to prevent births within the group; or

(6) transfers by force children of the group to another group;

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR CASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CURBELO of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROTHFUS. 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 materials on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, next week, the Supreme Court will hear the most important religious freedom case in decades. It is Zubik v. Burwell. The purpose of this Special Order is to talk a little bit about religious freedom and what is at stake here.

Before I begin, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who has long been a champion of human rights across the globe and understands the importance of religious freedom and is also the chair of our Pro-Life Caucus.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I want to thank my good friend and colleague, KEITH ROTHFUS, for his tremendous leadership on protecting the weakest and the most vulnerable among us, including the unborn and their mothers who are at risk of violence perpetrated by abortion, and for his dedication to protecting conscience rights, again, the subject of today's Special Order.

Next week, the Court will hear oral argument on a landmark case for religious liberty. The impact of the Court's ruling in this case cannot be overstated, but the question before the Court is really quite simple: Can the government coerce the Little Sisters of the Poor and other people of faith to violate their conscience?

The Obama administration is telling these religious sisters, women who have given their life in service to God by taking care of the elderly poor, that their conscience is irrelevant and that they must follow the Federal Government's conscience rather than their own.

This abuse of government power is absolutely antithetical to the American principle of freedom of religion and the First Amendment. Unless reversed, Obama's attack on conscience rights means that government can impose discrimination against Americans who seek to live according to their faith.

The Little Sisters have 30 homes for the elderly across the United States. Each Little Sister takes a vow of obedience to God and of hospitality ''to care for the aged as if they were Christ Himself,'' and they wear religious habits as a sign to others of God's presence in the world. Yet the Obama administration is dictating to the Little Sisters and others about how they should interpret their own religious beliefs. That, in a word, is outrageous.

□ 1330

The Sisters object to having their healthcare plans used to funnel drugs and devices that they have a moral objection to, including drugs that could even destroy a young human life. The sisters say that facilitating the provision of these items is a violation of their religious beliefs, and the government is saying: No, it isn't. We know better than you.

Under the Obama administration's coercive mandate, the Little Sisters and other religious organizations, like Priests for Life and Geneva College, are put in the impossible situation of being forced to violate their religious beliefs or face Obama-imposed crippling fines of $100 per day per employee. In the case of the Little Sisters, that would mean about $70 million per year.

This obscene penalty is completely unfair, unreasonable, and unconscionable. The Obama administration is saying: We will punish you; we will hurt you; we will stop you from serving, unless you provide health care according to the government's conscience, not your own.

President Obama has no business imposing his morality on people of faith, but that is exactly what this oppressive mandate does.

Let's make no mistake about it, this mandate is very much Obama's willful intention. The imposition of this attack on religious freedom is no accident. It comes straight from the pages of ObamaCare.

In December of 2009, in the run-up to passage of ObamaCare, Senator MIKULSKI offered an amendment which provided the authorizing language for this oppressive mandate; and some, including Senator CASEY, rigorously supported Senator MIKULSKI's amendment.

Mr. Speaker, when President Obama spoke in 2009 at Notre Dame University—which, I would say parenthetically, has also filed suit over the mandate—he spoke about drafting a sensible conscience clause. Yet today, protection of conscience is another highly visible broken promise of ObamaCare.

The Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker, has a duty to protect the right of the Little Sisters of the Poor and others to live according to their conscience, to ensure that they serve the elderly poor according to their conscience.

Again, I thank Mr. ROTHFUS for his leadership.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, again, for his long leadership on this very important subject of protecting life and protecting conscience.

He mentioned something about the government deciding what is or is not a sincerely held belief. It has been long established, Mr. Speaker, that that is up to the religious adherent-to-be, making that decision, not the government, not the government to interpose itself and tell an individual what is a sincerely held belief for the individual. That is a fundamental freedom that the individual has.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), who also has concerns about what is at stake.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROTHFUS.

Also, I appreciate following somebody like the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who has been a tremendous leader on life and on the individual liberties that we are guaranteed and that, indeed, were the cornerstones of the founding of this country and are our religious rights. So I am glad to be able to support Mr. ROTHFUS today in this Special Order about our First Amendment to the Constitution.

We know that next Wednesday, it appears the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the consolidated cases of Zubik v. Burwell.

Now, why is it we are even having to do this? How far have we gotten out of touch, as a Nation and as this oppressive government, that we have to go to court to assert the religious rights and freedoms of individual organizations, like Little Sisters and others that are joining them? It is outrageous to me because, again, a cornerstone of the founding of this country is religious rights.

The Little Sisters of the Poor is a tremendous faith-based organization consisting of Catholic nuns who serve the elderly in over 30 countries around the world, giving from their hearts to help people in a way they see fit in their views and their religion with God.

My scheduler, Caitlin, hosts a weekly movie night at the Little Sisters D.C. home, where she and many others can attest to the incredible work that is done by these nuns.

The HHS mandate under ObamaCare is now forcing religious organizations, like the Little Sisters, to provide health care plans, contraceptives, drugs, and things that they find that are against their belief system, that violate their deeply held belief system system; yet the club of ObamaCare and this Federal Government, hitting them over the head saying ''you have to provide this,'' goes against our founding principles, and I think the whole country should be outraged by this, merely so that a few can have something provided to them for free by an organization that shouldn't have to be doing so.

Indeed, John Adams once stated: ''Nothing is more dreaded than the national government meddling with religion.'' It is a fundamental liberty critical to a thriving and free society.

We have been blessed in a free country, where we can have our expression free, not having to adhere to a healthcare mandate or being forced to bake a cake because of someone else's idea of violating religious views. It is not government's place to determine what a person's religion requires or adheres to. Our laws should support and encourage citizens to worship without fear of reprisal from an oppressive Federal Government.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for religious organizations, such as Little Sisters of the Poor, and protect them from this horrific HHS mandate. And for the Supreme Court, once they decide to weigh in on a decision, not just to have yet another partisan down-the-line decision based on politics but, indeed, look into their hearts and look into their souls to what is right for the founding principles of this Nation and for people like Little Sisters of the Poor to carry out their God-given and God-driven agenda to help the people of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank Mr. ROTHFUS for the time and for leading this Special Order here today.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAMALFA for those observations and to hear about some personal interactions with the Little Sisters of the Poor and the tremendous work that they do.

We see the Little Sisters of the Poor at my parish about once a year. They are the most unthreatening individuals you would imagine. They stand at the door. Some of them are older, so it appears that some of them may have a little bit of arthritis as they are bent over holding a basket. And in that basket is a request for donations. They beg. They beg for people to support their work, which is caring for the most vulnerable people in our society, the elderly poor.

We haven't gotten here in a vacuum, Mr. Speaker. I think it is very important for us to take a look at the historical context of religious freedom and its importance.

Freedom of religion is fundamental in our country. An interesting note, here in my pocket is the Constitution, and religious freedom is literally the very first freedom mentioned in our Constitution. It is in the Bill of Rights.

''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.''

The very first freedom mentioned.

After freedom of religion, there is freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of the right of the people to peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. But the very first freedom mentioned is the freedom of religion.

It is interesting because we also talk about rights in our society. As a footnote, our founding documents—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—talk about rights. But the very first right in one of our founding documents is the right to life.

In our Declaration, ''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.''

The very first right in our founding documents is the right to life, and the very first freedom in our founding documents is the freedom of religion.

Why was it so important? Because there is a long history, Mr. Speaker, of how religion has been treated throughout the world.

You can go back to the beginnings of the development of the Christian faith in Europe where we saw this religious sect begin in the Holy Land and then spread to the capital of the Roman Empire.

It was the Roman emperors who first persecuted the people of faith, who had the Christian faith. We saw how the emperors forced early Christians to violate their conscience.

It might not seem as any big deal. All they wanted was for individuals to burn a little pinch of incense before the Roman gods because the emperors were concerned about threats to the empire; and they thought if they could appease the Roman gods, if they had everybody in the empire doing that little pinch, it was not going to hurt anybody.

In fact, a lot of Christians went along with it. But there were those who did not because they could not do that in their conscience. And what happened to them? They were murdered. They were murdered because they did not burn that pinch of incense to the Roman gods.

So we look back through history and we understand now that it was wrong for an all-powerful government to go after people of conscience's sincerely held beliefs. We all recognize that as abhorrent right now.

But it wasn't just 2,000 years ago or 1,800 years ago, Mr. Speaker, that we saw these persecutions happening. There was a gentleman in 16th century England, in 1535. We know him now in history as ''a man for all seasons.'' Thomas More, an extraordinary intellect, was a poet, lawyer, father, husband, Speaker of the House of Commons, chancellor.

Mr. More was a man of serious faith and serious conscience. He had a very good relationship with his friend, King Henry VIII, but King Henry had a problem. He had made an arrangement to have special permission granted where he could marry the widow of his brother who had died, Catherine of Aragon.

But after some time, Henry was concerned that he did not have a male heir that he wanted to leave the throne to. So he thought he needed another wife.

We know the course of history: He divorced Catherine, and he married Anne Boleyn. He wanted the people of England to accept that. He knew that his dynasty was at stake, so he required people to accept that.

Thomas More, in conscience, could not. He was jailed in the Tower of London. His books were taken away. He refused to speak on the matter because he thought that silence would protect him. Then there was perjury, and he was convicted of treason for opposing the king, and he was beheaded, all because he was following the dictates of his conscience.

This was the context, Mr. Speaker, in which Western history was developing. And as the Renaissance was happening—and More was part of the English Renaissance—and as we went into the later 16th century and the 17th century, the development of thinking on religious freedom—and there were religious wars throughout Europe, and all these minorities seemed to be getting oppressed by the government—a number of sects decided that there would be a better place where they could practice their faith in conscience, and that place was the New World across the ocean.

□ 1345

It took a lot of trouble to get to the New World—dangerous new territory, treacherous crossing, unknowns—but these were people who were looking to build a city upon a hill. We know the stories of Pilgrims, who sought religious freedom, and of, later, the Puritans. My own State, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was established as a colony where people of conscience would be protected.

William Penn, in his Pennsylvania Charter of Privileges in 1701, wrote:

''No people can be truly happy, though under the greatest enjoyments of civil liberties, if abridged of the freedom of their conscience as to their religious profession and worship.''

Penn, himself, was jailed for his exercising his conscience, as he wrote from Newgate Prison in 1670:

''By liberty of conscience, we understand not only a mere liberty of the mind but the exercise of ourselves in a visible way of worship, upon our believing it to be indispensably required at our hands, that if we neglect it for fear or favor of any mortal man, we sin and incur divine wrath.''

All of these individuals were seeking protection, were seeking a place where they could exercise their freedom of conscience. Maybe that, Mr. Speaker, is why the freedom of religion is the first freedom mentioned in our Bill of Rights.

Our Founders, the Fathers of our country, understood the importance of religion. President George Washington remarked in his farewell address that religion and morality are ''the firmest props of the duties of men and citizens'' and ''the indispensable supports of the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity.''

Six years prior to his farewell address, Washington wrote a letter to the

Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, which contained, arguably, one of the most beautiful articulations of religious liberty in American history:

''The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy—a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.''

Alexis de Tocqueville, who visited this country in the 1830s, explains in ''Democracy in America,'' in looking back at the experience of the Pilgrims: The Pilgrims came, de Tocqueville said, ''to make an idea triumph.'' They founded a community, the Pilgrims, and a society where government could not encroach on their particular religious practice. This is part of the fabric of our country.

Look at the experience in history. All of the Founders were well-versed in our history, the Western history—of the importance of conscience, of religious freedom. Outside observers coming to this country, like de Tocqueville, were seeing it and understanding the importance of people of faith to correct the errors that were in our country. The movement to abolish the abominable practice of slavery happened because people of faith stood up and recognized the inherent indignity of the practice and the violation of fundamental human rights. History in our country is just replete with instances of people of faith who have stood up to make a difference. One hundred years after the end of the Civil War, it was people of faith who began the marches in the South. It was people of faith from the north who went down to help.

Dr. Martin Luther King was a pastor. He went to seminary in my home State of Pennsylvania, to the Crozer Theological Seminary. He was motivated by what was the fabric of his life, which was grounded in scripture. He asked the big questions.

Just before his death, Dr. King says:

''Conscience asks, 'Is it right?' And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right.''

People of faith, people of conscience, we have seen them very active in the effort to protect all human life since the Supreme Court, in 1973, took what then-Justice White said was an exercise in raw judicial power and said that certain human beings aren't persons.

We know that we have had more than 50 million abortions since that time, but it has been people of faith who have been looking for solutions, who have been seeking to help women in crisis. Whether it has been Catholic charities, crisis pregnancy centers, people of faith, they have been standing up and providing assistance to women in crisis, walking with them, helping to carry the burdens that they are experiencing—of women who have often been abandoned and isolated, who don't feel like they have a friend but then who find a hotline where a voice picks up—somebody who has been motivated by his faith to be sitting by that phone, wanting to help, asking to help.

Next week, the Supreme Court is going to be taking a look at this case. Again, it may be the most important religious freedom case the Court has heard. The Court is going to make the decision: For the individual who objects to signing a form based on his religious belief, is that a legitimate exercise of his conscience?

That is not the government's decision, Mr. Speaker. The government should not be subjectively telling an individual in this country, who has a fundamental First Amendment right—a first freedom—to exercise his religion, what is legitimate and what is not. That is what is at stake here.

It is interesting that my diocese—the diocese in which I live, the Diocese of Pittsburgh—is the lead plaintiff named in the case, Bishop Zubik.

Bishop Zubik has written:

''Religious freedom is not secondary freedom; it is the founding freedom. Religious freedom in this country means that we pledge allegiance to both God and country, not to God or country.

''We have the right not just to worship, not just to pray privately. We also have the right to try to have an impact on our society for the common good. We have our rights to express our beliefs publicly and try to convince hearts and minds. We not only have a duty but the right to live out the faith in our ministries of service.

''Religious freedom is not a passive act. Religious freedom is intentionally action. Religious freedom has to be expressed. Religious freedom has to be lived. Religious freedom has to be out in the open, among the people. Freedom of religion can never be confined to merely the freedom to worship. It defies the Constitution and does a mortal injustice to society.''

The First Amendment doesn't say ''freedom to worship.'' It says ''freedom of religion.''

For those who are Christians, you can go to Matthew, chapter 25, and the mandates that we have from Jesus.

Looking at whether in your life you fed the poor, clothed the naked, gave drink to the thirsty, visited those in prison, when you go up to the pearly gates, those who have lived in accordance with Matthew 25 may still ask the question: When did I help you? When?

''When you did it to the least of my brothers, you did it to me.''

That is not happening inside the church, Mr. Speaker. That is happening on the streets. It is happening in hospitals. It is happening in health clinics. It is happening in food banks. It is happening on counseling hotlines. These are people of faith who are engaged in public society, who want to help others. In a spirit of solidarity, they are standing with those who are suffering, and they are wanting to help—motivated by their faith.

That is what the Little Sisters of the Poor do. I mentioned how the Little Sisters come to my parish and beg. They are not a very threatening bunch, Mr. Speaker. They have homes across the country in which they are taking care of the elderly. They offer an opportunity for dignity for the people who have lived long and hard lives. At the end of their lives, they may not have much to show for it from a monetary perspective, but they may have lived very rich lives in the way they were helping in their communities. That is not a condition for going to stay with the Little Sisters of the Poor. They love unconditionally and they provide a chance for people in their senior years to have a little bit of respect and a little bit of dignity.

The Little Sisters of the Poor are up against a leviathan—Goliath—the all-powerful United States Federal Government at the Department of Health and Human Services.

It says, ''You will sign this. You, Sister, will sign this.''

''But,'' Sister says in her conscience, ''I can't do that.''

''Sister, it is an opt-out.''

Sister is saying, ''Yes, but if I sign that document, that sets in chain the provisions of services that violate my conscience. You are forcing me to take an act to be the cause—the cause of something I don't believe in.''

''But, Sister, you will. You will do this.''

Think back 2,000 years, 1,800 years. The Empire needs to be protected from barbarians who are going to be coming across—the Goths, whoever it is. We have to sacrifice just a pinch—just a pinch—to our Roman gods to be protected.

Thomas More: King Henry's surrogates go to Thomas in the tower. ''Just sign the document. Just sign the document. It is not going to hurt. It will bring peace. It will make sure that the king's dynasty will continue. We are tired of religious wars in Europe, and if the king doesn't have a male heir, then we are going to have all kinds of continued wars. There is a very good justification, Sir Thomas, to sign that document.''

Thomas says, ''I can't. I can't.'' He lost his head.

People of faith in England and in Holland—wherever—knew that if they got to these shores, they could live in freedom of conscience.

□ 1400

Now we have the all-powerful government coming in and saying: You will

comply; you will sign. Oh, Sister, that is not a violation of your religious freedom. Trust us.

Really? Really? How is it that the Federal Government could be the arbiter of what is a sincerely held belief? Doesn't that set the government up perhaps as an entity itself making religious decisions?

I thought the Federal Government was not supposed to make religious decisions. If the Federal Government has a bureau of what is a sincerely held religious belief, that is a pretty serious issue that the Court needs to take a look at.

I wonder what you would call that bureau? Bureau of legitimate religious practices? Bureau of legitimate religious beliefs? Bureau of what we will allow you to believe in this country? Is that what this is?

It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that religious freedom is not a priority here for those who promulgate these regulations.

I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK), who is a stalwart defender of human life.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative ROTHFUS for setting up this time so we can draw attention to this case of the Little Sisters of the Poor and for his eloquent defense of the right to life.

I am here today to also support the Little Sisters of the Poor and all the faith-based groups in our country that seek to help the poor and unfortunate among us.

Northern Michigan, where I come from, is home to many of these organizations, and I am very familiar with the good works that these groups do in our communities. We need to be doing more to encourage this type of service and make faith-based organizations even more important in our country, not put undue problems in their way and make them do things that they don't believe in.

The undue burden that is being imposed on many of these organizations by the Federal Government is completely wrong. Thanks to the President's healthcare law, faith-based organizations are being forced to participate in a convoluted system that leads to abortion, a practice that is contrary to their and my deeply held beliefs.

I stand with the Little Sisters of the Poor and many of my constituents in northern Michigan in the belief that life inside the womb is just as precious as life outside the womb. Both unborn and born children have a right to life, and we have a duty to defend this right. This is a civil right. This is what our country was founded upon. Life is the first of the freedoms that are enumerated.

My hope is that Americans who believe in the sanctity of life will keep strong in their efforts to stop the Federal Government's intrusion into our religious freedom.

I, myself, am frankly amazed that we live in a country that was founded on the right to life and liberty—and we all have heard the phrase ''life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness''—and that the Federal Government is paying for losing a civil right: the right to life.

I don't know what it is exactly, how this country that is founded on principles like that could have gotten to this state. It is one of the reasons I am standing here. I never was involved with politics in my life until this administration came upon the scene and started destroying the fabric of our Republic.

I think often, too: How does this happen? How does God allow this to happen? This time in our lives, in our country, is truly a test of our faith.

Really, Mr. Speaker, I am here to be sure that all Americans continue to fight and not lose the hope that our country will solve this problem and get out of the business of paying for abortions and the tragedy of abortion over the many years that it has been legal in this country. I call upon those Americans to continue to work hard, to keep strong in their efforts, to bring an end to this tragedy that is going on in America and the overreaching Federal Government that is allowing it to happen.

I again commend Mr. ROTHFUS for doing this and really call out to all Americans to not lose hope that we are going to put a stop to this and to continue to fight for the lives of the unborn and unfortunate.

I again applaud those faith-based organizations that continue to fight and go to court over this and that we need to continue to do this.

I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BENISHEK.

Again, you think about the dignity of the human person and, as he talked about, the importance of the right to life, just a fundamental right.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, the first right in our founding documents, beginning with the first freedom being the freedom of religion.

It is amazing to me how the freedom of religion in this country has informed the world and what took root in this country 240 years ago, which is the notion that we were not going to have an established church and that we were going to allow people to freely exercise their faith and how that has led to this proliferation in our country of the practice of faith. And comparing what is happening in the United States versus other countries, particularly in Europe where there was an established church, we know that more people go to church in this country than in Europe.

It was the American experience, I think, that has really informed others, including the Catholic church, of which I am a member. I hark back to what President Washington had written to the Hebrew congregation:

''The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess, alike, liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship.''

It is amazing to look at that letter and then to reflect how the Catholic church came together under, now, Pope Saint John XXIII with the Second Vatican Council, which the whole idea was to open up the church and to engage modernity and to see what was out there that might inform how people are ordering their lives.

The Second Vatican Council issued a number of remarkable documents, including a declaration on religious freedom, the Dignitatis Humanae. It states:

''The exercise of religion, of its very nature, consists before all else in those internal, voluntary and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. No merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind.''

The Second Vatican Council, they had to recognize how religious freedom developed in this country because there was no coercion. Conversely, there is the long history going back hundreds of years, centuries, back to the Roman martyrs where the emperor was forcing people to act against their conscience, King Henry VIII.

Here we have, today, an all-powerful Federal Government sitting in judgment on what somebody's sincerely held belief is. The Court needs to protect this fundamental freedom. The Court needs to protect conscience. This country is a better place because of it.

It is interesting because, as the Affordable Care Act has been implemented, the purported compelling interests that the government uses about providing access to health care, they have set up a regime, a scheme where not every single plan is being required to provide the services that the Little Sisters of the Poor find objectionable or that the Diocese of Pittsburgh would find objectionable or Geneva College, a Christian college in my district, would find objectionable, because they grandfathered some plans. They grandfathered plans that cover millions of people.

So I guess it is a compelling interest when they are going after a little religious charity, but it is not a compelling interest if they are going against a big corporation that might have a grandfathered plan.

Oh, it is just signing a little paper, Sister.

No, it is not; it is coercion.

If the Little Sisters of the Poor are providing health insurance to their employees without the mandated services that include abortion-causing drugs, if they provide a health plan that covers cancer, covers maternity benefits, covers a broken bone at the emergency room, but doesn't cover those services they find objectionable, they will be fined $36,500 a year for one person. All told, when you add it all up, it is $70

million. But if they provide no plan—no plan at all—it is $2,000 per employee. If that doesn't send a message of coercion, I don't know what does.

I urge the Court to recognize the right of conscience and to be tolerant of that. This country is a wonderful country. ''Tolerance'' is one of the words that we have inscribed down here on the rostrum of the House of Representatives—''tolerance.''

It is a two-way street, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge the folks at the Department of Health and Human Services to give a better appreciation for tolerance.

This country just has a long history of protecting religious freedom from the very beginning through the movement to abolish slavery, through the movement to ask for the cashing of the promissory note that Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King talked about, to the pro-life movement, to the charities, the hospitals, the clinics, the schools, and the food banks that have all been run by religious organizations. It is about these organizations wanting to take care of people.

Although not a party to the case, I think of a story involving the Missionaries of Charity, that order founded by blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who will be canonized a Catholic saint this September by Pope Francis, who spoke here in this Chamber.

Mother Teresa's nuns have established a number of homes around the world. We know that they had a home for the elderly in Yemen, and some of those residents were murdered just weeks ago by radical jihadists. Four of the sisters were murdered as well.

Mother Teresa has established homes in our country, and I remember hearing a story about a home in San Francisco in either the late 1980s or early 1990s. It was a home that was caring for people with AIDS. There was a story of one gentleman who was going to die, and he needed a place to stay.

□ 1415

The Missionaries of Charity took him in, and they nursed him back to health. He went back out and continued his life, but he got sick again and came back again. The sisters welcomed him back.

As he neared the end of his life, he was scared until Mother Teresa picked him up in her arms. For once in his life, he found unconditional love and peace because a person of faith whom we all recognize did great things because of faith, that person found peace.

Millions of people in this country have found peace because of the free exercise of religion. Let's not crush that. Let's protect these fundamental freedoms of religious freedom, the tremendous good that is being done. We should not make religious organizations adjuncts of the all-powerful Federal Government: You can practice your charity as long as you do it the way we want you to. We lose something there, Mr. Speaker.

How much time do I have remaining, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BABIN). The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), who has long been an advocate for the types of freedoms I have been talking about, religious freedom, and the first right that we have been talking about, the right to life.

I yield to Mr. GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS), my friend. I mean, just within days of Mr. ROTHFUS arriving here at the Capitol as a United States Congressman, we were together, abiding together, standing together, and it has been my great honor to do so. I have come to know his heart. He is a man of intellect, a man of character.

Mr. ROTHFUS. So the gentleman from Texas will control the time, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to join my colleagues in support of fundamental American values, among which are commitments to religious freedom, human rights, and religious expression.

As a Catholic, my faith plays a significant role in every aspect of my life and fosters a respect for the religious rights and freedoms of others.

Next week, the Supreme Court will hear from our religious non-profit organizations, including the Little Sisters of the Poor, which have challenged the HHS mandate and its impact on their religious rights and freedoms.

I believe in the importance of patient-centered health care for women, and I also want to ensure that conscience rights and religious liberties are protected.

At its core, this case is about the state forcing religious organizations to provide for services that violate their beliefs.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, to hear my friend Mr. ROTHFUS talk about the Little Sisters of the Poor—I have not met them personally as he has. I don't know them personally as he does, but it is rather clear they bear a great deal of resemblance in the way they carry themselves, in the way they help others, in the way they are incredibly selfless, that they are living their lives truly committed to doing what Jesus said when he said: If you love me, you will tend my sheep.

These Little Sisters of the Poor, these Catholic nuns, since I haven't met them personally and dealt with them personally, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS), my friend, has, I take it from his description and from what I have seen of them on television and heard them speak on radio and television and in the written media, these are precious, extraordinary women, the kind of people about which Jesus spoke when he said: They will inherit the Earth.

Unfortunately, between that time when they inherit all things, they have to endure the slings and arrows of people who ridicule and persecute Christians for their beliefs. It is so remarkable that we are supposed to have this incredibly educated judiciary, this incredibly educated group of people in the United States, when, as I have heard repeatedly in my district over the last few months, you know, there is sense, s-e-n-s-e, in Washington and at the Capitol, but it's not common sense there.

It is common sense where the Little Sisters of the Poor are located. It is common sense where I live in Texas, common sense among the 12 counties that I travel constantly. There are places around the country it is common sense, but not here, because the people around the country can read the First Amendment to our Constitution. It says Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

This is a Nation, according to our Founders, who had a tremendous amount to say about our foundation. I know that we have had people educated to the level of Ph.D.—perhaps even beyond, whatever that is—and yet they have not gotten a complete education of the basis on which this Nation was founded. They have been convinced by people who have taken tiny little parts of our founding and seen little trees and shrubs and ignored the forest.

If people on the Supreme Court and in our Federal court system would dare to look at a full history of this Nation, they might actually read what the Pilgrims themselves said in their own writing, their own agreement, because in 1620, November 11, 1620—I am quoting from the Pilgrims:

''In the name of God, Amen . . . having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politick.''

Or how about September 26, 1642, some educational institution called Harvard that has also been educating people out of common sense. Thank God there are people who have graduated from Harvard and have been able to maintain some level of common sense. But Harvard said:

''Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let every

one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of Him (Proverbs 2:3).''

Or how about this entry in George Washington's prayer book. Perhaps some of our courts' liberal judges, some of them have probably heard of George Washington, and I know in some of our schools we have had to drop the study of real history because they are teaching to the ridiculous test that some bureaucrats think should be appropriate because the Federal Government has gotten too involved and gone beyond what the Constitution allows them to require and do. But George Washington's prayer book included this prayer:

''O, most glorious God and Jesus Christ, I acknowledge and confess my faults in the weak and imperfect performance of the duties of this day. I called on Thee for pardon and forgiveness of sins, but so coldly and carelessly that my prayers are come my sin and stand in need of pardon. I have heard Thy holy word, but with such deadness of spirit that I have been an unprofitable and forgetful hearer . . . Let me live according to those holy rules which Thou hast this day prescribed in Thy holy word. Direct me to the true object, Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and life. Bless, O Lord, all the people of this land.''

Wow. That was the father of our country, in his prayer book that is.

So I think about the wisdom. Proverbs says fear the Lord's beginning of wisdom, and I think about the wisdom of a lady who is not that well formally educated, Ms. Milam in Mount Pleasant, Texas, one of my mother's best friends.

My late mother had some awesome friends, and I loved to hear them talk.

Ms. Milam's daughter, Emma Lou, was talking to her mother, Ms. Milam, and it was my great honor when I was able to drive as a 14-year-old and Ms. Milam would call over and tell my mother: Tell LOUIE I have got some homemade rolls.

And I would head over to Ms. Milam's house because they were incredible. She had real butter.

She didn't have a very advanced education. I don't know if she got to seventh or eighth grade. I know she didn't go too far at all in school, but she was a very, very smart woman. And having discussions, sometimes eating rolls and real butter, and hearing the wisdom of this lady—I think she was 90, maybe, when she said this, but her daughter was talking about someone there in our hometown where I was growing up, Mount Pleasant, and she mentioned a guy there.

Ms. Milam said: He is a fool.

Emma Lou, her daughter, said: Mother, he has his Ph.D.

Ms. Milam said: I don't care. He will always be a p-h-u-l, fool.

There are people in this country, they may have their Ph.D.s, but they will always be, as dear Ms. Milam, Emma Lou Leftwhich's mother, you say he will still be a p-h-u-l, fool.

She may not have been the most accurate speller, but she knew a fool when she saw and heard one.

So we have people who have not been properly educated about our history, and so they go about miseducating others by telling people like me when we were students: By the way, Benjamin Franklin was a deist, someone who believes if there was something that created the universe and it didn't just all amazingly happen from a big bang or whatever—some of us believe there could be a big bang and still have been intelligent design to what happened.

But we were told Ben Franklin, no, he didn't believe that there was a God that intervened in the ways of man, that if there was a deity or something of force that set things in motion, that that thing, force, deity, whatever it is, if it still exists, it never interferes with the laws of nature, the ways of man. It just lets everything play out, so we are on our own.

But if you look at the words Ben Franklin wrote and spoke himself, we know what he said in 1787, June, at the Constitutional Convention, because he was asked for a copy. He wrote it down. Madison took notes, but Franklin wrote it down. In part, he says—and, of course, he was 80 years old, a couple years away from meeting his Judge, his Maker. This brilliant man said:

''I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His''—God's—''notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?''

□ 1430

''We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' ''

He said:

''I firmly believe this; and I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little partial local interests . . . and we ourselves shall beome a reproach and a byword down to future ages.''

This is a man who is one of the greatest Founders of this country, who made clear, standing before all of these brilliant people in Philadelphia and the little Independence Hall and told them unashamedly that if we do not invoke God's help here in our effort to put together a Constitution that this country will work and live under, then we will succeed no better than the builders of Babel. It will all come crashing down, as the Tower of Babel did.

Yet we get far enough from that amazing speech in 1787—and yes, it is true that because they didn't have a treasury; they didn't have money; they weren't getting paid; they weren't able to hire a chaplain, as they had throughout the Revolution. The Continental Congress had a chaplain that led in prayer every day before they started.

They didn't have money. They didn't have a treasury. They couldn't hire a chaplain. There were denominations of Christians there that didn't trust other members to do a prayer that was satisfactory for all, so they all had to hire a chaplain during the Continental Congress days to do the prayer for everyone, that they could all be assured was a fair prayer to each of the Christian sects. Even the Quakers would not get upset if they picked the right Christian chaplain. So that is what they did.

But it is true, after Franklin made this speech, that it was pointed out they have got no money. They can't hire a chaplain. So they will get to that later—and later, they did. Because since that first day that Congress was sworn in, in 1789, in Federal Hall there in New York, right after George Washington put his hand on his own Bible and added the words to the end of his oath of office ''so help me God,'' he goes in, he makes a brief speech—back in those days, they did that, a brief speech—to Congress. Then they all went down to St. Paul's Chapel, which is still there, that was protected from the concrete and debris and steel—all those things that came flying—totally protected by a sycamore tree that fell there in the cemetery. It was totally protected—even the fragile stained glass windows—from any harm.

The chapel where George Washington and the first Congress, after they were sworn in, came down Wall Street and actually had a prayer service together in St. Paul's Chapel.

Is it any wonder that, after 9/11, the only building that was not harmed in what was considered part of Ground Zero was St. Paul's Chapel, where that first prayer session came together? Jonathan Cahn has written eloquently about that.

When I was there a few months after 9/11, that is where everybody was bringing their wreaths and their messages that just broke your heart: Has anyone seen this person? It is St. Paul's Chapel.

It is not just me that says it. But let's go to another of our Founders. A lot of people don't know that he was a Founder, Noah Webster.

In 1783, Noah Webster wrote and published the first book on proper spelling for words, which eventually morphed into our dictionary. Generation after generation has learned at the hands of Noah Webster, and a lot of people don't realize what an important role Noah Webster had as a thinker, as a brilliant man, as a confidant to George Washington, as a confidant to Alexander Hamilton, another of our Founders.

But that brilliant man, Noah Webster, said this:

''The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all of our civil constitutions and laws. All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible.''

Wow.

Of course, Jedidiah Morse, the father of American geography, as he is called, and the father of Samuel B. Morse, stated:

''Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all the blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.''

Of course, this is what the Supreme Court has been doing, the very thing that our Founders, including this direct statement of Jedidiah Morse made: when the pillars of Christianity fall, then self-government is going to fall with it.

And that is why John Adams had made the point that he did, that this form of government is intended only for a religious and moral people. It is totally ineffective to govern any other kind.

Yes, they had some things wrong. No one should have been enslaved when a Constitution and a Bill of Rights were adopted, as it was. No one should have been. People should have been treated equally—not by behavior or conduct, because there have to be laws governing behavior and conduct and choices—but regarding things that you have no control over: race, creed, color, gender, national origin. And it took a little while to get that right.

People talk about Jefferson. People say he didn't even believe in God. Are you kidding me? Jefferson, whose memorial is not far from this very Capitol—a beautiful dome overlooking the Tidal Basin—has inscribed on the walls:

''Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?''

John Quincy Adams, our youngest diplomat in the history of the United States, appointed by George Washington. Became President in the election of 1824. He was the only person to have been President and, after he was President—defeated in 1828 by Andrew Jackson—runs for Congress in 1830. Nobody ever did that before or since. Why would anybody run for Congress after they had been President?

Well, in the case of John Quincy Adams, it was because he believed God had called him to do what William Wilberforce was doing and had almost completed doing in the British Empire, and that is, eliminating slavery because of his beliefs of the teachings in the Bible.

By the way, John Quincy Adams overlapped with Lincoln for about a year just down the hall here. We now call it Statuary Hall. It has got a brass plate where his desk was. There is a brass plate where a skinny, not that handsome guy sat in the very back for 2 years, overlapped with Adams.

I asked the historian Steve Mansfield about this. He said, there is no question about it that Abraham Lincoln, sitting at the back of Statuary Hall—the back of the House Chamber down the hall, listening to the speeches of John Quincy Adams over and over about the evils of slavery and how in the world could we expect God to continue blessing America when we are putting brothers and sisters in chains? He said, there is no question; those speeches materially affected Lincoln more than anything else in his 2 brief years in the House of Representatives, so much so that after the compromise of 1850 and slavery appeared to be perpetuated, that eventually he had to get back involved in politics to try to get rid of slavery.

Why? Because Lincoln, who started as an infidel, as Mansfield's book ''Lincoln's Battle With God'' points out, he bragged about being an infidel in the early 1820s. But by the time he became President, he had no question whatsoever: There is a God Almighty who has control of the universe. He does let us make free choices. And Lincoln felt like he may have made some wrong choices that contributed to trouble in the country that broke his heart, caused him depression. But he believed.

He was materially affected by the man who believed that God had called him to bring an end to slavery. And in obedient response to what he believed was God's calling, he materially affected that young freshman sitting at the back of Statuary Hall to the point that he ended up being the leader that brought about the end of slavery.

My friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) was quoting from and relating to Martin Luther King, Jr. What was he? He was an ordained Christian minister who believed in God, who believed in the saving grace of Jesus Christ, just like the little Sisters of the Poor, who have dedicated their lives to helping others who don't have the ability to care for themselves. They have spent so much of their lives that would equate to millions and millions of dollars providing health care and help to people in need.

And what happens? We have, as Thomas Jefferson related, gotten so far from remembering where our rights come from that this Nation is in peril of continuing to stay free.

You have other statements. John Quincy Adams says:

''The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: It connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.''

From the day of the Declaration, they—the American people—were bound by the laws of God and by the laws of the gospel which they nearly all acknowledged as the rules of their conduct.

Well, certainly.

Under the freedom of religion in our First Amendment that was adopted June 15, 1790, nobody can be forced to become a Christian. God gives us free choice. And that is part of the foundation of this Nation and the freedoms. And the minute that a majority of this country think our freedoms come from a government, those freedoms are gone.

The Nation—at least a majority—must accept that our freedoms are a gift from God that should be protected by the government, and the minute a majority believes otherwise, then it is—as defendants used to say, after they were sentenced in my court, sometimes they would say: It is all over but the slow talking and the low walking.

And so it will be over for this Nation when a majority believes that freedom is something this government in Washington gives benevolently to us. Because once that belief is a majority belief, then the government giveth and the government taketh away.

□ 1445

What that government will find, as every government that has ever been instituted, whether king, dictator, emperor, Parliament, Congress, it ultimately will always find that when you do not know the basis, the foundation of the world, then your government will not last just a whole lot longer. That is why the Founders kept trying to make sure we understood this.

Alexis de Tocqueville, that my friend, Mr. ROTHFUS, referenced, who came over here to do a study of what was making America so special and great. This one is not often quoted, but it is a quote from 1835:

> There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the Earth.

There are so many quotes that are part of our history. Franklin Roosevelt, 1935, says:

> We cannot read the history of our rising development as a nation, without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic. Where we have been the truest and most consistent in obeying its precepts, we have attained the greatest measure of contentment and prosperity.

It was the Ambassador to the U.N. from Lebanon, and later President of the U.N. of the General Assembly said this in 1958, ''Whoever tries to conceive the American word without taking full account of the suffering and love of salvation of Christ is only dreaming.

''I know how embarrassing this matter is to politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and cynics, but whatever these honored men think, the irrefutable truth is that the soul of America is at its best and highest Christian.''

But you don't have to be a Christian. You can be an atheist, agnostic, Buddhist, Muslim, whatever you want to be, as long as the Constitution and the Bill of Rights is foremost in your guiding principle here in this country.

But this administration has done what really would be unthinkable in any other administration. It basically has an undeclared—publicly undeclared war against Christianity. And it has

sown seeds around the world so that when I have met and wept with people, victims in Nigeria and around the world, they don't understand why America doesn't stand up against Christian genocide around the world and their suffering. Because when you look, the United States Government will litigate against the Little Sisters of the Poor, Mother Teresa, basically, and say: You have got to believe what we tell you to believe. You have got to practice the religious beliefs we tell you to believe. We don't care how moral and Christian and wonderful and humble and helpful you have been. We don't care. You are going to do what the new God of this country says, the five majority on the Supreme Court. That is the new God.

It is about marriage. It is about everything else. Until the five majority in the Supreme Court wake up and allow freedom of religion not to be prohibited, consistent with the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, then we have not a whole lot of time left as a free people.

As an Australian group told me, if something happens to the United States, forget trying to come to Australia. We are gone as soon as you are.

It is time we stand up and make sure religious freedom lives again completely free in America.

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

SENATE BILL REFERRED

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

S. 719. An act to rename the Armed For Reserve Center in Great Falls, Montana, the Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center; to the Committee on Armed Services.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

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

S. 2426. An act to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan in the International Criminal Police Organization, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, March 21, 2016, at noon for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

4663. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Additions to the Entity List [Docket No.: 160106014-6014-01] (RIN: 0694-AG82) received March 15, 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.

4664. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Amendment 15 [Docket No.: 150302204-5999-02] (RIN: 0648-BE93) received March 16, 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.

4665. A letter from the Chairman, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Information Required in Notices and Petitions Containing Interchange Commitments [Docket No.: EP 714] received March 15, 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 Transportation and Infrastructure.

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. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 4771. A bill to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system; to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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 Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 4772. A bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds to accept commercial flight plans for travel between the United States and Cuba until certain known fugitives are returned to the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. WALBERG (for himself and Mr. KLINE):

H.R. 4773. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to nullify the proposed rule regarding defining and delimiting the exemptions for executive, administrative, professional, outside sales, and computer employees, to require the Secretary of Labor to conduct a full and complete economic analysis with improved economic data on small businesses, nonprofit employers, Medicare or Medicaid dependent health care providers, and small governmental jurisdictions, and all other employers, and minimize the impact on such employers, before promulgating any substantially similar rule, and to provide a rule of construction regarding the salary threshold exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. CASTOR of Florida:

H.R. 4774. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the distribution of additional residency positions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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 Mr. OLSON (for himself, Mr. FLORES, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. LATTA, Mr. MCCARTHY, and Mr. CUELLAR):

H.R. 4775. A bill to facilitate efficient State implementation of ground-level ozone standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. LEE, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. HECK of Washington):

H.R. 4776. A bill to establish a national program to identify landslide hazards and reduce loss from landslides, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, 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. SEWELL of Alabama (for herself, Mr. BYRNE, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, and Mr. PALMER):

H.R. 4777. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1301 Alabama Avenue in Selma, Alabama as the ''Amelia Boynton Robinson Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina:

H.R. 4778. A bill to direct the Comptroller General to submit to Congress a report on medical items and services being offered in the facilities of recipients of assistance under title X of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300 et seq.) or of their affiliates, subsidiaries, successors, or clinics; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ (for himself, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CLAY, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, and Mr. GROTHMAN):

H.R. 4779. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to prevent Federal prosecutions for certain conduct, relating to CBD oil, that is lawful under State law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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 Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H.R. 4780. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a comprehensive strategy for Department of Homeland Security operations abroad, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. DUFFY (for himself, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, and Mr. RATCLIFFE):

H.R. 4781. A bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to make certain functions of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation subject to appropriations; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 4782. A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2016, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CHABOT (for himself and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ):

H.R. 4783. A bill to reauthorize and improve the Small Business Innovation Research Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, 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. SCHRADER (for himself and Mr. BILIRAKIS):

H.R. 4784. A bill to increase competition in the pharmaceutical industry; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PERRY (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN):

H.R. 4785. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. GOSAR (for himself, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. ASHFORD, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. HARDY, Mr. HARRIS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. SALMON, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. SMITH of Texas):

H.R. 4786. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a pilot program for commercial recreation concessions on certain land managed by the Bureau of Land Management; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself and Mr. CLAWSON of Florida):

H.R. 4787. A bill to direct the Secretary of Commerce to award competitive grants to institutions of higher education to combat lionfish in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, through the Cooperative Science and Education Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. ADAMS (for herself and Mr. HANNA):

H.R. 4788. A bill to strengthen resources for entrepreneurs by improving the SCORE program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. BEYER (for himself and Mr. COOK):

H.R. 4789. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a structure for visitor services on the Arlington Ridge tract, in the area of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 4790. A bill to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on Federal land and to open up opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, Education and the Workforce, Armed Services, Energy and Commerce, and Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. BRAT (for himself, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. PERRY, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. SALMON, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. BABIN, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. BURGESS):

H.R. 4791. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require deposits into the Immigration Examinations Fee Account to be subject to appropriations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 4792. A bill to update the oil and gas and mining industry guides of the Securities and Exchange Commission; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 4793. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire land south of Lake Okeechobee, Florida, for the purpose of flood damage reduction and water storage, treatment, and conveyance purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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. CRENSHAW (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. SESSIONS):

H.R. 4794. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow rollovers between 529 programs and ABLE accounts; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CRENSHAW (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. SESSIONS):

H.R. 4795. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals with disabilities to save additional amounts in their ABLE accounts above the current annual maximum contribution if they work and earn income; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

H.R. 4796. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to specify a minimum number of days of parental leave available for a member of the Armed Forces in connection with the birth of a child of the member or in connection with the adoption or foster care of a child by the member; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. QUIGLEY):

H.R. 4797. A bill to provide grants to eligible entities to reduce lead in drinking water; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HONDA (for himself, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. LEE, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, Ms. PELOSI, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. SABLAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WELCH, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. TAKAI, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CROWLEY, and Mr. SMITH of Washington):

H.R. 4798. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to promote family unity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JOLLY:

H.R. 4799. A bill to hold the salaries of Members of the House of Representatives in escrow if the House does not pass all of the regular appropriation bills for a fiscal year prior to the beginning of that fiscal year, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 4800. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a land exchange involving lands within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico (for herself and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 4801. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, and title XVIII of the Social Security Act, to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct audits of medical loss ratio reports submitted by health insurance issuers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico):

H.R. 4802. A bill to require consideration of the impact on beneficiary access to care and to enhance due process protections in procedures for suspending payments to Medicaid providers; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. HONDA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. KEATING, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mr. FOSTER):

H.R. 4803. A bill to increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4804. A bill to provide for a task force within the FBI to deal with certain malicious and false threats in order made to obtain a response by law enforcement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS (for herself and Mr. BYRNE):

H.R. 4805. A bill to amend the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act to provide that information held by health care clearinghouses is subject to privacy protections that are equivalent to the protections that apply to information held by other types of covered entities under

the HIPAA Privacy Rule, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. QUIGLEY (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mrs. BUSTOS):

H.R. 4806. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate national primary drinking water regulations regarding lead and copper; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. RICHMOND:

H.R. 4807. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide the same level of Federal matching assistance, regardless of date of such expansion, for every State that chooses to expand Medicaid coverage to newly eligible individuals; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SALMON:

H.R. 4808. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require students who do not complete a program of study to repay Federal Pell Grants; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER (for herself, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 4809. A bill to amend the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 to require the disclosure of political intelligence activities, to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for restrictions on former officers, employees, and elected officials of the executive and legislative branches regarding political intelligence contacts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. STEFANIK:

H.R. 4810. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Defense to cooperate with Israel to develop directed energy capabilities to detect and defeat ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. TAKAI (for himself, Mr. BEYER, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. FARR, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H.R. 4811. A bill to authorize Federal agencies to establish prize competitions for innovation or adaptation management development relating to coral reef ecosystems and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, 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. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. HOYER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. HARRIS, and Mr. DELANEY):

H.R. 4812. A bill to direct the Joint Committee on the Library to enter into an agreement with the Harriet Tubman Statue Commission of the State of Maryland for the acceptance of a statue of Harriet Tubman for display in a suitable location in the United States Capitol; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. SESSIONS):

H.R. 4813. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the age requirement with respect to eligibility for qualified ABLE programs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WITTMAN:

H.R. 4814. A bill to provide that the salaries of Members of a House of Congress will be held in escrow if that House has not agreed to a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017 by April 15, 2016; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H. Res. 650. A resolution providing for the safety and security of the Iranian dissidents living in Camp Liberty/Hurriya in Iraq and awaiting resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and permitting use of their own assets to assist in their resettlement; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. HASTINGS:

H. Res. 651. A resolution condemning the recent violent terrorist attack against Taylor Force and the recent wave of terrorism against Israel and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' failure to condemn such attacks; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT (for himself, Mr. HECK of Washington, and Mr. REICHERT):

H. Res. 652. A resolution recognizing the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, Washington, as the National Nordic Museum of the United States; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

179. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 220, urging the President and Congress of the United States to explore and support policies that will lead to the establishment of facilities within the United States for the reprocessing and recycling of spent nuclear fuel; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 4771.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, of the Constitution, which grants Congress the power to provide for uniform laws that remove barriers to trade and facilitate commerce nationwide; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 9; Article III, Section 1, Clause 1; and Article III, Section 2, Clause 2 of the Constitution, which grant Congress authority over federal courts.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 4772.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 4773.

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

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. CASTOR of Florida:

H.R. 4774.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. OLSON:

H.R. 4775.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution: The Congress shall have power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Ms. DELBENE:

H.R. 4776.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:

H.R. 4777.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution, which reads: ''The Congress shall have power . . . To establish Post Offices and Post Roads''.

By Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina:

H.R. 4778.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 : ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes''

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H.R. 4779.

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

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H.R. 4780.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 4781.

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

Article I, Section 9, Clause 7.

By Mr. ABRAHAM:

H.R. 4782.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CHABOT:

H.R. 4783.

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

Article I, §8, cl. 2; Art. I, §8, cl. 7; Art. I, §8 cl 11; and Article I, §8, cl. 12.

By Mr. SCHRADER:

H.R. 4784.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 4785.

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

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

By Mr. GOSAR:

H.R. 4786.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause). Under this clause, Congress has

the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States. By virtue of this enumerated power, Congress has governing authority over the lands, territories, or other property of the United States—and with this authority Congress is vested with the power to all owners in fee, the ability to sell, lease, dispose, exchange, convey, or simply preserve land. The Supreme Court has described this enumerated grant as one ''without limitation'' Kleppe v New Mexico, 426 U.S. 529, 542–543 (1976) (''And while the furthest reaches of the power granted by the Property Clause have not been definitely resolved, we have repeatedly observed that the power over the public land thus entrusted to Congress is without limitation.'') Historically, the the federal government transferred ownership of federal property to either private ownership or the states in order to pay off large Revolutionary War debts and to assist with the development of infrastructure.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 4787.

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

Article I, §8, clause 3

By Ms. ADAMS:

H.R. 4788.

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

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

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 4789.

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

Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2, relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 4790.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

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

By Mr. BRAT:

H.R. 4791.

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

American immigration law stems from Congress' power to ''establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization'' (Article I, Section 8, Clause 4) and to ''regulate Commerce with foreign Nations'' (Article I, Section 8, Clause 3). Only Congress has the power to ''lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises'' (Article I, Section 8, Clause 1), and Article I, Section 9, Clause 1 states that ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law,'' explicitly requiring congressional authorization for funds to be spent. Furthermore, it is clearly both ''necessary and proper'' (Article I, Section 8, Clause 18) that Congress maintain control over funds through appropriations to ensure that the President ''take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed'' (Article II, Section 3).

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4792.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (relating to the power of Congress to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.)

Article I; Section 8; Clause 18

The Congress shall have Power To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. CLAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 4793.

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

Article 1 Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CRENSHAW:

H.R. 4794.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CRENSHAW:

H.R. 4795.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

H.R. 4796.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 14 and 18 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

H.R. 4797.

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

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

By Mr. HONDA:

H.R. 4798.

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

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

By Mr. JOLLY:

H.R. 4799.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 4800.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4801.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 4802.

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

Article I, Section VIII.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4803.

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

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

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4804.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS:

H.R. 4805.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. QUIGLEY:

H.R. 4806.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. RICHMOND:

H.R. 4807.

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

This bill is introduced pursuant to the powers granted to Congress under the General Welfare Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 1), the Commerce Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 3), and the Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 18).

Further, this statement of constitutional authority is made for the sole purpose of compliance with clause 7 of Rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and shall have no bearing on judicial review of the accompanying bill.

By Mr. SALMON:

H.R. 4808.

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

Article 1, Section 8:

The Congress shall have power . . . To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER:

H.R. 4809.

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

Sections 5 and 8 of Article I of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. STEFANIK:

H.R. 4810.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. TAKAI:

H.R. 4811.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

H.R. 4812.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

H.R. 4813.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. WITTMAN:

H.R. 4814.

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

Article I, Section 6 of the Constitution of the United States

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 169: Mr. MARINO.

H.R. 228: Mr. LOWENTHAL and Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 230: Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 605: Mr. BOUSTANY.

H.R. 664: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. VEASEY, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. ESTY, Mr. LEVIN, and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 670: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.

H.R. 704: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 729: Mr. RUSH, Mr. ROSS, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. ASHFORD, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 879: Mr. PALAZZO.

H.R. 969: Mr. BLUM.
H.R. 971: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 986: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 1025: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
H.R. 1170: Mr. SCHRADER.
H.R. 1178: Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 1218: Mr. KEATING, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Ms. BROWN of Florida.
H.R. 1220: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 1233: Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 1309: Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 1310: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 1342: Ms. HAHN.
H.R. 1427: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida and Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 1453: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 1621: Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 1643: Mr. FORBES.
H.R. 1653: Mr. KILMER and Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 1655: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas and Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 1660: Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 1714: Mr. HECK of Washington.
H.R. 1736: Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.
H.R. 1769: Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. MICA, and Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 1779: Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 1814: Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 1941: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 1950: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.
H.R. 1958: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H.R. 2102: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2124: Mr. GARAMENDI and Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 2167: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 2315: Ms. ESTY.
H.R. 2403: Ms. DUCKWORTH and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 2473: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 2546: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.
H.R. 2713: Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 2737: Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 2802: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 2896: Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H.R. 2911: Mr. MEEHAN and Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.
H.R. 3074: Mr. HECK of Nevada and Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 3084: Mr. REED and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 3117: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 3119: Mr. ROE of Tennessee and Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 3225: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas and Mr. PALAZZO.
H.R. 3226: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 3229: Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 3591: Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 3640: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3691: Ms. PINGREE and Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 3706: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 3790: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 3808: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. RENACCI, and Mr. MACARTHUR.
H.R. 3817: Mrs. LAWRENCE.
H.R. 3870: Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 3892: Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 4007: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H.R. 4019: Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 4073: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LEVIN, and Mrs. MILLER of Michigan.
H.R. 4099: Mr. MARCHANT and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 4113: Ms. NORTON and Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 4167: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 4184: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 4212: Mrs. BEATTY and Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H.R. 4247: Mr. MICA, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. CLAWSON of Florida.
H.R. 4253: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 4255: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H.R. 4262: Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. MACARTHUR, and Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H.R. 4263: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 4277: Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 4294: Mr. CRAMER, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 4323: Mr. LOWENTHAL and Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 4336: Mr. DELANEY, Mr. NUGENT, and Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 4352: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 4386: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 4389: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. TONKO, Ms. NORTON, Ms. LEE, Mr. HONDA, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 4442: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 4479: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. LEWIS, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 4480: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 4488: Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. KIND, and Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 4497: Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 4499: Mr. CHABOT.
H.R. 4501: Mr. KILMER, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 4514: Mr. DELANEY, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. JOYCE, and Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 4529: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 4534: Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. REED, and Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 4555: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 4585: Ms. MENG, Mr. JEFFRIES, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 4595: Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 4613: Mr. GIBSON, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 4614: Mr. GIBBS and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 4636: Mr. LUCAS and Mr. PALAZZO.
H.R. 4651: Mr. WALKER.
H.R. 4653: Mr. QUIGLEY and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 4683: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas and Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 4703: Mr. MESSER.
H.R. 4730: Mr. BABIN, Mr. BARTON, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 4731: Mr. POE of Texas and Mr. ZINKE.
H.R. 4742: Ms. EDWARDS and Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 4754: Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 4760: Mr. MARINO.
H.R. 4764: Mr. WALKER, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan.
H.R. 4768: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H. Con. Res. 40: Mr. COFFMAN.
H. Res. 32: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H. Res. 54: Mr. BOST and Mr. O'ROURKE.
H. Res. 169: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
H. Res. 432: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H. Res. 540: Ms. PELOSI and Ms. EDWARDS.
H. Res. 551: Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. HAHN, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Ms. MATSUI.
H. Res. 590: Mr. COLE, Mr. YOHO, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. ABRAHAM, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. JONES, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. DESANTIS.
H. Res. 591: Mr. MARCHANT, Mrs. ROBY, Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. TIPTON, and Mr. KIND.
H. Res. 615: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H. Res. 637: Ms. PELOSI.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

52. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the Board of Directors of the Fleetwood Area School District, Fleetwood, PA, relative to supporting equitable funding for school districts in the Commonwealth; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016 No. 43

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are the shepherd of our souls. Because of You, blessings overtake us. Thank You for inscribing each of us on the palms of Your hands. Great is Your faithfulness.

Bless our Senators and those who labor with them. Give them strength to meet today's challenges with a peace that comes from total trust in You. Remind them that the way to find life is to lose it in service for others.

Surround us all with Your favor, as You complete the work You have started in each of us.

We pray in Your marvelous 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The minority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF KIM DINE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the Republican leader will be here shortly. I have something to do downtown, so I will have to leave. I certainly do not want to get ahead of him. I know he is going to say something because we have talked about Chief of Police Kim Dine, who has retired.

I want to join with the Republican leader in recognizing the work of the U.S. Capitol Police Chief, Kim Dine. He spent his life in law enforcement. He spent his entire professional life serving and protecting the people of Washington, DC, and the entire metro area. He started as a young officer here in Washington 41 years ago and over the course of three decades has moved up the ranks of the Metropolitan Police Department, becoming assistant chief of police.

In 2002, he was selected to serve as chief of police of Frederick, MD. He served the people of Maryland with distinction for 10 years.

In 2012, our Sergeant at Arms asked Chief Dine to come back to Washington, this time as Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police Department. We are very fortunate that took place.

Chief Dine helped oversee President Obama's 2013 inauguration, and since then it has been event after big event: four State of the Union Addresses, Memorial Day and Fourth of July concerts, and, of course, Pope Francis's historic visit here last year. During all of those proceedings, it was his obligation to protect the people who are visiting and to protect the people who work within this beautiful Capitol Complex. At every one of those events, Chief Dine and his department did a superb job protecting 30,000 people—Senators, Congressmen, and staff—who are in the Capitol Complex virtually every day. And that doesn't include the visitors who come here.

So now, as the Chief embarks upon a well-deserved retirement, we thank him for his service. We thank his wife Robin and their two daughters for sharing their husband and father with us the past few years. I am sure this man was as taken care of at home as he has taken care of all of us in the metropolitan area. I hope his family takes satisfaction in the outstanding work he has rendered to the American people.

I thank you very much, Chief. We wish you nothing but the best.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF KIM DINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this weekend U.S. Capitol Police Chief Kim Dine will retire his badge and say goodbye to the Senate after several decades of law enforcement service, including more than three right here in the Capitol.

Chief Dine was police chief in a nearby Maryland suburb when he first came to this position in December of 2012. You could say the appointment was a bit of a homecoming for him given that Chief Dine began his more than 40 years in law enforcement with the DC Metropolitan Police Department. He served there for 27 years and rose through the ranks, eventually becoming assistant chief of police.

I know it is never easy to leave the Capitol, but you have to imagine Chief Dine has a lot to look forward to in retirement. After all, this is a guy who has been known to get into the office before the sun rises and leave after it sets. Most would need some rest after so many years of that kind of schedule.

So here is what we would like to say: The Senate appreciates Chief Dine's willingness to serve our country. And after nearly four decades in law enforcement, we wish him all the best in his retirement.

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

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FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY AND SUBPOENA ENFORCEMENT RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me state an obvious point. When it comes to filling the current Supreme Court vacancy—which could fundamentally alter the direction of the Court for a generation—Republicans and Democrats simply disagree. We simply disagree. Republicans think the people deserve a voice in this critical decision; the President does not. So we disagree in this instance, and as a result, we logically act as a check-and-balance.

There is no reason one area of disagreement should stop us from looking for other areas of agreement, though. We will continue our work in the Senate as the American people make their voices heard in this important national conversation. For instance, we will address another very important issue today, which I would like to talk about now.

Senator PORTMAN and Senator MCCASKILL are the top Republican and top Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. Over the past year, they have worked together in a bipartisan way to examine human trafficking. Their probe has revealed how trafficking has flourished in the age of the Internet. It has also revealed how many cases of sex trafficking, including cases involving children, have been linked to one Web site in particular: backpage.com.

One national group who tracks the issue has told the subcommittee this: Nearly three-quarters of all suspected child sex trafficking reports it receives from the public through its tip line have a connection to backpage.

Chairman PORTMAN and Ranking Member MCCASKILL have wanted to do something about this. They know they have to keep investigating. So they issued a subpoena to backpage. They wanted documents about the company's business practices. They wanted to know how it screens advertisements for warning signs of trafficking. As the leaders of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, they had every right to make these requests in the course of their investigation, but backpage has refused to comply. Does that mean Senators PORTMAN and MCCASKILL give up? Of course not. And we shouldn't, either. They jointly submitted a Senate resolution that would hold the company in civil contempt and force it to turn over this required information. This resolution passed through the committee with unanimous bipartisan support 15 to 0, and today it can be adopted by the full Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support too. We will have that opportunity this afternoon. If we do, it will allow the Senate's legal counsel to bring a civil suit in court and ask the court to order compliance with the subpoena. That is critical for allowing this bipartisan investigation to move forward.

I thank Ranking Member MCCASKILL for all she has done. I thank Chairman PORTMAN for all he has done.

We saw Senator PORTMAN's great work last week in passing bipartisan legislation to help address America's heroin and opioid crisis, and again today we will see Senator PORTMAN's great work in leading on another important issue and doing so once more in a bipartisan manner.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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 12:45 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to address what I believe is the urgency of the moment, really the test of the time. We have a Constitution that was designed for three coequal branches of government. We know the importance of each of those branches of government and the roles they have are spelled out in the Constitution.

A fully functioning Supreme Court—one of the coequal branches—is of the utmost importance to the proper function of our democracy. Justices decide cases that shape the daily lives of all Americans. Even one Justice can deeply affect the rights and liberties of the American people for generations to come.

Yesterday, the President nominated Chief Judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court of the United States.

A clear and plain reading of the text of the Constitution says explicitly in article II, section 2, that it is the duty of the Senate to provide ''advice and consent'' to the President on key nominations, particularly Justices to the Supreme Court.

I, along with my 99 colleagues, took an oath of office. We swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and to faithfully discharge the duties of the offices we hold. There was no addendum to that oath that excused us from our responsibilities during a Presidential election year. The people of New Jersey elected me to serve a full 6-year term. That means my duties and obligations as a Senator—or the duties and obligations of each of the 100 Senators in this body—should not be interrupted by a Presidential year. That is especially true when those duties are explicitly laid out in the Constitution and when the duties impact a coequal branch of government, such as the Supreme Court.

I have only served in the Senate since October of 2013. This is my first Supreme Court nominee to consider, and I look forward to thoroughly reviewing Chief Judge Garland's record, to meeting with him face to face, and hopefully, I believe rightfully, taking an up-or-down vote on his confirmation.

That is what all of us swore an oath and signed up to do when a vacancy occurs on the Supreme Court. That is the duty the American people expect of us—to abide by the Constitution and provide our advice and consent regarding a Presidential nomination of this significance—a lifetime appointment—to the Supreme Court, a coequal branch of government.

We may not ultimately agree on whether Chief Judge Garland should be confirmed. The Senate can vote no. Senators have that independent choice. It happens almost every day here where we disagree on issues. There is no guarantee in the Constitution that the President's nominee should get confirmed. But we should agree at least to do the job we were elected to do and to allow the confirmation process to move forward. That is bigger than any one party.

Now, as I understand it, Chief Judge Garland is highly respected, experienced, and is considered by many to be a deliberate jurist whom the Senate overwhelmingly confirmed in 1997 to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, which is known as the second highest court in the land. His nomination to be an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court is certainly deserving of our consideration.

Chief Judge Garland, in fact, has more Federal judiciary experience than any other Supreme Court nominee in history.

He currently serves as Chief Judge of the D.C. Circuit Court, a court where he has served for almost 19 years. Previously, he has served under both Democratic and Republican Presidents at the U.S. Department of Justice. He first worked as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division of DOJ and later served as the Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General. In those posts, he supervised high-profile cases at the Department of Justice such as the prosecution of the Oklahoma City bomber, which ultimately brought Timothy McVeigh to justice.

To call his qualifications impressive is an understatement. Chief Judge Garland has dedicated his life to public

service, and his lengthy career reflects his commitment to the high ideals etched on the Supreme Courts itself, ''Equal justice under law.''

He has said, ''The role of the court is to apply the law to the facts of the case before it—not to legislate, not to arrogate to itself the executive power, not to hand down advisory opinions on the issues of the day.'' No wonder he is known in legal circles and around Capitol Hill for his careful opinions and lack of overt ideological bias.

Chief Judge Garland is so well admired, so highly regarded, and so accomplished that his appeal transcends the typical partisan divisions that we too often see in Washington.

There is no possible justification—based on this nominee's reputation, his experience, his dedication, his service, and his work—to ignore, blockade, or stonewall Chief Judge Garland's nomination or to deny him a hearing and a vote. There is no reason for that.

There is certainly no historical or constitutional precedent behind such a blockade. Since committee hearings began in 1916, every pending Supreme Court nominee has received a hearing, except for nine nominees who were confirmed within 11 days. So what is being suggested—to not even meet with this nominee or to not even give this nominee a hearing in committee—is unprecedented in our Nation's history.

The Senate has previously confirmed Supreme Court nominees during a Presidential election year. History shows us that the Senate has previously confirmed a Supreme Court nominee at least 17 separate times during the Presidencies of liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats, alike. We have even held confirmation hearings of Supreme Court nominees at least five times in Presidential election years since the hearing process began in 1916.

Thus, the excuse that we should not move forward with the confirmation process for Chief Judge Garland because this is a political election season simply falls flat in the face of our history. In fact, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and, more recently, President Ronald Reagan saw their Supreme Court nominees confirmed in a Presidential election year. Since 1975, it has taken, on average, a little over 2 months for the full Senate to consider a nomination before voting.

It is only March, so there is plenty of time to consider and confirm a nominee. There is no reason why Chief Judge Garland cannot be confirmed by even the end of May, given the average time of recent Supreme Court confirmations, which is more than ample time for the next Justice to be on the Court before the next Supreme Court term begins in October.

When the Supreme Court, that coequal branch of government, has a body of work to do, for the Senate to deny this nominee a hearing and a vote we would also deny that coequal branch of government its full, functioning complement of members. This is a historic time and a critical test for this distinguished body. It is a time that will test how dignified our confirmation process will be for future Supreme Court nominees.

It provides us an opportunity, amidst all of the partisanship, amidst all of the delays that are going on, amidst all of the partisan rhetoric, for this body to rise above the fray. We can show that the Senate, at its best, treats nominees to our highest court with a level of dignity, honor, and respect. Indeed, we can show a greater fidelity to the Constitution than to party, and show that we are not susceptible to the partisan winds of the time.

I believe Chief Judge Merrick Garland deserves a dignified confirmation process. It is up to each and every Senator to decide whether he should be a Supreme Court Justice. For me, this moment in time is not just about the individual; it is also about how we as a body, the Senate, will do business and whether we will do our jobs even in Presidential election years.

I have heard some of my colleagues say simply: Let the people decide.

That sentiment appears to resonate at first, especially since a first principle of any democracy is to let the voters decide important issues. But in reality the people have already decided. They decided when they voted for each of the 100 Members of this distinguished body, which tells us that we should do our duty. The people decided when they voted for President Barack Obama for a second consecutive 4-year term. The people did not decide that the President should be a 1-year President or a 2-year President, but that he should serve a full 4-year term and conduct his duties—his sworn duties—accordingly.

No Senator nor the President should shirk from fulfilling their Constitutional obligations. The people in this democracy decided when they elected us. We should do our job and give Chief Judge Garland a hearing and a vote.

Our country has a deep history of fights, which have taken place not only in this body but in our larger democracy. There have been divisions and factions in this country. The Federalist Papers literally acknowledged that there would be divisions and fights, but the Constitution was designed to call us to a higher purpose, to overcome our petty divisions, and to unite us.

Our Nation is mighty and strong, and I am so proud of that because, as much as our differences matter, we always seem to understand that our country matters more. The people who founded our Nation understood that we would have differences of opinion and ideology. They understood that our differences and diversity of thought would make our country great, but they also understood that, in order for our Nation to succeed and endure, we must be loyal to our ideals and principles. Those ideals and principles are enshrined in the Constitution itself and reflected in our democracy, and that is what brings us together. In fact, it harkens to the very hallmark ideal of our country: ''E Pluribus Unum,'' out of many, one. It is written into the culture of our country. There is an old African saying: If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.

When our Founders drafted the Declaration of Independence, they enshrined for all time the ideal that we are individuals endowed by our creator with inalienable rights. The Founders ended that national charter by pledging their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to each other.

There has been no greater honor in my life than when I stood in this well before the Vice President and swore my oath to uphold the Constitution. In fact, if I ever have to, I will sacrifice myself for my country. These are the ideals and this is the honor that I believe has helped our great country persevere.

Now we are faced with a test where two conflicting ideals have been put forth: whether a President and a Senate should fulfill their obligations all the way to the end of their sworn terms or whether we should begin to truncate the powers of a Presidency and the powers of individual Senators and suspend our constitutional obligations because it is an election year. To me, that undermines the purpose and the spirit of our constitutional institution.

As I said, the nomination of Chief Judge Garland to the Supreme Court will be a greater test for the Senate and the constitutional values we hold dear. I worry we will fail this test and descend deeper into the kind of divisiveness that undermines our Constitution.

I believe this is a time that calls for an honorable stance. We have an extremely competent Supreme Court Justice nominee before us. I am not going to blockade his nomination. I am not going to avoid meeting with this distinguished nominee. I hope we will hold hearings and a vote so that Senators may decide whether this nominee is worthy of sitting on the Nation's highest Court. I hope that each individual Senator will honor the precedent that has been continuous for years and years and years and then allow this nominee an up-or-down vote. The purpose of our sacred Constitution, as spelled out and written in article II, section 2, is to allow the President to put forward a nominee and the Senate to give its ''advice and consent,'' which I believe means an up-or-down vote on a nomination.

Again, we are here because greater Americans made a pledge to each other. As different as they were, they came together and wrote a Constitution and a Declaration of Independence. We are here because people greater than we are pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

Let us harken back to that honor. Let us put forth our sacred honor now

and not allow this country to lurch even deeper into divisiveness. Let us unify and show that, yes, there are differences; yes, there are divisions; yes, there is partisanship, but in the end, we will unite around those bonds that hold this Nation together and ensure that our democracy functions for years, decades, and generations to come.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Ms. HIRONO pertaining to the introduction of S. 2710 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

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

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

VETERANS' ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I want to take a moment or two to speak about our Nation's veterans. The Presiding Officer and I have the honor of serving together on the Senate Veterans' Affair Committee. I take that responsibility—as does the Presiding Officer—very seriously. There is no other group of people that we should hold in higher regard than those who served our country. Today I want to talk about some of the challenges they are facing as a result of our failure to do that.

Who would we expect to get the very best health care in our country? We want everyone to have good quality, affordable health care. But of all the people we would want to make certain received the health care services they were promised, clearly, it would be those who served our country—the men and women of our military who are now veterans. They deserve timely, high-quality health care. That is true whether they live in an urban or suburban setting or a rural place like your State and mine. There are more than 221,000 veterans who call Kansas home, and the vast majority of them live in very rural parts of our State.

Before being elected to the Senate, before the honor that Kansans allowed me to serve them here in the Senate, I served in the U.S. House of Representatives. I represented the First District of Kansas, generally known in our State as the Big First. That is a congressional district larger than the State of Illinois, and there isn't a VA hospital in that congressional district. Veterans in this part of Kansas drive hours on end to get care, or they simply go without it all together.

Over the past year, Congress has repeatedly passed legislation designed to ease the burden for veterans who are struggling to get health care from VA facilities in my State and yours and across the country. In the wake of the scandal, we learned across the country about the false waiting list for veterans. The VA put people on a waiting list that didn't really exist. The scandal across our country allowed us, as Members of the Congress and the Senate, to come together—Republicans and Democrats—and we passed legislation called the Choice Act. This legislation allows veterans who can't get timely service to access that service with a provider outside of the VA.

Importantly—and what I want to talk about today—the Choice Act says that if you are a veteran who lives more than 40 miles from a VA facility, then at your request you can have those services provided by a local hometown physician, be admitted to your hometown hospital, see your local optometrist, and be treated by your local physical therapist or chiropractor. All of those things make a lot of sense for the veterans who live in the places where I come from.

In the process of doing that, part of the goal was to ease the burden, in addition to providing quality and timely services, for those who live in rural places. Part of the theory—and I think rightly so—in passage of the Choice Act was to lift a bit of the burden on the VA off of the VA. It has been difficult for them to have the necessary health care providers to meet the needs of veterans. So we began providing services in the community. And we are also speeding up the process by which a veteran who still goes to a VA hospital or still goes to a VA clinic gets services in a more timely and effective way.

This past July Congress passed legislation to amend the Choice Act. We did so because of the number of problems we were encountering as a result of the stories that I heard from my veterans across our State—and I know it is true of many Senators, if not all—about problems with the way the Choice Act was being implemented by the Department of Veterans Affairs. We amended that legislation to try to make it work better. In my view, that shouldn't have been necessary. The VA could have solved this challenge on their own but didn't.

What it says is that it is not a facility. I have used this example on the Senate floor before. My hometown is a town of about 1,900 people. It is about 23 miles from the community of Hays—about 20,000 people—where there is an outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA was saying that you cannot access the Choice Act if you live within 40 miles of a facility, and the problem was that they were saying even if that facility doesn't provide the service the veteran needs. So by law, we changed the definition of what a VA facility is, and it said that it is not a VA facility if it is not open full time and doesn't have a full-time physician—a pretty commonsense kind of thing that we needed to apparently put in the law to get the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement and to interpret the Choice Act in a commonsense way that was designed to meet the needs of veterans.

Unfortunately, many of our veterans remain unaware of their options. I talk to lots of veterans, some who have given up on Choice, some who don't know it is an option, and some who tried and are caught up in a bureaucratic system and are trying to get an answer about whether they qualify, and even if they do, where they can go and how their bill will get paid.

Examples in my State: One of the Kansas VA community-based outpatient clinics—known as a CBOC—is only open 2 days a month, and it shouldn't be counted as part of the Choice Act, a facility of the Choice Act. There are 9 out of 14 CBOCs in Kansas that do not have a full-time medical doctor. Those nine community-based outpatient clinics should not be counted under Choice. I want to highlight that for veterans from Kansas and across the country who might happen to hear what I have to say today so they know there are more options than they may realize.

Many Kansas veterans choose to live in rural communities. Many of us often choose to live in rural communities and raise our families, see our grandkids, and more often than not, those communities don't have a VA hospital or a clinic to serve those veterans' needs.

In townhall meeting after townhall meeting and up and down Main Streets of communities in my State, the most common conversation I now have is with veterans who are expressing how the system is failing them, the frustration they are encountering, and that they are not seeing the improvements and changes for the betterment of the care they are entitled to.

As I said earlier, many veterans are so frustrated with the back-and-forth they have with the VA and the redtape, they simply give up and either go without health care or end up trying to pay for it out of their own pocket. That is exactly what occurred to Mr. Lamoine Guinn, who is a rural Kansan. Mr. Guinn shared his story with me not to try to get me to solve the problem, but he wanted others to know how this program needed to change so that other veterans would benefit. After a year of dealing with the VA, he decided to simply give up on Choice. I don't want to let that happen. I don't want veterans to give up on Choice. I don't want the Department of Veterans Affairs to have the excuse to say Choice is not a viable

program, veterans don't like it, and come back to Congress and tell us that it is no longer needed.

If I were home in Kansas, I would explain it this way: Again, my hometown, Plainville—population now 1,900—used to have rail service, and over time the rail service diminished and became less effective. The rates went up, and fewer people used the rail service, the railroad, to haul grain in particular. Then the railroad could go to the regulators and say: Nobody is using the railroad; can we just abandon it?

I worry that that kind of attitude and approach could happen with this issue if we don't make certain our veterans see the benefit and actually receive the benefits that come from the Choice Act. I don't want to give anybody—the Department of Veterans Affairs or other Members of Congress—the opportunity to say ''The Choice Act doesn't matter. People don't like it. It is not popular. Let's do something different'' when the reality is that it would be popular if it were working effectively and in a timely way and veterans were being cared for.

Mr. Guinn lives in Oberlin, a small town, a county seat town in Decatur County, almost in Nebraska. It is one of those typical Kansas small farming communities. The closest VA facility to him is actually in Grand Island, NE. Although he is a Kansas resident, he is part of the Nebraska VA network because of its proximity to Grand Island. He is eligible under the Choice Program, and he needed to schedule spinal surgery with the community provider. That is what he wanted to do. So the VA referred him to HealthNet. HealthNet is the organization that manages this program for the Department of Veterans Affairs. HealthNet then referred him to TriWest because he is a Kansas resident. TriWest covers Kansas while HealthNet covers Nebraska. The health care providers were arguing about who is responsible for his care because he lives one place and his VA provider is in an adjoining State.

My complaint is that it shouldn't matter where he lives. He is stuck in a bureaucracy. The burden ought not fall to him to solve all of his problems. The VA ought to step in and solve the problem for him and tell him what it is that ought to be done and get him out of the back-and-forth between the Nebraska and Kansas networks.

He has now gone a year without the surgery. He is going to now drive to another VA medical center in Omaha—300 miles one way—so he can get the surgery he is entitled to have by his hometown provider or a regional hospital in his area.

Many of our veterans—I don't know the age of this particular veteran, Mr. Guinn, but many of the veterans who live in those communities are World War II veterans and now more likely Vietnam veterans. The opportunity for them to have family around them, the ability for them to get long distances is a complete challenge. To have to go 300 miles, when the law says that he is a veteran and he, who served our country, is entitled to services at home, is a terrible mistake, and it ought to be something that can be sorted out, but every time he has attempted to do that, the burden still rests with him. We want the Department of Veterans Affairs to step in and figure this out and get it done and get it done quickly.

Another veteran who reached out to my office for assistance was Mr. Francis Wierman, a 92-year-old veteran. He lives in La Crosse. It is a county seat town of a couple thousand folks. Because of his age, it is difficult for him to travel for his annual physical appointments.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak until I conclude my remarks.

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

Mr. MORAN. I thank the Chair.

Because of his age—Mr. Wierman needs to travel. It is difficult for him to do it. What he needs is an annual physical. So Mr. Wierman has attempted to utilize the Choice Program, and he was told there was no flexibility to be seen in La Crosse by a hometown doctor or go to a hometown hospital due to his proximity, his location next to an outpatient clinic.

Mr. Wierman sacrificed for our country, and he deserves to be able to receive his care in his own community given the burden and strain traveling imposes upon him, a veteran of 92 years of age. We need to make certain he receives the care he is entitled to, and we need to make sure the VA is doing what needs to be done to accomplish that.

My final example today is Mr. Dabney, who suffers from post-traumatic stress. He was also told he was eligible for Choice, so he set up an appointment with the local care provider. Despite the OK from the VA practitioner about getting care outside of the VA, the handoff got lost in the shuffle, and somehow the VA determined that it was Mr. Dabney's fault that the paperwork didn't follow him, leaving him with the bill for the services provided by the outside-the-VA practitioner.

I shared this case with Secretary McDonald at a hearing the Presiding Officer and I attended several months ago. The conclusion months later by the VA was that Mr. Dabney simply didn't understand the Choice Act and he should have tried harder to get an official authorization before setting up the appointment; therefore, the bill still rests with him. Thankfully, the provider, the network TriWest, disagreed, and they are now elevating his case to try to make certain he doesn't have to pay the bill for the services the VA originally authorized him to receive outside of the VA.

The Choice Act was designed specifically to help these veterans. They gave of themselves to serve our country and fought on our behalf, and they deserve the care and respect they should be receiving today from or country and its Department of Veterans Affairs. Our country must fulfill its commitments to these individuals and to others who provide for those who sacrificed for our Nation, regardless of the community they call home.

Last week I joined my Senate colleagues in sponsoring the Veterans Choice Improvement Act of 2016. This legislation is designed to fix problems with the original Choice Act that the VA has been unable to resolve on their own to make sure these veterans receive what they are entitled to. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I look forward to working with the Presiding Officer and other members and with our chairman, JOHNNY ISAKSON from Georgia, as well as the ranking member, Senator BLUMENTHAL, for purposes of making sure that we get this right and that we make certain the VA does its job in caring for these men and women who served our country.

I will continue to make certain that happens, and I continue to express my gratitude to those who served our country and renew my willingness and my desire to make sure they receive the health care they are entitled to.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

(The remarks of Mr. COTTON pertaining to the introduction of S. 2708 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. COTTON. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I come to this Chamber for the 131st time to urge this body to break free and wake up to what carbon pollution is doing to our atmosphere and our oceans.

Last week, scientists at NOAA reported that carbon dioxide levels at their Mauna Loa Observatory jumped in 2015 by the largest year-to-year increase in 56 years of research.

Pieter Tans, lead scientist at NOAA, said:

> Carbon dioxide levels are increasing faster than they have in hundreds of thousands of years. It's explosive compared to natural processes.

We see the effects of this runaway carbon pollution everywhere, in ever-climbing temperatures, in ever-changing weather patterns, and in ever-rising, warming, and acidifying seas. But the Republican-controlled Congress refuses to take responsible action. They put their climate effort elsewhere, such as attacking former Vice President Al Gore for raising awareness of the real and looming climate crisis.

One Republican colleague has railed against Mr. Gore, calling him ''the

world's first climate billionaire,'' claiming that he is ''drowning in a sea of his own global warming illusions'' and faulting him for ''desperately trying to keep global warming alarmism alive today.''

Another prominent Republican, this one running for President, suggested ''the Nobel committee should take the Nobel Prize back from Al Gore.''

Others claim that cold or snowy weather proves Mr. Gore wrong. After one snow in DC a few years ago, a prominent Republican TV personality claimed the storm ''would seem to contradict Al Gore's hysterical global warming theories.'' A Senator gloated after that storm, ''Where's Al Gore now?''

Another Senate colleague said while campaigning for President in Iowa:

> I have to admit, I was really confused. Al Gore told us this wasn't going to happen, but it was cold there.

These are all profoundly ignorant comments if you know anything about climate change, but they cannot resist. They inhabit what Politico's Daniel Lippman and Mike Allen this week called ''a political reality indifferent to the exigencies of climate change.''

So let's catch up on what Al Gore is up to on climate change. He has a TED talk on the ted.com Web site, and I highly recommend it. Mr. Gore's presentation opens with the fact that our atmosphere is not as big as most people think. He shows this picture taken from the International Space Station to remind us that the atmosphere surrounding our planet is really just a thin shell. It is into this thin shell that we continue to spew megatons of heat-trapping carbon pollution day in and day out. Mr. Gore explains that this thin atmosphere ''right now is the open sewer for our industrial civilization as it's currently organized.''

Here is how he shows our carbon dioxide emission rates through time. You can see the amount of carbon emissions really started to increase here after World War II. Vice President Gore explains: ''[T]he accumulated amount of man-made, global warming pollution that is up in the atmosphere now traps as much extra heat energy as would be released by 400,000 Hiroshima-class atomic bombs exploding every 24 hours, 365 days a year.''

He continues:

> [T]hat is a lot of energy. . . . And all that extra heat energy is heating up . . . the whole earth system.

The Vice President didn't mention it, but the Associated Press has used a similar analogy about the heat from climate change that is going into our oceans, a piece that said: ''Since 1997, Earth's oceans have absorbed man-made heat energy equivalent to a Hiroshima-style bomb being exploded every second for 75 straight years.''

Mr. Gore showed this depiction of average temperatures between 1951 and 1980. The blue is cooler-than-average days, the white is average days, and the red is warmer-than-average days. Now we are going to look at what happened in the next three decades after this 1951 to 1980 period. What is going to stay the same is this green line. That will be the constant against which you can see the change. Let's go to the next chart.

This is 1983 to 1993. You will notice that everything has moved against the constant. You will also notice down here that a new category has emerged. This category is extremely hot days.

The next chart is 1994 to 2004. Again, the average continues to move against this green line which is a constant, and now you see that new category of extremely hot days growing even more.

Here is our last decade, 2005 to 2015. What we experience in this last decade has moved completely away from the historic norm indicated by that green line, and this extreme temperature, the extremely hot days category, is now bigger than the cooler-than-average category. Remember, 1950 to 1980, this category didn't even exist. Now it is bigger. Well, it might have existed, but it wasn't visible on the graphs; let me put it that way. Now it is bigger than the cooler-than-average category. Mr. Gore points out that these extremely hot days in the last 10 years ''are 150 times more common on the surface of the earth than they were just 30 years ago.'' By the way, we measure this stuff. This is not a theory.

Worldwide, 2015 was the hottest year since we began keeping records in 1880, according to NOAA and NASA. That Republican colleague who went to Iowa and thought that the cold disproved climate change dismissed that finding as ''pseudo-scientific theory.'' You know what. NASA is driving a rover around on the surface of Mars right now, so I will go with them knowing what they are talking about.

The last 5 years have been the warmest 5-year period on record, according to the World Meteorological Organization, and 14 of the 15 hottest years ever measured have been in this young century. We are a terrestrial species. We live on the land, so naturally we pay more attention to the land and not so much to what is happening in our warming and acidifying oceans. This chart shows the oceans absorbing over 90 percent of the excess heat trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gas emissions. This is the effect of those Hiroshima bomb equivalents warming up the oceans that the Associated Press used as their example.

What does all that extra heat mean for the oceans? Well, unless you are going to dispute the law of thermal expansion, it means that warming things expand.

Last month, a study of tidal flood days along my east coast came out. The author's conclusion? I will quote him:

> It's not the tide. It's not the wind. It's us.

There is one industry, the insurance industry, that pays serious attention to climate change as their losses have been mounting. This is insurance company data from the Insurance Information Institute in January of 2006 showing the climate rate of worldwide extreme weather catastrophes. Why? Well, Dr. Kevin Trenberth works at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. He says:

> All storms are different now.

Do you hear that?

> All storms are different now. There's so much extra energy in the atmosphere, there's so much extra water vapor. Every storm is different now.

Well, the challenge of climate change is urgent, but Mr. Gore points out that we have the understanding and engineering prowess to generate energy from new sources, and we are doing unexpectedly well. Vice President Gore says:

> The best projections in the world 16 years ago were that by 2010, the world would be able to install 30 gigawatts of wind capacity. We beat that mark by 14 and a half times over.

It is the same story for solar capacity, which is taking off even more quickly than wind. Again quoting Vice President Gore: ''The best projections 14 years ago were that we would install one gigawatt [of solar] per year by 2010.''

The Vice President continues:

> When 2010 came around, we beat that mark by 17 times over. Last year, we beat it by 58 times over. This year, we're on track to beat it 68 times over.

Look at that curve. These innovations helped renewable energy costs become comparable with fossil fuel power even though, as Vice President Gore points out, ''fossil energy is now still subsidized at a rate 40 times larger than renewables.''

If you look at what the International Monetary Fund has said about the ''effective subsidy'' of fossil fuel, the subsidy for fossil is actually way bigger than that.

Most importantly, society is moving. More than 150 major U.S. companies signed onto the American Business Act on Climate Pledge, supporting a strong outcome in the Paris climate negotiations. Fifty-three percent of young Republican voters—that is, young Republican voters under the age of 35—have said they would describe a climate change denier as ''ignorant,'' ''out-of-touch'' or ''crazy.'' Those are not my words; these are the words in the poll that the young Republicans chose.

Despite the recent stay of the administration's Clean Power Plan, 19 States are continuing with EPA to develop compliance strategies for their economies and their energy sectors. Roughly 6 in 10 Republicans and GOP-leaning Independents under age 50 think the government should limit greenhouse gases even if it causes a $20 increase in their monthly bill. So people are moving.

Mr. Gore uses a line from the great American poet Wallace Stevens: ''After the final no, there comes a yes, and on that yes the future world depends.''

Well, Al Gore has faced a lot of ''no.'' The fossil fuel industry and its minions

have mocked and derided him. The climate denial machine keeps working its poison. In fact, we just learned that Arch Coal's bankruptcy filing shows they were funding an extremist group dedicated to harassing and threatening scientists.

As the evidence comes in, as every major science agency and organization lines up with all our National Labs and military services and our home State universities across the country, it turns out the mockers and the deniers were wrong. In fact, in all decency, Al Gore deserves an apology, as do the countless men and women who scrutinize these data, who labor in the real science, and who call us to action. If we continue sleepwalking in Congress, we will need to apologize not just to Al Gore but to future generations. We will need to apologize to our own grandchildren for our negligence when we knew better.

So let us wake up from our fossil fuel-funded make-believe and meet our moral obligation.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BACKPAGE.COM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, this afternoon the Senate will proceed to a vote on S. Res. 377, a resolution that would hold backpage.com in contempt of Congress for not complying with an investigation being conducted by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. Unfortunately, concerns have been raised that the Web site has connections to sex trafficking. Backpage has refused to comply with the subpoena request from the subcommittee. We all know that sex trafficking is a heinous, evil practice, and we should not and we will not tolerate it.

In 2012 I sponsored an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act that included a sense of Congress demanding that the owners of backpage.com remove the adult services section of their Web site.

Last year this Chamber passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, and it was signed into law by President Obama in the spring. This law contains language offered by Senator KIRK from Illinois which gives law enforcement officials additional tools to prosecute individuals such as those behind backpage.com who knowingly facilitate the sale or advertisement of human trafficking victims online.

Today's resolution is another opportunity for the Senate to stand up for the victims of human trafficking.

As a reminder, when we debated the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, we talked about the profile of a typical victim of human trafficking—not that any of them are typical, but on average it is a girl between the ages of 12 and 14. This is a horrific business and sordid business, and I encourage every Member to support this resolution.

I thank the chairman of the subcommittee, Senator PORTMAN from Ohio, who has been working tirelessly to highlight this issue and bring it to the Senate's full attention. I am grateful for his bipartisan efforts and strong leadership and look forward to voting yes on the resolution later today.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on another matter, we all know that yesterday President Obama exercised his authority under the U.S. Constitution to suggest to the Senate a nominee for the Supreme Court of the United States. During the announcement, President Obama spent time talking about the serious task of selecting a Supreme Court nominee, particularly one to succeed a legal lion such as Justice Scalia, whom the President appropriately called one of the most influential jurists of our time. His point was that the Supreme Court of the United States—the highest Court in the land—is an institution of unparalleled importance. What happens at the Supreme Court affects the lives of every American. So lifetime appointments to this most powerful Court in the land should not be taken lightly. As the President put it, our Supreme Court Justices have been given the role as the ''final arbiters of American law'' for more than 200 years. Of course, today they consider and answer some of the most pressing and challenging controversies and questions of our time. I agree with what the President said to that point.

We all know the Supreme Court is critical to our form of self-government and our democracy, and the role it serves is an essential one. When it plays a role our Founders did not intend, it really undermines respect for the rule of law and for the Court as an institution. So the selection of the next Supreme Court Justice should be handled thoroughly and thoughtfully.

I understand the President is taking his authority seriously, but under the same Constitution—the same Constitution that gives the President the authority to nominate a person to fill this vacancy—that same Constitution has a separate responsibility for the U.S. Senate either to grant or to withhold consent to that nomination.

With the passing of Justice Scalia, the Senate must exercise its constitutional authority as well. Regardless of how we come down on the controversy of the day with regard to when this vacancy should be filled, we all take this responsibility seriously, and because of that, I believe we should follow the examples set by the minority leader, Senator REID; the senior Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER; and Vice President BIDEN when he was chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee—their admonitions made over the years when they were in the majority—and not move forward with the President's nominee at this time.

I think it is only a matter of fundamental fairness to apply the same rules to the same situation no matter who is in the majority and who is in the minority. When they were in the majority, they argued that these vacancies should not be filled the last year of the President's term of office. JOE BIDEN did that in 1992 during the Presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush. Senator REID made that same argument when George W. Bush was President of the United States. And in 2007, 18 months before George W. Bush left office, Senator SCHUMER, the heir apparent to the Democratic leader, said there should be a presumption against confirmation. So it is only fair to play by the same set of rules which they themselves advocated.

Based on the conduct, based on the behavior of our Democratic colleagues when they were in the majority—well, first when they were in the minority, when they filibustered judges for the first time, and later when they were in the majority, before they saw the majority flip to Republicans, the Democratic leader packed the DC Circuit Court of Appeals by invoking the so-called nuclear option, breaking the Senate rules in a raw display of political power in order to pack a court that many people call the second most important court in the land. So this lifetime appointment to the Court is a critical check on the executive branch—a check this administration has proved over and over again we need desperately.

As others and I pointed out long before the President announced this nominee, this nomination will change the ideological balance of the Supreme Court for a generation. Justice Scalia served for 30 years. Because of that, because of all of this, I believe the American people should have their voices heard in the selection of the next Supreme Court nominee. We have already undertaken the process here of the Democrats choosing their nominee for President, and Republicans are doing the same. There is simply too much at stake to leave this decision in the hands of a President who is headed out the door—a decision that will have dramatic consequences on the balance of the Court and the direction of the country for a generation to come.

I believe we should listen to the voices of the American people and allow them to cast their vote and to raise their voice and determine who will make that selection.

I know there have been some members of the press who have asked: Well, if not now, how about in a lameduck session of the Congress; that is, after the election and before the new President is confirmed?

I think that is a terrible idea. If you believe in the principle that the American peoples' voice ought to be heard, it makes no sense to have an election and then to do it and not honor their selection.

So I know some have expressed some concern about that. I, for one, believe we ought to be consistent. That consistent position and the consistent principle are that the American people deserve to be heard and their voice heeded on who makes that selection to something as important as filling this vacancy on the Supreme Court.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, yesterday President Obama nominated Federal appeals court judge Merrick Garland to fill the vacancy left by the death of Associate Justice Scalia. The President has done his job. Now it is time for the Senate to do ours, to use advice and consent on this nominee, not to treat that as an option but as an obligation.

It is my sincere hope that in the coming days and weeks, all of my Senate colleagues will join me in meeting the nominee and evaluating him based on his merits and on his record and that Republican objections about this individual be laid aside so that at least they can look at his qualifications, his judicial temperament, and his record.

Chief Judge Garland has served the U.S. Court of Appeals since 1997. Let me stress that he has served on this important court for almost 20 years. He was previously at a law firm as a partner. He served as U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia and as Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Finally, he served as a U.S. circuit judge earlier in his career.

He is highly qualified as a nominee. America deserves to have a fully functioning court, and they deserve to have Senators who will do their job in reviewing this nominee. The Supreme Court cases that impact our fundamental rights and our operations of government—including the extent of property rights, privacy rights, the balance between civil liberty and national security, how to ensure equal protection under the law, and how to guarantee adequate and due process—are all things that deserve to have a full Supreme Court.

We need a fully functioning Court to keep the balance that we have in our system—the checks and balances throughout our government. We cannot delay the consideration of this Supreme Court nominee.

President Obama had an obligation to fill this vacancy on the Court. He did so by making this nomination. His duty does not end just because this is an election year.

The Senate has a constitutional obligation now to provide the advice and consent to the President on this nominee. That is a job that we should all take very seriously. The American people deserve no less. In fact, the Supreme Court Justice who grew up in the State of Washington, William O. Douglas, was nominated and confirmed within 16 days. That is right—16 days.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt nominated Justice Douglas on March 20, 1939, to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court on a seat vacated by Justice Brandeis. Justice Douglas was confirmed by the Senate on April 4, 1939. He went on to serve on the Supreme Court for 36 years.

So it can be done. While I am not saying it has to be done in the short amount of time that took—16 days—I do believe that we can get this nominee done in an efficient time. If you look at the record of most of the Supreme Court nominees, it has been, on average, 70 days. So we have plenty of time to make this consideration and make this decision. Yet Senate Republicans have manufactured their own artificial barrier to this debate of the Supreme Court nominee, basically saying that they don't believe we have to take up consideration of this issue.

I am asking them: Please, take Judge Garland's phone calls. Please make your schedule available to meet with him. When we return, please schedule a hearing to consider his nomination. Then, do what the American people want us to do; that is, do our job and actually vote on consideration of Judge Garland. This is in the interest of the American people. I know that Senate Republicans want to say they want to wait. But we cannot wait a full year to get another nominee on the Court.

The Senate has confirmed Supreme Court Justices in the final year of a Presidency more than a dozen times. During the last year of President Reagan's final term, Justice Kennedy was unanimously confirmed by a Democratic-controlled Senate. So the Republicans on the other side of the aisle, and many out there in the party, are saying they want to just allow a minority to drive the interests of the party and delay, delay, delay.

Well, in my opinion, you are delaying justice. In fact, you are taking some of the gridlock that has existed in this building and are just moving it across the street to the Supreme Court. We cannot have delays and gridlock in our judicial system. We need to do our job and move through this process. Today, I am urging my colleagues to have a hearing, ask the tough questions, and finally hold a vote.

Let's show the American people that we can do our job and that we can vote for or against this nominee. But you have to first meet with him, take his phone calls, and schedule a hearing.

The Seattle Times recently wrote: ''The hyperpartisan milieu of Congress this election year must not thwart the framers' intent.''

The Olympian newspaper in our State wrote:

> The Republican Party's intransigence in Congress is legendary. But the new refusal to consider any appointment of a new justice to the U.S. Supreme Court by President Obama is an outright abuse of power.

So, if the other side continues to refuse a nominee until a new President is sworn in, it would mark the longest period in the history of the Senate, since the Civil War, to fill a vacancy. All the positions on the Supreme Court are essential. My constituents and people all across America expect the Senate to do its job, regardless of whether it is an election year or not.

So I hope that, as our forefathers and Framers of our Constitution put together a government that works, those here in the Senate will take the phone calls of Judge Garland, take the meetings, schedule a hearing, and make sure that we vote on this nominee this year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4721, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (H.R. 4721) to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Thune-Hatch-Nelson-Wyden substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 3457) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

> (Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)
>
> Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2016''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—AIRPORT AND AIRWAY PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Extension of airport improvement program.
Sec. 102. Extension of expiring authorities.
Sec. 103. Federal Aviation Administration operations.
Sec. 104. Air navigation facilities and equipment.
Sec. 105. Research, engineering, and development.
Sec. 106. Compliance with aviation funding requirement.
Sec. 107. Essential air service.

TITLE II—REVENUE PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Expenditure authority from Airport and Airway Trust Fund.
Sec. 202. Extension of taxes funding Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

TITLE I—AIRPORT AND AIRWAY PROGRAMS

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 48103(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''$1,675,000,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''$2,652,083,333 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''.

(2) OBLIGATION OF AMOUNTS.—Subject to limitations specified in advance in appropriation Acts, sums made available pursuant to the amendment made by paragraph (1) may be obligated at any time through September 30, 2016, and shall remain available until expended.

(3) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.—For purposes of calculating funding apportionments and meeting other requirements under sections 47114, 47115, 47116, and 47117 of title 49, United States Code, for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall—

(A) first calculate such funding apportionments on an annualized basis as if the total amount available under section 48103 of such title for fiscal year 2016 were $3,350,000,000; and

(B) then reduce by 20.83 percent—

(i) all funding apportionments calculated under subparagraph (A); and

(ii) amounts available pursuant to sections 47117(b) and 47117(f)(2) of such title.

(b) PROJECT GRANT AUTHORITY.—Section 47104(c) of title 49, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''March 31, 2016,'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016,''.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF EXPIRING AUTHORITIES.

(a) Section 47107(r)(3) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''.

(b) Section 47115(j) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(c) Section 47124(b)(3)(E) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''$5,175,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016,'' and inserting ''$8,193,750 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016,''.

(d) Section 47141(f) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(e) Section 186(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (117 Stat. 2518) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(f) Section 409(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (49 U.S.C. 41731 note) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(g) Section 411(h) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (49 U.S.C. 42301 prec. note) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(h) Section 822(k) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (49 U.S.C. 47141 note) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

SEC. 103. FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION OPERATIONS.

Section 106(k) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by amending subparagraph (E) to read as follows:

''(E) $7,711,387,500 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''; and

(2) in paragraph (3) by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

SEC. 104. AIR NAVIGATION FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT.

Section 48101(a)(5) of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(5) $2,058,333,333 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''.

SEC. 105. RESEARCH, ENGINEERING, AND DEVELOPMENT.

Section 48102(a)(9) of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(9) $124,093,750 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''.

SEC. 106. COMPLIANCE WITH AVIATION FUNDING REQUIREMENT.

The budget authority authorized in this Act, including the amendments made by this Act, shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of subsections (a)(1)(B) and (a)(2) of section 48114 of title 49, United States Code, for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.

SEC. 107. ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE.

Section 41742(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''$77,500,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016,'' and inserting ''$122,708,333 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016,''.

TITLE II—REVENUE PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FROM AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 9502(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''; and

(2) in subparagraph (A), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting ''or the Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2016;''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 9502(e)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF TAXES FUNDING AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND.

(a) FUEL TAXES.—Section 4081(d)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(b) TICKET TAXES.—

(1) PERSONS.—Section 4261(k)(1)(A)(ii) of such Code is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(2) PROPERTY.—Section 4271(d)(1)(A)(ii) of such Code is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(c) FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP PROGRAMS.—

(1) TREATMENT AS NON-COMMERCIAL AVIATION.—Section 4083(b) of such Code is amended by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''.

(2) EXEMPTION FROM TICKET TAXES.—Section 4261(j) of such Code is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 4721), as amended, was passed.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

DIRECTING SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL TO BRING A CIVIL ACTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 377, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 377) directing the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I rise today in support of S. Res. 377, which is a resolution to enforce a subpoena of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which I chair. I will be joined shortly by my colleague Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL of Missouri, who is the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee and whom I worked with as a partner on this issue over the past year.

This is a subpoena that we issued to a group called backpage—backpage.com. This resolution is intended to enforce that subpoena. Backpage and its chief executive officer, Carl Ferrer, have not been willing to cooperate with the committee. Unfortunately, we are at the point where we have to seek the enforcement of our subpoena.

For nearly a year now, Senator MCCASKILL and I conducted a bipartisan investigation into the scourge of human trafficking on the Internet with a focus on sex trafficking involving children. In the past 5 years, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children reported an over 800-percent increase in reports of suspected child sex trafficking, an increase the organization has found to be ''directly correlated to the increased use of the internet to sell children for sex.'' They testified before our subcommittee about this. They are the experts. They see this huge increase being related to the Internet. In other words, the destructive crime of sex slavery has moved from the street corner to the smartphone.

An adult can now shop for underaged trafficking victims from their computer screen. Sex traffickers are well aware that backpage.com, the biggest one by far, offers them a quick and easy-to-use marketplace to sell children and coerce adults.

Here is how the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children spells it out, describing this growing problem at a hearing I chaired late last year:

> Online classified ad sites such as backpage.com . . . allow [sex traffickers] to remain anonymous, test out new markets, attempt to evade public or law enforcement detection, and easily locate customers to consummate their sale of children for sex. Online sex trafficking also enables traffickers to easily update an existing ad with a new location and quickly move the child to another geographic location where there are more customers seeking to purchase a child for rape or sexual abuse.

This is from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. As co-chair of the Senate Caucus to End Human Trafficking, I have spent many hours with those dedicated to fighting this crime and those who are victimized by it. For victims, the toll of sex trafficking is measured in stolen childhoods and painful trauma. For traffickers, it is measured in dollars—often a lot of dollars. It is a problem, I believe, that should command more attention around our country and certainly here in the U.S. Congress.

The aim of our investigation is very straightforward. We want to understand how lawmakers, law enforcement, and even private businesses can more effectively combat this serious crime that thrives on the online black market.

Traffickers have found refuge in new customers through Web sites that specialize in advertising ''ordinary'' prostitution and lawful escort services. A business called backpage.com is the market leader in that industry, with annual revenues in excess of $130 million last year. Backpage has a special niche: According to one industry analysis in 2013, $8 out of every $10 spent on online commercial sex advertising in the United States goes to backpage.com. The public record indicates that backpage sits at the center of the online black market for sex trafficking.

Again, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children has reported that of the suspected child trafficking reports it receives from the public, 71 percent involve backpage. Again, they have said that of the suspected child trafficking reports they receive from the public—and they have a 1–800 number; they get reports from the public—71 percent involve backpage.com.

According to a leading anti-trafficking organization called Shared Hope International, ''Service providers working with child sex trafficking victims have reported between 80 percent and 100 percent of their clients have been bought and sold on backpage.com.'' In fact, this organization has documented more than 400 cases in 47 States of children being sex trafficked on backpage.com.

Despite all this, backpage executives said they are committed to combatting sex trafficking. The company claims that its internal procedures for reviewing and screening the advertisements ''lead the industry.'' That claim led us to ask a very simple question: What are those industry-leading procedures? If they are so effective in the fight against human trafficking, Congress and other lawmakers ought to know about it. That is why Senator MCCASKILL and I asked backpage for documents about their ad-screening practices—a process backpage calls ''moderation.'' We also asked for other information about their business practices—fair questions, targeted questions, relevant questions. The company has refused to answer them and refused to cooperate.

We then took the next step and issued a subpoena to backpage's CEO, Carl Ferrer, inquiring him to produce documents about backpage's moderation practices, efforts to combat human trafficking, and financial information. The company essentially told us no. Wrapping itself in a privileged First Amendment argument, backpage refuses to produce documents about its business practices and told us that the company refuses to even look for documents—not just that they don't have the documents, but they refuse to even look for them, a clear sign of willful contempt for the Senate's process.

That is why we are here today on the floor. Senator MCCASKILL and I gave backpage every opportunity to cooperate in good faith with our investigation. We carefully considered its objections to the subpoena. We actually issued a 19-page opinion, thoughtfully overruling their objections and directing backpage to comply. They continued to stonewall.

In the meantime, our investigation has not stopped. Our investigators and lawyers found a number of third parties and other witnesses who had information about backpage's practices and procedures. Along the way, we discovered that from 2010 to 2012, backpage outsourced much of its screening and, again, this moderation; meaning, looking at these ads coming in, the screening and moderation they outsourced to others, including to workers in India.

We obtained emails from the California company that managed those India-based moderators, including emails with backpage's CEO and other executives. These emails are deeply troubling. Our investigation showed that backpage edits advertisements before posting them by removing certain words, certain phrases, certain images. For instance, they might remove a word or image that makes it clear that the sexual services are being offered for money. Then they might post this sanitized version of an ad. While this editing changes nothing about the underlying transaction, it tends to conceal the evidence of illegality. In other words, backpage's editing procedures—far from being an effective anti-trafficking measure—serve to sanitize the ads of the illegal content to the outside viewer.

We still don't know the full extent of backpage's editing practices. How much of the illegal conduct—or even the fact that they were selling minors online—was being concealed? Why? Backpage will not tell us.

Then there is this email. It tells the moderators what to do if they have doubts about whether a girl advertised on backpage is underage. I am going to quote from this email. It says:

> If in doubt about underage: The process should for now be to accept the ad . . . however, if you ever find anything that you feel is underage and is more than just suspicious, you can delete the ad. . . . Only delete if you [are] really very sure person is underage.

To be clear, we didn't get this information from backpage itself because it refuses to provide it. This came from the contractor. Backpage claims emails like this are protected by the First Amendment, which is not accurate.

In November, Senator MCCASKILL and I released a bipartisan staff report about our investigation and held a hearing to consider what to do about backpage's noncompliance. I encourage Members to take a look at this staff report. It is online. You can find it.

By the way, despite being under subpoena, backpage's CEO refused to show up for the hearing we held. Shortly before the hearing date, he simply informed us that he wasn't going to show up. This is something Senator MCCASKILL and I will continue to focus on. But others did show up for our hearing. We heard testimony from law enforcement, prosecutors, and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children confirming what we had come to suspect: Backpage is not really an ally in the fight against human trafficking; they said it profits from it.

The general counsel of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children told us that it had dozens of meetings with backpage about improving the company's anti-trafficking measures, but those meetings ended because the national center concluded that backpage was ''not engaging in good faith efforts to deter the selling and buying of children for sex on its Web site.''

The national center told us that ''[d]espite backpage's assertions, it was adopting and publicizing only carefully selected sound practices, while resisting recommended substantive measures that would protect more children from being sold for sex . . . on backpage.com.'' For example, the national center noted that backpage did not ''hash'' its photos—a very low-cost technique for comparing digital images that could help identify missing children.

The national center also noted that backpage has more stringent rules to post an ad to sell a pet, a motorcycle,

or a boat than it does to sell a person. A user is required to submit a verified phone number for selling a hamster but not in placing ads that could involve the sale of a child for sex. Think about that.

The human toll of all this is staggering. It is hard to overstate the traumatic effect of a minor being advertised on a daily basis on a site like backpage.com.

In a recent lawsuit brought against backpage in Boston, the plaintiff was a 15-year-old girl who had been raped over 1,000 times as a result of being advertised on backpage.com—1,000 times. In the course of our investigation, we also heard some similarly heart-wrenching stories. For example, backpage receives reports from families pleading with it to take down ads of their children. Here is one such email sent to backpage that the national center shared with us. Remember, this is an email from a parent about a child being sent to backpage. It said this:

> Your Web site has ads featuring our 16-year-old daughter [ ], posing as an escort. She is being pimped out by her old [boyfriend], and she is underage. I have emailed the ad multiple times using your website, but have gotten no response. . . . For God's sake, she's only 16. . . . Stuff like this shouldn't be allowed to happen.

This is from a parent pleading.

Even after receiving such reports, the national center tells us backpage often does not remove the ad. Instead, the ad remains live on the Web site, which allows the abuse of that child to continue. Imagine as a parent or a grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister feeling helpless in the face of backpage not even being willing to take down an ad of a family member.

It is sometimes hard to square backpage's public statements about its business practices with the reality on the ground. For example, the national center recently was searching for a child who was missing—and by the way, still is missing—and found she appeared in a sex advertisement on backpage. Sadly, that is pretty common. What made this case even more incredible was that backpage ad actually contained a missing-child poster of that same child. So the ad advertising sex actually used the missing-child poster of that child. That poster had the child's real name on it, real age, real picture, and the date she went missing. The other pictures in the ad included topless photos. We certainly would like to know what supposedly market-leading screening and moderation procedures missed that one. And that, Madam President, is exactly why we need the documents we have asked for from backpage, documents we have subpoenaed from backpage. Without them, we can't really evaluate how sex trafficking is proliferated in these online marketplaces. We can't really evaluate how Congress can do a better job fighting against this crime. We can't help the many prosecutors at the local level who are trying to stop this practice or the attorneys general around the United States of America who are trying to stop this practice. We can't really help to stop this from happening.

To be clear, our purpose is absolutely not to shut down any particular company or to deter protected advertising for lawful services. This is not an attempt to shut down something that is lawful on the Internet, it is an attempt to stop something that is unlawful, and nor are we even looking for information about individual advertisers. In fact, Senator MCCASKILL and I have made clear that backpage should redact from any documents they send us any of the personally identifying information about its users. We don't need that. That is not what we are about. What we are interested in are facts that will enable smart legislation on a critical issue of public concern. We hope our investigation will help to combat this process directly but also will help to generate legislation here in the Congress.

This civil contempt resolution before us today—S. Res. 377—will enable us to get those facts. It was reported out of the full committee unanimously. I wish to thank Senator RON JOHNSON, the chairman of the committee, and Senator TOM CARPER, the ranking member of the committee, and all of our colleagues on the committee for their unwavering support for this investigation.

This will be the first time in more than 20 years that the Senate has had to enforce a subpoena in court. I can't think of a time when it has been more justified. To my colleagues who are wondering about this, again, I hope they will look at our report and see why it is so important that we move forward with enforcing this subpoena.

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations has a long history of investigating crime that infiltrates interstate commerce and affects our Nation's health and safety. In our era, the crime of human trafficking has become a scourge, and Congress needs to know everything it can to be able to better fight it. No investigation of that subject could omit backpage.com. Again, as we have heard from these outside groups, the vast majority of this sex trafficking that is going on online is through this very site. The National Association of Attorneys General has described backpage as a ''hub'' of ''human trafficking, especially the trafficking of minors.'' That is the attorneys general around the country.

Unfortunately, this is an issue that affects all of our communities. It knows no ZIP Code.

Madam President, before I yield the floor, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a number of statements in support of the resolution from the Nation's leading anti-trafficking organizations, including the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

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

''Rights4Girls applauds the Senate's passage of this important resolution that will provide much needed accountability and insight into Backpage.com's business practices—practices that have led to the trafficking and exploitation of children all across this country. We are especially grateful to Senators Portman and McCaskill for their leadership in advancing this resolution and for their dedication to protecting our nation's most vulnerable children.''—Yasmin Vafa, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Rights4Girls

''I commend the Senate, particularly Senators Rob Portman and Claire McCaskill, for their leadership on the investigation into Backpage and their dedication to assisting victims of child sex trafficking and their families. I am outraged at the business practices Backpage continues to engage in and that they are not being held accountable for facilitating and profiting from child sex trafficking on their website. Backpage is a shopping mall for people who want to exploit children and they shouldn't be able to continue profiting on the rape of children without repercussions. These creeps keep hiding behind the veil of the First Amendment while knowingly allowing children to be trafficked for sex on their website. This isn't about prostitution or sex between consenting adults, this is about children being purchased for rape and sexual abuse.—John Walsh, human and victim rights advocate and creator of America's Most Wanted

''The Subcommittee's efforts to investigate the practices of Backpage.com and demand answers in an effort to prevent the sex trafficking of children on that website and others like it is critical to our work to end sex trafficking. Shared Hope proudly supports the resolution and the Subcommittee's important work. We are grateful to you for your bravery and diligence.''—Shared Hope International

SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL,
Vancouver, WA, March 16, 2016.

Hon. ROB PORTMAN,
Chair, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
Ranking Member, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, DC.,

DEAR CHAIRMAN PORTMAN AND RANKING MEMBER MCCASKILL: Shared Hope International is writing to strongly support the resolution directing the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena issued by the Subcommittee to the Chief Executive Officer of Backpage.com, Carl Ferrer (S. Res. 377). We thank you for your brave leadership on this investigation and dedication to assisting the victims of online commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Shared Hope International was founded and exists to end sex trafficking of women and children and assist the victims through restoration and access to justice. Since 1998, we have implemented programs and advocated for laws and policies that would ensure victims of sex trafficking are protected, served and honored as victims. Increasingly, the victims we serve have been sold for sex on the internet, and most often the website named is Backpage.com. In fact, NCMEC reports that 71% of all child sex trafficking reports to the CyberTipline relate to Backpage ads. Shared Hope documented 495 cases representing at least 548 child victims who were sold for sex on Backpage.com in nearly every

state in the U.S. These are cases we identified through media coverage, which means they represent only a fraction of the total number of cases. Our partners indicate most of the youth they serve in recovery programs were sold on the site. A study by YouthSpark in Atlanta, Georgia, found 53% of children receiving care from service providers across the country were bought and sold for sex on Backpage.com.

The Subcommittees efforts to investigate the practices of Backpage.com and demand answers in an effort to prevent the sex trafficking of children on that website and others like it is critical to our work to end sex trafficking. Shared Hope proudly supports the resolution and the Subcommittee's important work. We are grateful to you for your bravery and diligence.

Sincerely,

LINDA SMITH,
(U.S. Congress 1995–99, Washington State Senate/House 1983–94), Founder and President, Shared Hope International.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN,
Alexandria, VA, March 15, 2016.

Hon. ROB PORTMAN,
Chairman, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, DC.,

Hon. CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
Ranking Member, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PORTMAN AND RANKING MEMBER MCCASKILL: On behalf of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the families and children we serve, I am writing to express our strong support for your resolution directing the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena issued by your Subcommittee to the Chief Executive Officer of Backpage (S. Res. 377). We commend you for your leadership on this investigation and your dedication to assisting victims of child sex trafficking and their families.

NCMEC is a private, non-profit organization that for over 31 years has been designated by Congress to serve as the national clearinghouse on issues related to missing and exploited children. In this role, NCMEC has learned a great deal about child sex trafficking, including its pervasive growth online and the devastating impact this crime has on children and their families. We know that sex trafficking is a crime that takes place in nearly every community in the United States and increasingly children are sold for sex online on websites like Backpage.com.

NCMEC receives reports of child sex trafficking through intakes of missing child cases, requests for analytical assistance, and reports to the CyberTipline, the reporting mechanism for child sexual exploitation crimes. In recent years, NCMEC has witnessed an increase in missing and exploited child cases involving the online trafficking of children for sex. In 2015, NCMEC assisted with approximately 10,000 reports regarding possible child sex trafficking, but we know this is only a small fraction of suspected child sex trafficking victims in this country.

Even more concerning is that a majority of child sex trafficking cases reported to NCMEC involve ads posted on Backpage.com. More than seventy-one percent (71%) of all child sex trafficking reports submitted by members of the public to NCMEC relate to Backpage ads. We also have seen a disturbing trend of runaway children trafficked on Backpage.com. Today, when we are looking for a runaway child who we have reason to believe might be trafficked, Backpage.com is the first place we look for the child.

We have long been alarmed about Backpage's business practices that fail to prevent children from being sold for sex on its website. The work of your Subcommittee to investigate these practices and to demand answers is to be widely commended.

NCMEC is proud to lend our support to this important resolution, and we hope the Senate's work can uncover more information regarding the use of online websites, such as Backpage.com, to traffic children. We are grateful for your dedication to the safety of our nation's children and look forward to continuing to work with you and others who are working tirelessly to halt the terrible tragedy of online child sex trafficking.

Sincerely,

JOHN F. CLARK,
President and CEO.

POLARIS,
Washington, DC, March 16, 2016.

Hon. ROB PORTMAN,
Chairman, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
Ranking Member, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PORTMAN AND RANKING MEMBER MCCASKILL: On behalf of Polaris, a non-profit organization working to end human trafficking and restore freedom to victims and survivors, I am writing to express my strong support for S. Res. 377, which directs the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena issued by your Subcommittee to the Chief Executive Officer of Backpage. I appreciate your tremendous work on this investigation and your leadership in the fight to ensure victims of child sex trafficking and their families receive justice.

Since 2007, Polaris has operated the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC), a 24-hour, national, confidential anti-trafficking hotline and resource center created and overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, in March 2013, Polaris launched our BeFree textline, allowing trafficking victims and concerned citizens to use text message to contact us for help.

In 2015, the NHTRC received 1,383 cases involving sex trafficking of a minor, and Polaris received 22 cases through our BeFree textline involving sex trafficking of a minor. In these two sets, Backpage was specifically referenced in 222 cases. In total, the NHTRC has received 5,810 minor sex trafficking cases since 2007, BeFree has received 66 cases since 2013, and Backpage has been referenced in 595 cases.

Backpage's business practices have long been a major source of concern for Polaris and the anti-trafficking community as a whole. We wholeheartedly support your Subcommittee's investigation into Backpage, and we think that S. Res. 377 is critical to ensuring Backpage is held accountable for its shocking, blatant disregard for your investigation. We are proud to stand with your Subcommittee in this fight to stop child sex trafficking, and we hope the Senate will unanimously pass S. Res. 377.

Sincerely,

BRAD MYLES,
CEO.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this resolution and vindicate the authority of Congress to obtain information necessary for sound legislation to protect the most vulnerable among us.

We are going to hear shortly from Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL, who has been a partner of mine in this effort from the beginning. This investigation has taken about a year. We have done it thoughtfully and carefully. Again, I wish to express my gratitude to her for her support for the legislation. We wanted to wait until she was back in Congress—she was home taking care of some important health matters—in order to take up this vote today. I know she will express her own strongly held views on this.

I just want to say I hope all of my colleagues—Republicans and Democrats alike—will look at this issue and realize this is an opportunity for us to go on record supporting an investigation that could lead to legislation that can actually help to protect those most vulnerable among us.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, today the Senate will vote on S. Res. 377, a resolution directing Senate legal counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, PSI, against Carl Ferrer, chief executive officer of backpage.com LLC, ''backpage''. I support this resolution in furtherance of PSI's bipartisan investigation into businesses that directly or indirectly facilitate sex trafficking.

Backpage officials have publicly acknowledged that their website may have been used by criminals to engage in sex trafficking, including the trafficking of children. Identifying and shutting down the tools that help criminals engage in such illegality is critical to preventing these crimes. We must do all we can to stop these criminals and to support the survivors. That is why I support this resolution and why I have worked tirelessly to enact legislation to prevent human trafficking in the first place and to provide resources for trafficking victims so that they can begin to rebuild their lives.

Last year the chairman and ranking member of PSI jointly launched a bipartisan investigation to examine businesses that directly or indirectly facilitate sex trafficking. Backpage is one of the companies that PSI has been investigating, but it is not the only one. PSI aims to learn as much as possible about these businesses so that the Senate can craft appropriate legislative and policy responses to combat sex trafficking and child exploitation.

On October 1, 2015, and in accordance with subcommittee rules, PSI voted on a bipartisan basis to issue a subpoena to backpage's CEO, Carl Ferrer. This subpoena was issued only after backpage failed to comply with a subpoena issued earlier in the year and after several backpage employees refused to testify. The subpoena required,

among other things, the production of backpage's policies and practices with respect to reviewing advertisements for potential criminal activity, information on how backpage cooperates with law enforcement, data on how many advertisements backpage denies or deletes, and information relating to revenue earned through adult advertisements. To date, backpage has refused to comply with the subpoena.

On November 19, 2015, PSI held a hearing about backpage.com. At this hearing, the senior vice president of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children testified that 71 percent of reports of suspected child trafficking it receives involve backpage. The hearing also raised significant concerns about backpage's willingness to cooperate with law enforcement. PSI issued a subpoena compelling the testimony of Carl Ferrer at the hearing, but he refused to appear.

The refusal of backpage to comply with the subpoena compelled the full Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to vote unanimously in favor of the resolution now before us. The resolution authorizes Senate legal counsel to begin to take action to enforce the subpoena in Federal court. PSI's investigation is exactly the type of oversight the Senate should be conducting. The subject matter is one of utmost importance, and PSI's efforts have been jointly conducted by the chairman and ranking member of PSI since the investigation began. Most importantly, the requested documents are critical to understanding how online sex trafficking is effectuated and to finding ways to stop it.

Authorizing Senate legal counsel to enforce a Senate subpoena is a very serious matter that should not be taken lightly. This action should be taken only in the most limited of circumstances and should never be pursued for partisan or political motives. Given the serious nature of this investigation and the unanimous support by all members of the committee and subcommittee throughout the process, I support this resolution.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I wish to express my strong support for the resolution to enforce the subpoena against backpage's CEO Carl Ferrer.

From my work as chairman and now ranking member of the Select Committee on Intelligence, I know how important congressional investigations can be to ensure that we have all the facts, and that is the type of issue before us today.

In this case, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations is conducting a bipartisan investigation into the use of the Internet to facilitate sex trafficking, particularly sex trafficking of minors. As my colleagues know, this has been an area I have worked to address legislatively, including in an amendment to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act that passed 97–2 that makes it a Federal crime to knowingly advertise minors for commercial sex. I believe the Investigations Subcommittee's work can inform the work of the Congress as a whole to better protect vulnerable children trafficked over the Internet.

Backpage is a Web site that allows for the advertisement of commercial sex online. In 2013, it was estimated that $8 out of every $10 spent on online sex advertising in the U.S. goes to backpage. Moreover, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children has itself determined that backpage is linked to 71 percent of all suspected child sex trafficking reports that it receives from the public through its ''CyberTipline.'' Thus, this bipartisan investigation naturally involves questions about the specifics of how backpage operates.

As I understand it, the subcommittee's subpoena seeks documents to help explain backpage's current policies and practices. These questions involve, among other things, whether backpage edits the content of ads before they are published, whether backpage might be more helpful to law enforcement with the data it collects, and whether backpage has resources sufficient to further prevent trafficking on its site. But backpage has refused to comply with this subpoena.

Where an investigative subcommittee is conducting a bipartisan investigation into the most horrific crimes committed against young people, it is the right thing to do for the Senate to enforce this subpoena through the legal process.

I would like to also share about a case that arose in my State very recently. Last week, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department arrested three individuals charged with abducting a 20-year-old woman and transporting her to the Bay Area to sexually exploit her. The victim was initially kidnapped in Palmdale, where she was viciously assaulted and then moved 6 hours north to Oakland, where her pictures were taken and posted to backpage.com. She was then driven back down to Orange County and had a gun pointed at her by one of her attackers. The victim was fortunately able to make some panicked calls to her mother while taken captive, and the L.A. Sheriff's office was able to find her in a motel and rescue her. The suspects were then captured and now face a litany of charges. This all occurred just weeks ago.

The point is sex trafficking, facilitated by the Internet, continues to plague communities all over the country.

I recently met with John Clark, the new president and CEO of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. The National Center reported that over the last 5 years, there has been an 846 percent increase in reports of suspected child sex trafficking and that this increase is ''directly correlated to the increased use of the Internet to sell children for sex.'' That is sobering.

Every day in America, vulnerable victims are advertised over the Internet and exploited by traffickers. I believe the Congress must get to the bottom of it, try to understand how it is happening, and do all that we can to stop it. So I fully support enforcement of this subpoena and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. PORTMAN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to support S. Res. 377, a resolution to enforce a subpoena of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations against backpage.com and Carl Ferrer, the company's chief executive officer. This action comes as part of the subcommittee's ongoing investigation into the sex trafficking of minors and the unfortunate and increasing role of the Internet in facilitating this horrific crime.

Before I go much further, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the chairman. Senator PORTMAN has been tenacious. He is committed. He is forcing us as a body to address an issue that is so unpleasant that many times we shy away from it because we would rather talk about more pleasant subjects and issues that are less emotional. But it is what is happening in America and in the world, and thanks to the leadership of Senator PORTMAN, it is being addressed in a forthright manner that alerts all of us and, indeed, alerts the world. I very much appreciate the great work he has done on this issue. I know he remains committed for as long as he is a Member of this body, and we are incredibly grateful for his friendship and his leadership.

This marks the first time in 20 years that the Senate has been required to enforce a subpoena in court. I have been in Congress for a long time, and I have never seen anything quite like it. As part of the subcommittee's fair and deliberative investigation into human trafficking and child exploitation on the Internet, we have encountered a company that, instead of doing everything in its power to assist in protecting the most vulnerable in our society, has decided to focus its energies on stonewalling congressional efforts to do so.

Let me be clear. As is always the case in this unsavory underside of society, it is about money. Backpage.com is the market leader in commercial sex advertising. It was valued at over $600 million in 2015, with over $130 million in annual revenue, and their business model is dependent on the revenue generated from this part of its Web site.

Backpage claims to be a leading partner in the fight to combat child sex trafficking by screening advertisements for evidence of trafficking and taking deliberate steps from preventing illegal activity from appearing on its Web site. But the company has refused to produce documents that could verify this claim, and the facts gathered by the subcommittee from other sources indicate this is not the case.

As Senator PORTMAN has indicated, backpage has been linked to hundreds of human trafficking cases, including those of children. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has gathered data that indicates that the vast majority of suspected child trafficking reports it receives from the public include postings made on backpage. Identifying what screening procedures are in place and the effectiveness of these efforts in curbing trafficking are an important part of this investigation.

Thanks to the leadership from the Senator from Ohio, it is hard to think of a more worthy use of the Senate's investigative authority than examining the methods used to facilitate the buying and selling of children for sexual exploitation. This investigation is designed to guide Congress as we consider ways to combat human trafficking and identify what can be done to protect children and eliminate this crime. Enforcement of this subpoena is necessary to accomplish that goal and to protect the prerogative of the Senate to investigate matters of consequence to our national interest. I appreciate Senators PORTMAN and MCCASKILL's truly bipartisan efforts to investigate matters of consequence to our national interest. I appreciate their efforts to shed light on this difficult issue, and I appreciate their commitment to defending the Senate's role in addressing it.

I hope and believe that vote will be 100 to 0, as we strongly support Chairman PORTMAN's right to obtain the information he believes is necessary to the subcommittee's investigation concerning human trafficking. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important resolution.

I know that my friend and colleague Senator PORTMAN knows that one of the areas where human trafficking is most intense are those States that are on the border, and our southern border is obviously penetrated regularly by these human traffickers. I would like, as a representative of the people of my State of Arizona, where this issue is of particular importance, to thank Senator PORTMAN and Senator MCCASKILL for their unending worthy and important efforts on this issue.

By passing this legislation, we will send a message to others. We will send a message to others, I say to my colleague from Ohio, that they can run but they can't hide.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Arizona. He has been a leader on this issue for many years. For people who don't know, Cindy McCain, the wife of the Senator from Arizona, is an international leader on this issue dealing with human trafficking all over the world and also sex trafficking here at home. I appreciate his passion and his commitment to it. As a former chair and a ranking member of this committee, I look to him for counsel and advice on how we conduct ourselves. He has been very helpful in this specific issue, and I thank him.

I yield to the Senator from Minnesota for such time as she may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator MCCAIN for his work. I started to work on some of these backpage issues in conjunction with Senator MCCAIN's wife Cindy McCain, as well as with Senator HEITKAMP. We took a trip to Mexico focusing on the trafficking going on across the border with that country.

I want to thank Senators PORTMAN and MCCASKILL for leadership on this really important resolution. Just last year, five St. Paul residents were charged with running a multistate sex trafficking ring. One of the alleged victims was 16. Those underage girls were being advertised on backpage, and the ads were placed in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Georgia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois.

In Southwest Minnesota, an operation involving backpage resulted in charges against 48 men around the towns of New Ulm and Mankato, the town my husband grew up in. These cases prove that sex trafficking isn't just happening in some faraway place. It is happening right now in the United States of America. It is happening in our own neighborhoods. It is happening in oil patches in North Dakota. It is happening in Cleveland, and it is happening in St. Paul. These are real stories with real people.

In 2014 I spoke to the trafficking advocacy group Polaris when they released their State-by-State rankings of efforts to fight human trafficking. They said then:

> The scope and scale of human trafficking within the United States presents a daunting challenge to policymakers, service providers, law enforcement, and advocates. Originally, human trafficking was thought to be more of a problem in other countries, but now it is known to be happening in our backyards. It is estimated that there are hundreds of thousands of victims of sex and labor trafficking inside our borders.

We have learned more about human trafficking through the advocacy and dedication, as I mentioned, of our friend Cindy McCain and her work at the McCain Institute. Their 2014 report actually focuses specifically on this advertising.

When I was a prosecutor for 8 years, yes, we had trafficking—of course, we did—and, yes, we had child pornography, but I would say we didn't see this tsunami of advertising that we see now. Why? The Internet has made it easier. We love the Internet. It has allowed us to communicate in ways, but it has expanded demand for sex trafficking victims because of the fact that it is easier to do than it used to be.

What the McCain report shows is that the availability of potential victims of domestic minor sex trafficking exceeded researcher expectations, with no less than 38 different Web sites advertising victims who showed indications of being juvenile sex trafficking victims, with at least 4 Web sites providing customer feedback and soliciting recommendations of victims of sex trafficking.

The McCain report went on to say: ''In Phoenix, during 10 days of ad screening, 34 ads were identified as possibly depicting minor victims with duplicate ads resulting in 81 distinct tips of domestic minor sex trafficking.''

Last year we successfully passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act that Senator CORNYN and I led. We are making good progress in implementing this bill. Senator CORNYN and I met recently with Attorney General Lynch. They are working hard. Ongoing work not only includes this resolution and is the focus on the advertising of illegal sex trafficking but also partnering with the private sector.

Senator WARNER and I have introduced the Stop Trafficking on Planes Act or the STOP Act, which is built on the work of the industry to train flight attendants and train people on the planes to find the victims. I note this investigation led by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations is a bipartisan attempt to address a serious issue. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S. Res. 377. This is just one element of this fight against sex trafficking, but it is an important one because people should not be allowed to violate the Senate rules, they shouldn't be allowed to skirt hearings, and they shouldn't be allowed to get away with this kind of behavior. Backpage and others of its ilk are not just a vehicle for advertising this crime, they are actually a vehicle for expanding this crime and hurting more people.

I appreciate the work of Senator PORTMAN and Senator MCCASKILL.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Minnesota for her strong support of this resolution today, which again is just enforcing a subpoena that is targeted and focused on information that can help us to be able to legislate in this matter. I hope all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join us in this effort. I also thank her for broader work on this issue, specifically the leadership role she has played as a former prosecutor in trying to get at this problem of sex trafficking online.

Senator KLOBUCHAR is absolutely right. The Internet has provided so many wonderful things for our economy and for our society. Yet there is a dark side, isn't there. That dark side is shown as clearly as anywhere with regard to backpage; the fact that this sex trafficking has been made more efficient through the Internet and specifically through this one Web site that contains the vast majority of sex trafficking and commercial sex.

Again, I refer you to my comments I made earlier. We talked about the fact that there is a girl who is currently missing. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children has been trying to find her. They put up posters about her, and recently she appeared on a sex advertisement on backpage. Again, this is more common than you would expect.

What made this case even more incredible to me was the backpage actually contained a missing child poster of that same child. So the missing child poster that the national center had put out there for all of us to help find her shows up on backpage.com as an advertisement for this young girl. This poster had the child's real name, real age, real picture, and the date she went missing. Other photos in that ad included topless photos of this girl. She is 16 years old.

This is another example of where there is a problem that must be addressed. Our investigation is to create the information for us to be able to legislate wisely on this issue.

I see my colleague from New Hampshire has joined us. We wish to hear from her. She is another former attorney general of a State and has been involved in this issue for many years and is an active member of the caucus we talked about earlier to try to combat trafficking.

I yield to my colleague, the Senator from New Hampshire, such time as she may need.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I thank Senator PORTMAN and Senator MCCASKILL for their strong leadership on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, of which they are the chair and ranking member, on such an important issue because enforcing the subpoena—the resolution we have before us to enforce the subpoena is critical.

As you heard today, I was attorney general of New Hampshire. I had the opportunity to work with the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children reports that of suspected child trafficking reports it receives from the public, 71 percent involve backpage.com.

What is the resolution about? It is about the fact that Senator PORTMAN, Senator MCCASKILL, and the committee they lead has asked legitimate questions and asked for documents from backpage.com.

We have heard the horrific stories of things that have happened and have been reported. Senator PORTMAN referenced a recent report in Boston about a 15-year-old girl who had been raped over 1,000 times as a result of being advertised on backpage.com.

Of course, we have heard horrific stories about children. In one Pennsylvania case, a defendant forced a minor to have sex with approximately 15 different men in one encounter where she was threatened with a weapon—advertised on backpage.com, so it is pretty straightforward.

In a Florida case, a trafficker drugged and threatened to kill a 14-year-old girl so he could sell her for sexual services online—backpage.com.

In a California case, a trafficker forced two women to work as prostitutes through beating and threatening them with sexual violence—backpage.com.

These are very legitimate questions that have been asked to inform our policy decisions of backpage.com. Yet they will not produce the documents that have been asked of them, to ask how they were screening to ensure they aren't taking illegal actions when it comes to child sex trafficking and trafficking of women and men and boys and girls. Yet they will not answer that. The CEO of backpage.com was subpoenaed to testify, and he refused to appear here.

If backpage.com is not doing the things in some of these reports that have come forward and is not acting illegally, then they will come and talk to us about this. The CEO of backpage would not try to hide behind the First Amendment, making arguments that don't bear out under the First Amendment because we are talking about illegality, the trafficking of children in horrific ways—then this is a legitimate inquiry for this committee.

I again commend Senator PORTMAN and Senator MCCASKILL.

I urge the Members of the Senate to support this resolution to enforce this subpoena so we can ensure that we get the information this committee needs to inform our policy decisions to address a very important issue that is putting children at risk, that is harming families, that is harming men and women who are being trafficked, and we need to get to the bottom of it.

I yield the floor back to Senator PORTMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank my colleague from New Hampshire.

Let me just say I already talked about Senator MCCASKILL in my remarks, but she has been a terrific partner on this issue and many others. She has a passion for it as a former prosecutor, someone who understands this issue well.

I yield all remaining time to Senator MCCASKILL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, last year a 15-year-old girl wandered into an emergency room in St. Louis, told a horrific tale, asking for help. She had been trafficked across truckstops throughout the Midwest, taken from truckstop to truckstop, and sold to truckers for sex—all through backpage. As we debate this today, it is important we stay focused on that 15-year-old girl and don't get lost in the process of the Senate.

This is a valid investigation. This is an important investigation. What we are doing today is making sure the Senate can do its work under the Constitution. Backpage has refused to cooperate. It has refused to willingly cooperate. It has refused two legitimate and duly authorized subpoenas concerning backpage asking for information at the heart of the investigation.

Under any circumstances, I find it shocking that a company would refuse a lawful subpoena of the U.S. Senate, would ignore a lawful subpoena of the U.S. Senate. It is particularly outrageous given that backpage has already admitted that serious criminal activity, including sex trafficking of children, occurs on its site. Backpage simply has no excuse for not complying with these legal subpoenas.

During our November 19 hearing, I promised that while the subcommittee would move forward carefully and cautiously, we would not go quietly into the night, and on some day in the near future we would use the Senate's enforcement measures to compel cooperation from backpage. Today is that day. While we stay focused on that 15-year-old girl, I know I speak for the chairman—and I wish to give the chairman great accolades for our working relationship. It is not always easy to reconcile differences in positions, differences in policy, and staffs working together, but he didn't give up. We both stay at it, and we are both determined to work on this committee in a bipartisan fashion. I am very grateful to him for his effort in that regard.

As we think of that 15-year-old girl and the information we need, we also need to think that a bigger principle is at stake; that is, if we ignore backpage's refusal, what does that say to companies in the future when we need information in order to do our job? That you can give the back of your hand to the U.S. Senate and there will be no consequences? Obviously, that is a slippery slope I don't think we should go down. I don't think the Founding Fathers would want us to go down that slippery slope.

That is why today is the day we say enough. We go with this vote to the courts and we get enforcement of these legal subpoenas so we can truly find out what, if any, role backpage has had in the highly illegal and immoral practice of trafficking children for sex.

I yield the floor.

I yield back all remaining time for the Democrats.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question occurs on adoption of the resolution.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 38 Leg.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Flake	Murphy
Ayotte	Franken	Murray
Baldwin	Gardner	Nelson
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Paul
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blumenthal	Grassley	Peters
Blunt	Hatch	Portman
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Boozman	Heitkamp	Reid
Brown	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hirono	Roberts
Cantwell	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Inhofe	Rubio
Cardin	Isakson	Sasse
Carper	Johnson	Schatz
Casey	Kaine	Schumer
Cassidy	King	Scott
Coats	Kirk	Sessions
Cochran	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Collins	Lankford	Shelby
Coons	Leahy	Stabenow
Corker	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	Markey	Thune
Crapo	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McCaskill	Toomey
Donnelly	McConnell	Udall
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Enzi	Merkley	Warren
Ernst	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Boxer	Sanders
Cruz	Vitter

The resolution (S. Res. 377) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the preamble is agreed to and the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 29, 2016, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from South Carolina and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy.

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

PRESIDENT'S SYRIAN POLICY AND RUSSIA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, briefly, the Senator from South Carolina and I discussed this announcement that Russia will begin withdrawing some military forces from Syria. It obviously signals Vladimir Putin's belief that he has bombed and killed enough of the opponents of the murderous Assad regime to assure Assad's survival.

For 4 years, this administration—this President—stood by as the Assad regime slaughtered nearly half a million people in Syria. Then, when Assad appeared weak, it watched as Putin intervened militarily and protected his brutal regime, in a move that the President described as Putin going into a ''quagmire.'' Well, apparently now Vladimir Putin is leaving that ''quagmire,'' and he is leaving a solid Bashar Assad in a position of strength. He is leaving thousands of dead moderate opposition that he has indiscriminately bombed, and the United States has their begging bowl out, asking and pleading that they somehow reach some agreement again in Geneva.

It is really embarrassing to watch this President and this Secretary of State as they continue to beg Vladimir Putin and his stooge Lavrov as they continue to place Russia in a position of influence they have not had since Anwar Sadat threw them out of Egypt in 1973.

They now have a major role to play in the Middle East. They have a military base. They have a naval base. They have upgraded airfields, and they have now solidified Bashar Assad's position in power.

Is there anybody who believes that Russia will agree to an arrangement that Bashar Assad or his stooge doesn't remain in power? Of course not. Aren't we tired of begging Vladimir Putin? Aren't we tired of watching the United States and the young men we trained and equipped being bombed by Vladimir Putin and killed and murdered? Don't we sometimes grow a little tired of that? It is no wonder that the United States of America has no standing and no influence in the region.

I don't often quote from the New York Times. I would ask my colleague if he has seen this:

> The Russian move may . . . be a reflection that Mr. Putin is now supremely confident in Mr. Assad's renewed stability and can afford to step back a bit and play statesman. Mr. Putin has achieved many of his main goals: bringing Russia back to center stage as a global power; preventing, on principle, regime change by outside powers, particularly Western ones; gaining a stronger foothold in Syria; picking off Russian jihadists on the Syrian battlefield; and strengthening Mr. Assad.

I wish to ask my friend from South Carolina: Isn't it obvious what is going to happen next; and that is, an increase in fighting in eastern Ukraine, more Ukrainians slaughtered while we refuse to give them defensive weapons, but just sufficient amount of violence and killing to prevent the United States of America or the Europeans from taking any significant action? Indeed, won't there now be pressure on the part of the special interests and the industrialists, particularly in Germany, to lift the sanctions on Vladimir Putin?

Mr. GRAHAM. I think you are right, I say to Senator MCCAIN.

Let's look at what our military leaders say rather than just look at what political people think. General Dunford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a hearing you chaired today was asked: What is Putin up to? What do you think he is trying to do here?

He said: Well, all I can tell you is the reason he came into Syria was to destroy ISIL and help fight ISIL. He has proven that he did not do that. He didn't try to do that.

So what General Dunford said was that basically Putin lied about why he came to Syria. If he is leaving Syria, the job against ISIL is far from done. But I think you nailed it, I say to Senator MCCAIN. The job of propping up Assad has been accomplished.

So what General Dunford said is that the reason that Putin came into Syria was not to destroy ISIL but to help his stooge, his puppet Assad. He believes he achieved such military superiority on behalf of Assad by bombing the people we trained that he can now leave.

So at the end of the day, he is not leaving. A naval base and an air force base will be in Syria. He said: We are withdrawing our forces, but, of course, we will have a naval presence and an air base.

Here is what I would say. If he needs to help Assad in the future, he will. Geneva has become a joke. There is no way you are going to negotiate a successful agreement when Assad is backed by Russia and Iran. The opposition has been abandoned by the United States and the free world. The Russian President has bombed the people the American President trained to take Assad out.

Mr. MCCAIN. What does the Senator from South Carolina think that does to our reputation when we arm, train, and equip young men, send them in to fight, ostensibly against ISIS or Bashar Assad—although, in this case ISIS—and we stand by and watch the Russians slaughter them from the air?

Mr. GRAHAM. I think it sends a signal that you can't rely upon us. You have two training programs—one by the CIA and one by the Department of Defense. The people trained outside the Department of Defense have been wholesale slaughtered by the Russian air attacks, and we have done nothing about it.

What does the region say? We have two enemies—Assad and ISIL. Our unwillingness to confront Assad has created a sense of abandonment in the entire region. Assad is a puppet of Iran. Iran is the mortal enemy of the Sunni Arab states.

So what has the President accomplished here? He said Assad must go. He trained people to help take him down. Russia came in and said Assad will not go. They have attacked the people we have trained, and we basically have abandoned the free Syrian opposition.

Now we are in Geneva talking about a peace agreement where the whole balance now is in Assad's favor. Does anybody really believe there is military jeopardy for Assad? And without his being in jeopardy, how do you get an agreement the Syrian people can live with? If Assad or his henchmen stay in power, how do you ever end the war in Syria?

So what we have accomplished is that we have given the Russians more influence in the Mideast than at any time since 1973. We have allowed Iran basically to dictate the terms in Damascus. We have jeopardized our relationship with our Arab partners. We have put in question Americans' reliability in terms of the people inside of Syria.

The Syrian policy of Barack Obama has done enormous damage. Without Russia being involved, none of this would have happened.

Mr. MCCAIN. The tragedy of all of this, I would say to my friend, is that when the United States of America was required to stand up because of the commitment of the President of the United States if the Bashar Assad regime had used chemical weapons and slaughtered—it is the gruesome pictures that you and I have seen—and then backed off, that was one of the seminal moments that American credibility disappeared. Here we are now still refusing to arm, train, and equip young men to fight against Bashar Assad and, in fact, making them pledge that they would only fight against ISIS. It is not ISIS that is barrel-bombing them. It is not ISIS that is dropping chemical weapons. It is not ISIS that has brought in thousands and tortured and beaten and killed. ISIS is our enemy. ISIS is evil. But to somehow excuse the behavior of Bashar Assad with the Russians' indiscriminate bombing is one of the most disgraceful chapters in American history in my view.

Mr. GRAHAM. To build on this, several years ago Russia took by force Crimea. This was not a fair election. It is pretty hard to have a fair election when there is a Russian tank parked in front of your yard. Good luck saying you don't want to go to Russia.

We have done nothing other than sanction Russia. Russia is still engaged in provocative behavior. We told him not to go into Crimea. We told him not to dismember Ukraine. He did. He is stronger, not weaker. We told him not to use military force to help Assad, who is the Butcher of Damascus. He did. We pleaded with him not to attack non-ISIL targets. He did. He destroyed the opposition to Assad. Russia is in league with Iran. So the biggest winner of Russia's involvement on the ground in Syria has been the Iranians, which is the most destabilizing group of people in the entire Mideast. The biggest loser has been the free Syrian opposition, the Syrian people themselves, and close behind is the American reputation in the region.

I want the administration to know that your handling of Syria has been a disaster on multiple levels. It has emboldened Iran. It has made Russia stronger. We are losing credibility in the region at a time when the region needs leadership. If you go to Geneva and you close out a peace deal that is a joke that allows Assad or somebody—Bob Assad, not Bashar Assad—to stay in power, if you allow a peace agreement where the Iranians control Damascus and Russia has a naval and air force base and more influence than we do, what have you accomplished?

I hope and pray the administration will stop this insane desire to bring Syria to a conclusion where the conclusion is going to make the whole region subject to blowing up. A successful conclusion is not having Iran being the dominant force inside of Syria, Russia having more influence, an air base and a naval base, and the Syrian people losing the ability to replace their tormenter, and ISIL having a magnet for future recruitment, which is an Iranian-backed Assad. That is not a successful outcome.

What do you think, I ask Senator MCCAIN?

Mr. MCCAIN. For the last 5 years, we have been writing a shameful chapter in American history. To sum all of this up, leading from behind doesn't work. If America leads from behind, somebody else is going to be in front. If the United States leaves conflicts and creates vacuums, then bad things happen.

Look at a map of the Middle East in January of 2009, when this President came to the Presidency of the United States, and look at that map now—the way ISIS has metastasized, the way hundreds of thousands have been murdered and millions are on the march as refugees. We still have apologists for this leading from behind, a policy which is described as ''Don't do stupid stuff.'' This is the result of leadership that has left the scene in a way that we have not seen since the 1930s, in the days of Neville Chamberlain and ''peace in our time.''

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, last week the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC—the hard-line military force that answers only to Iran's Supreme Leader and is committed to the preservation of Iran's revolutionary regime—launched a number of ballistic missiles, in clear violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231. These missile launches are profoundly disturbing and suggest a regime that is content on continuing to destabilize the region and threaten our vital allies and its neighbors. They don't technically violate the terms of last summer's nuclear agreement, but they do serve as a vital reminder that Iran remains a revolutionary regime that does not respect world opinion and does not share our values or interests.

America and our allies must seek every opportunity to push back on Iran's aggressive behavior—especially behavior such as this that is outside the parameters of the nuclear deal—by enforcing existing sanctions on Iran's illegal ballistic missile tests, its ongoing human rights abuses, and its support for terrorism across the Middle East and the world.

Another critical way the international community can demonstrate we are serious about holding Iran accountable is by aggressively enforcing the terms of the nuclear deal. Today I will discuss a key element of enforcing that deal: fully funding the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, the world's nuclear watchdog, which is responsible for monitoring Iran's compliance with the deal. The case for providing robust, sustainable funding for the IAEA is further strengthened by a second topic I will discuss, which is Iran's continued human rights abuses.

Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal so far does not mean that its government intends to embrace the international community or heed the call of the Iranian people for greater democracy. In fact, I believe the actions of the IRGC and Iran's hard-line conservative leaders indicate that the Iranian regime intends to continue to repress dissent, block democratic reforms, incite anti-Semitism, and violate basic human rights.

Mr. President, in a speech to the United Nations in December of 1953, President Eisenhower proclaimed American support for a new international organization tasked with putting nuclear technology ''into the hands of those who will know how to strip its military casing and adapt it to the arts of peace.''

Since its founding in 1957, the IAEA has undertaken a broad array of responsibilities—from promoting international nonproliferation efforts to supporting peaceful nuclear power—but none more vital than maintaining its safeguards program, which provides

credible assurances that countries are honoring their international obligations to use nuclear technology and material only for peaceful purposes.

The IAEA could not do its job without the ongoing full support of the United States. The United States develops the inspections technology on which the IAEA depends. We train and support the IAEA inspectors, scientists, and staff, particularly through our system of National Laboratories. Since 1980, every single IAEA inspector has been trained at least once at the Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico. At any given time, roughly 20 percent of all the inspectors who work for the IAEA are undergoing training or retraining at the vital National Labs of the United States.

The commitment made by American scientists and taxpayers to the IAEA is even more important now in light of the agreement reached by world powers last summer to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. This agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action, or JCPOA, gives the IAEA unprecedented access to monitor Iran's nuclear efforts through highly intrusive physical inspections and 24–7 remote monitoring technology. Unlike previous nuclear agreements, the JCPOA requires Iran to allow the IAEA to monitor Iran's entire nuclear fuel cycle, which includes all the steps required to go from mining and milling raw uranium to producing centrifuges that enrich uranium, to the actual enrichment sites.

The IAEA's regular inspections and continuous monitoring and oversight mean that the international community will know if Iran tries to cheat on the terms of the JCPOA before it can dash to a nuclear weapon or build a bomb in secret. But access alone is not enough. The IAEA must have the resources to actually inspect, monitor, and verify Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal by confirming that Iran's nuclear declarations are accurate and comprehensive, by monitoring their declared sites to ensure Iran's behavior actually complies with the terms of the JCPOA, and by tracking all nuclear-related material leaving every facility to make sure Iran doesn't divert and pursue illicit nuclear activities elsewhere in their country.

Given Iran's long record of cheating and of pursuing nuclear weapons illicitly over the decades past, investing resources in ensuring that the IAEA can take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity is a wise investment not just for the American people but for the world. To fulfill these responsibilities in addition to its regular and ongoing mission of ensuring nonproliferation in every other country in the world, the IAEA must have the resources to turn access into oversight.

Back in January, I traveled with seven other Senators to the IAEA's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, and there we heard directly from Director General Yukiya Amano about the challenges the agency faces in fulfilling its new responsibilities under the JCPOA. At the top of that list of challenges is securing a reliable, long-term source of funding. A recent report by our own nonpartisan Government Accountability Office here in the United States echos those very same concerns, stating that ''the IAEA faces potential budgetary and human resource management challenges stemming from the JCPOA-related workload.''

Effectively enforcing the terms of the JCPOA will require more than just additional inspectors, while inspectors are vital; the IAEA will also be required to train a new generation of nuclear scientists and to continue to develop more and more innovative nuclear detection and monitoring technologies as well—an undertaking as complex as it is important. That is why I urge Congress to increase America's voluntary contribution to the IAEA to a level at least $10.6 million above the President's fiscal year 2017 request and commit to a sustained and long-term investment so that we can be confident that the IAEA has the resources to recruit, to train, and to place the very best inspectors the world can produce. The increase of $10.6 million that I am urging will provide reliable funding for the IAEA—the funding they need to monitor the Iran nuclear program while continuing to work for safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear technology throughout the rest of the world.

An additional $10 million would not crowd out contributions from other states. American representatives at the U.N. offices in Vienna could direct extra funding to specific projects or withhold it from others, allowing us to address unanticipated needs by the IAEA without discouraging other donors from fulfilling their obligations as they should.

We also need to continue to insist on full transparency so that reports received by the IAEA, things they might learn, are shared with the United States—with our intelligence community, with our lawmakers, with our executive branch—and to ensure, frankly, that we know if there are additional classified or secret agreements, side agreements between the IAEA and Iran.

Look, whether my colleagues supported the JCPOA or opposed it, surely we can agree that it is in America's interest to see the IAEA succeed in monitoring Iran's behavior and attracting the best and brightest young scientists from around the world for years to come. As Brent Scowcroft—who served ably as National Security Advisor to both President Gerald Ford and later President George H.W. Bush—wrote in an August 21 Washington Post op-ed, Congress ''should ensure that the International Atomic Energy Agency and other relevant bodies and U.S. intelligence agencies have all the resources necessary to facilitate inspection and monitor compliance'' with the nuclear deal with Iran.

To fully and sustainably fund the IAEA is to make a sound investment in a highly technical organization that directly contributes to international peace and our security. But why exactly is it so important that we fund the IAEA, enforce the JCPOA, and push back on Iran at every opportunity? A brief review of Iran's dismal human rights record might reenforce why it is crystal clear that this is a priority for our Nation and must remain so.

Iran's Government continues to preach anti-Semitism, to incite hatred against Israel, and to call for the destruction of the Jewish State of Israel, and it uses state-run media to blame the Jewish people for the instability and violence that currently dominates the Middle East. Just last week, one of the ballistic missiles Iran illegally launched supposedly had a message printed on the side in Hebrew saying, ''Israel must be wiped off the earth.''

In January, as the international community marked Holocaust Remembrance Day, Iran's Supreme Leader published a video on his official Web site in which the narrator condemns the world for supporting Israel and questions the legitimacy and magnitude of the Holocaust. These statements should deeply concern and outrage the world community, but they are simply another reflection of the Iranian regime's longstanding disregard for international values and human rights.

Earlier this month, the United Nations issued a report showing that the number of people executed by the Iranian Government skyrocketed to nearly 1,000 last year—twice as many as in 2010 and 10 times as many as in 2005. Most of these executions were allegedly for drug-related offenses. According to some reports, last year one village in Iran saw every single adult male—every single one in the entire village—executed for so-called drug crimes.

These alarming statistics follow a January report from Amnesty International that documented Iran's execution of over 70 juveniles in the decade from 2005 to 2015, with another 160 young juvenile offenders still on death row. No country in the world uses capital punishment for minors more than Iran. And despite Iran's ratification of an international treaty banning capital punishment for minors, Iranian law still allows the death penalty for girls as young as 9 and boys as young as 15.

In addition, Iran's unelected Guardian Council suppressed democracy in its most recent elections, preventing the vast majority of either female or reform-minded candidates from even appearing on ballots.

Iran has illegally and inappropriately detained American citizens, including retired FBI agent Robert Levinson and Iranian American energy executive Siamak Namazi—both of whom we believe remain detained in Iran. The Committee to Protect Journalists estimates that at least 19 reporters are

today still being held unjustly by the Iranian Government.

These are just a few examples among countless many of Iran's unwillingness to respect even the most basic norms of international human rights. Effectively pushing back on these egregious human rights abuses and enforcing the JCPOA demands international collaboration, but increasing our voluntary contribution to the IAEA makes a direct impact without requiring approval or action by any other country.

There are two other additional unilateral steps this Congress can take today.

First, we could increase Federal investment in our National Laboratories, which train the IAEA inspectors I spoke about, develop technologies that nuclear inspectors depend on, and undertake research that improves the lives of people around the world.

Second, and more promptly, the Senate could and should confirm Laura Holgate, a nonproliferation expert who was nominated more than 5 months ago to serve as America's Ambassador to the U.N. agencies of Vienna, which includes the IAEA. After months of delays for purely political reasons, her nomination was finally approved by the Foreign Relations Committee on January 28. The full Senate should not delay any further to ensure that our government is represented at the very organization the world relies upon to prevent Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon.

Later this month, the President will convene heads of state from around the world for a fourth Nuclear Security Summit, a conference dedicated to preventing nuclear terrorism and securing stockpiles of nuclear material from around the world. The IAEA is at the very forefront of this vital mission, and we need to work together to make sure it has the tools it needs to take on these serious tasks.

These goals demand involvement from every actor on the international stage, but by increasing America's voluntary contribution to the IAEA by an additional $10 million, Congress can send a strong signal that we intend to hold Iran to the terms of the JCPOA, to support the international cause of nonproliferation, and to provide a vital incentive for our international partners to dedicate more of their resources to this important agency.

Iran remains today a revolutionary regime fundamentally opposed to America's values and interests. Iran's ballistic missile tests just last week serve as another reminder that the Iranian Government is neither America's friend nor ally. We must be relentless in our efforts to push back on these missile tests, on Iran's destabilizing support for terrorism, and on its human rights abuses. We must continue to enforce the existing sanctions in American law and be willing to consider imposing new ones when Iran's behavior warrants it.

Let me be clear about one thing in closing. The Persian culture, the culture of the people of Iran, is one of great richness and complexity. I have had the blessing of knowing many Persian Americans in my life and have known them to be people of great intellect and inventiveness and capability and to be the products of an ancient and respectable culture. We in the United States do not wish the people of Iran ill, but the Iranian regime and those who support it deserve international condemnation for a decades-long pattern of human rights abuses, support for terrorism, and other bad behavior. But we can and should make a distinction between the Iranian regime and the Persian people.

The people of Iran—those who turn out at polls to vote even in elections that are neither free nor fair and who have repeatedly demonstrated in the streets for democracy and engagement, risking life and limb to do so in the decade past—must know that the American people support the struggle of those who hope for real democracy someday in Iran and those who hope for an Iranian regime that someday respects international values and human rights.

So today, just a few days before Monday's Iranian New Year of Nowruz, we wish the people of Iran a happy, healthy, and peaceful new year, while continuing to stand firm against the values and actions of the Iranian regime.

Thank you.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PUERTO RICO

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I am trying to assess the financial and economic challenges facing Puerto Rico, an issue I have been speaking about since last summer. In fact, it was July of last year when I first wrote to Treasury Secretary Lew, expressing my concern about the fiscal situation in Puerto Rico and inquiring about the Obama administration's plans to address this predicament. While I did eventually get a response from the Treasury Secretary, numerous questions that I asked in that initial letter to this day remain unanswered.

Over the ensuing months, I made other inquiries to Health and Human Services Secretary Burwell because, for some time now, we have been told that funding—or to be more specific, a decline in funding—for Federal health care programs was a factor contributing to Puerto Rico's debt crisis. So as the chairman of the Senate committee of jurisdiction over most of those programs, I wanted to know what HHS thought needed to be done.

Not surprisingly, I am still waiting for a substantive response to those inquiries.

Instead of detailed proposals, I was initially told simply that health funding issues surrounding Puerto Rico are difficult and that the administration expected Congress to address these issues in a fiscally responsive way—and to do it quickly.

Eventually, last month, with the release of the President's budget proposal, we learned that the administration wants to provide $30 billion—that is with a ''b''—in additional Medicaid funds for Puerto Rico. When asked how the administration thought we should pay for this, Secretary Burwell suggested we simply adopt the President's budget. However, given that there are more surviving members of The Beatles than there are Senators willing to vote in favor of an Obama budget, I don't know if anyone can take that suggestion very seriously.

That is the sum total of the input we have gotten from the administration on dealing with Puerto Rico's health funding issues—a proposal for dramatically increased spending with no credible way to pay for it and a demand that we provide that funding as quickly as possible. That is all they are willing to say publicly on this matter, even though administration officials have labeled this a humanitarian crisis.

By the way, buried in all of the details is the fact that this proposal for increased Medicaid funds is meant to shore up an inequity created by the so-called Affordable Care Act. Apparently, the Democrats' partisan health law provided billions in additional Medicaid funding for Puerto Rico, but also included a cliff—or a point in time when that funding would drop off quickly and dramatically—and that cliff is fast approaching.

Let's be clear: The Democrats constructed that cliff, presumably knowing what they were doing at that time. The Democrats in Congress voted for it, and the Democrat in the White House signed it into law. No Republican in Congress supported that cliff.

Yet, now we are told that we must act quickly to eliminate the cliff that they have created and add even more funds without a realistic way to pay for them. And, on top of that, Democrats in Congress have labeled any hesitation on the part of Republicans to fix a problem they created and to fix it in the exact way they prescribe as callous indifference toward the plight of the American citizens living in Puerto Rico.

I have been as clear as I can be on this issue. I have said repeatedly that I want to work with my colleagues to find a solution, but we need to do so in a manner that is fiscally responsible with an eye toward righting the irresponsible course taken by the Government of Puerto Rico.

Toward that end, I, along with a number of my colleagues, have repeatedly requested audited financial statements from the Government of Puerto Rico. One would think that is a reasonable request. These requests date back to last September with the first hearing I held on these issues in the Finance Committee. That was six months ago, yet we still don't have that information from fiscal year 2014, let alone 2015.

In addition, last month I wrote a 9-page letter to the Governor of Puerto Rico, asking a number of questions about Puerto Rico's finances, and I asked that they be answered by the first of this month. I have received no answers to these questions.

In the face of a humanitarian crisis, it seems to be too much to ask of the Government of Puerto Rico that they provide some verifiable financial information so that Congress can make an informed decision about how to handle this very difficult situation. And, apparently, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle are ready and willing to spend tens of billions of dollars in taxpayer funds without all the relevant information and to publicly attack anyone who questions that strategy.

So far, my friends on the Democratic side, including Members of Congress and the administration, have been generally unwilling to provide even the most basic information about how much their various proposals for Puerto Rico would cost the Federal Government or whether they intend to offset those undisclosed costs. And none of them show an interest in even discussing ways to help Puerto Rico return to a more sustainable fiscal and economic course. Yet they repeatedly have the audacity to accuse Republicans of indifference to the struggles faced by the residents of Puerto Rico. Sometimes I feel as though I am all alone, trying to solve this problem without any help from the other side, and there are even difficult times on our side.

The absurdity of this debate, if that is what we want to call it, is compounded by the fact that the only practical and fiscally responsible legislation introduced in Congress to address these issues has come from Republicans.

As most of my colleagues should know, even with the severely incomplete information we have, Senators GRASSLEY and MURKOWSKI, who chair the Judiciary and Natural Resources Committees, and I have introduced a bill that would provide some tax relief and fully offset funds to Puerto Rico for transition assistance as well as an oversight authority to help ensure that Puerto Rico establishes credible budgets and future fiscal plans. Our bill provides the platform needed for sustained economic growth and a return of access to credit markets.

However, neither the administration nor any of my friends on the other side of the aisle have shown much interest in discussing the substance of our bill. One would think they would want me to bring it up, and if they wanted to amend it, they could amend it. We have to do this. We can't just play around with this. Instead, we have seen the aforementioned proposals to send tens of billions of dollars in health funds to Puerto Rico, no questions asked, and a proposed bankruptcy scheme that my colleagues have misleadingly claimed would simply give Puerto Rico access to chapter 9 debt relief—the same access we give to every municipality in the country.

Of course, as I have made clear on a number of occasions, the so-called chapter 9 access they are seeking for Puerto Rico doesn't really resemble the actual chapter 9 of the current Bankruptcy Code. In reality, their proposal would create, for lack of a better word, a super chapter 9 specifically for Puerto Rico and grant the territory unprecedented authority to restructure its debt. And that is the territory not having a special supervisory board to make sure they do restructure its debt.

Before I say more about the super chapter 9 proposal, I just want to make clear that I and others have been working for quite some time now to find an agreeable solution to these problems. We have done so even while the Government of Puerto Rico refuses to provide anything resembling a complete picture of its finances, which, it seems to this Senator, ought to be the first thing that is done.

I have been working with colleagues in both the House and the Senate to explore legislative options. And while I don't want to speak for anyone else at the moment, I will say we have been willing to consider various debt restructuring mechanisms for Puerto Rico, balancing the need for fairness and equal treatment for similarly situated parties.

However, as we consider various approaches, I want to make three things perfectly clear.

First, the Government of Puerto Rico must negotiate in good faith with its creditors, and creditors must do the same with Puerto Rico. It would be a mistake for officials in Puerto Rico to hold out or drag their feet on good-faith bargaining efforts in an anticipation of congressional action.

Second, contrary to claims made by some of my colleagues, none of us have any interest in helping out the ''vultures'' or ''speculators'' looking to profit out of the misery created in Puerto Rico. If anyone uncovers illegal actions taken by investors in Puerto Rico, then by all means they should be prosecuted. If anyone can identify any investors whose actions are clearly predatory and unethical, we should all rain shame upon them. And, if former Federal Government officials who travel through the revolving door of the administration are found to be unduly enriching themselves off of Puerto Rico's plight, their actions should be brought to light. I have no qualms with any of that because my goal and the goal of my Republican colleagues is to provide sensible and reasonable solutions to help the people living in Puerto Rico.

However, this does bring me to my third point. Innocent and ethical investors from Utah, New York, New Jersey, and every other State in the Union, as well as good-faith investors in Puerto Rico, should not be casually labeled as ''vultures'' or ''speculators'' and should be treated as any other similarly situated investor. A retiree or near-retiree in Sandy, UT, who invested part of her retirement savings in Puerto Rican debt instruments, which carry Federal tax preferences, is no less deserving of repayment than any other similarly situated claimant. It is easy to make exaggerated claims that the bondholders are all rich people; they are not. Thousands and thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, are average people who have trusted the bonds.

Teresa and Julio Garcia, who are residents of Puerto Rico, along with other middle-class Puerto Ricans who own a significant share of Puerto Rico's debt, are certainly not vultures and don't deserve unequal treatment. Residents of Puerto Rico who are retired or near retirement and who are numbered among Puerto Rico's bondholders, but don't happen to receive public pensions, do not deserve to see their savings depleted in order to favor certain public pension benefits in Puerto Rico. To some, that last example may seem oddly specific; however, if you look at the super chapter 9 proposals put forward by Democrats, the intent to favor public pensions over private bondholders—even those whose retirement savings are invested in those bonds—is explicit. What is wrong with worrying about private bondholders who are like Julio and his wife?

Regarding those public pensions, it is true that Puerto Rico tried to reform the retirement systems for its government employees and did end up making some lasting changes from one of its programs. Nonetheless, the territory has not followed through on some aspects of the reforms it did make, and even in the face of dire fiscal conditions, some of Puerto Rico's major public pension systems remain unchanged. And for my friends on the other side, it appears that any effort to encourage Puerto Rico to substantially improve its public pension systems as the island restructures some of its debt would be out of the question. That just can't be.

Madam President, as we see increasingly large municipal bankruptcies and States with mounting fiscal pressures, severely underfunded public pensions almost always seem to be lurking in the background. Until now, Detroit was probably the biggest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history, with a debt of around $18 billion. Now Puerto Rico is coming to Congress for help to deal with $73 billion of debt and $43 billion of shockingly unfunded public pension obligations, bringing the total to more than $115 billion.

It would be beyond irresponsible to offer aid to Puerto Rico without taking at least some action to improve public pension reporting and transparency. Given the growing crisis of underfunded public pensions around the country, which I have been warning my colleagues about for years now, taking no action will ensure that States and municipalities that have been responsible with their pensions and their fiscal planning will see their costs go up as a result of the bad and imprudent actors. On this point, officials of the Securities and Exchange Commission and municipal market analysts overwhelmingly agree: Increased transparency on public pension liabilities is clearly necessary.

Earlier this week, while our bicameral work to produce passable legislation to address the problems in Puerto Rico has progressed, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle decided to chime in once again with another round of implausible policy proposals and fresh political attacks. The latest group of bills introduced by Democrats includes a number of repackaged ideas from last year, including unscored and unsound proposals to allocate funds and direct aid as well as a renewed effort to grant unprecedented debt resolution authority for Puerto Rico. The only real difference between the ideas we have seen already and those that were included in the bills this week is that Democrats are apparently now willing to be upfront about the fact that the debt resolution authority they are seeking isn't just the same chapter 9 everyone else has, but an entirely new animal altogether.

Last year, my friends on the other side had a bill to provide Puerto Rico with an ability to apply chapter 9 debt resolution authority on a retroactive basis. The reasoning and rhetoric behind the bill was that municipalities in every State have access, and so should Puerto Rico—never mind the retroactivity.

Now, however, the goalposts are being moved. My friends have now introduced their super chapter 9 bankruptcy scheme devised by administration officials. Of course, this new super chapter 9 is not something available to other municipalities or States. It is, in fact, without precedent. It includes virtually all government debt in Puerto Rico and blows right through a payout protection afforded to general obligation debt that is in Puerto Rico's Constitution. This not only steps directly on Puerto Rico's autonomy, but it also sends dangerous signals by telling municipal bond markets to no longer regard general obligation debt issued by States as being safe, as previously expected. That, of course, means higher costs to States for funding things like infrastructure projects, and it is something that many State Governors have said they worry about and do not support. Needless to say, this freshly constructed bankruptcy scheme is extremely risky. Though my friends are now being transparent about the relief they want, it doesn't make their proposals any more palatable.

The bills introduced this week include proposals beyond the super chapter 9 proposal. While these ideas are not at all new, it is worth taking a few minutes to go through them individually.

First, we have provisions, as poorly constructed this year as they were last year, calling for additional Medicare and Medicaid funds for Puerto Rico.

Second, we have proposals to extend parts of the U.S. personal income tax system that provide direct aid to U.S. taxpayers to people in Puerto Rico, excluding any part that requires positive tax payment. Residents of Puerto Rico do not file Federal income tax returns or pay any personal Federal income tax, yet my colleagues want the earned-income tax credit and child tax credits to be paid out to residents of Puerto Rico. Of course, the Joint Committee on Taxation—the nonpartisan scorekeeper and adviser when it comes to tax policy—has already indicated that such a scheme would be rife with administrative difficulties and fraud. It is, at the very least, difficult and counterintuitive to expect the IRS to properly operate an income tax program for people that are not subject to the income system to start with. However, that doesn't seem to faze my friends on the other side.

Third, we have a control board to oversee the restructuring of Puerto Rico's debt that under the bill would be populated by Puerto Rican political appointees. That is one of the problems—the political appointees in Puerto Rico. Why don't they start thinking about all the taxpayers in America? Clearly, the structure of this proposed control board would subject any financial decisionmaking in Puerto Rico to the same political wrangling that got the territory into this mess in the first place. Yet the obviousness of these problems seems to have escaped my colleagues.

As with last year, we do not know the precise cost of the health funding and refundable tax credit proposals because my friends have not been interested in getting them scored or in disclosing how much they cost. Essentially, my colleagues want to have a debate about their proposals without any real discussion of what they will cost the American taxpayers.

I have been here only about 39 years—actually, 40—but I think that is long enough to know that anyone who puts forward legislation designed specifically to throw taxpayer funds at a problem without disclosing how much they actually want to spend isn't all that interested in passing the legislation. Instead, what people tend to want in those situations is to send a political message that they care about a problem while the other side does not.

Perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps my friends on the other side do want to see their proposals become law. If that is the case, they would be glad to know that I have worked with JCT and the Congressional Budget Office to get a ballpark figure on the cost of their proposals. All told, the provisions put forward in the bill Senator MENENDEZ and some of his colleagues introduced this week would cost Federal taxpayers more than $45 billion, and probably closer to $50 billion, at least from what we can tell from the legislative language, which is not the clearest I have ever seen.

I can only assume that the administration does not support these bills, given that, in what little communication we have had with them on these issues, they have consistently admonished us to address the Puerto Rico problem in a ''fiscally responsible way.'' I have a hard time imagining any argument that the approaches proffered by my friends this week would satisfy even the loosest definition of fiscal responsibility, at least not until they come up with a semireasonable way to offset the $50 billion cost.

Once again, given all these ominous realities, I have to assume that these bills are more about politics than solutions. As I said, people who are serious about solving a problem typically don't propose tens of billions of dollars in spending without actually disclosing the costs and talking about offsets. No, people who put out big ideas without a plausible path to get them enacted are usually more interested in talking about a problem than they are in solving it and more interested in political posturing than actually helping people.

Let me say that again. People who put out big ideas without a plausible path to get them enacted are usually more interested in talking about a problem than they are in solving it and more interested in political posturing than in actually helping people.

This Senator is not interested in the politics surrounding the crisis in Puerto Rico nor in what the polls say on this issue. I have been working for some time now to craft a legislative solution that can actually pass because I am more interested in enhancing the lives and opportunities of our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico than I am on the political impact this debate could have between now and November. Since last summer, well before almost anyone in Congress really began thinking about the challenges facing Puerto Rico and long before we sought any outlandish legislative proposal from our friends on the other side, I have been calling on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work with me to find serious and credible solutions to help the people, not the politicians, in Puerto Rico.

I repeat that call today. If there is anyone who wants to put people far out in front of politics and frankly address these problems instead of merely talking about them, my door remains open—wide open—and I hope some will walk through to help us get this done.

I want to get this done. I believe the people of Puerto Rico deserve having it done, but it has to be done right, and it can't be done by gouging everybody else in America for profligacy and improper conduct in Puerto Rico.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FLINT, MICHIGAN, WATER CRISIS

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I wish to talk about an issue my colleague Senator DEBBIE STABENOW of Michigan and I have been working on for 2 months. It is an issue that is sad and has been absolutely catastrophic for people who live in our State, in the city of Flint.

In fact, today we had hundreds of folks from Flint come to Washington, DC, to attend a House hearing that was held to talk about what had happened in Flint and to get answers from the EPA Administrator, as well as the Governor of Michigan. The folks came to make sure their voices were heard in this tragedy, to make sure people would see them as human beings who are being afflicted by this horrible tragedy. They are in a situation where they can't turn on their tapwater and have clean water, water free from lead.

I think many folks are aware of what happened. We had a situation where an unelected emergency manager was appointed by the Governor to save dollars, to save money, and in the process contaminated a water system.

The decision was made to move away from clean Detroit water from the Detroit water system—water that comes from Lake Huron in the Great Lakes—and move on a temporary basis until a new system could be put up and running that drew water from the Flint River. The Flint River was known to be water that was very corrosive. In fact, General Motors had an engine plant along the Flint River and used Flint River water in their manufacturing process but found that the water was so corrosive that it was damaging engine blocks. So they stopped using this water because of the damage it was doing to the manufacturing process, but, unfortunately, the unelected emergency manager and the State government decided to use that water for the people of Flint as a source of drinking water, and they did not put in the proper corrosion control chemicals that may have mitigated this disaster. As a result, this highly corrosive water was going through the pipes, damaging the pipes, and released very large amounts of lead that has led to the contamination of an entire water system.

This should have never happened. This is a disaster that was clearly manmade. It was a result of negligence on the part of those folks who were given the trust to run the system properly. Now we are left with an absolute catastrophe in the city.

Although every resident is hurt, there is no question that it is primarily the children of Flint who have been impacted as a result. That is what is so insidious about lead poisoning. Even though it will eventually be flushed out of your body, if you are ingesting this when you are young while your brain is still developing, it can have permanent brain damage. That damage can be mitigated, but it is going to require the use of wraparound education services. It is going to make sure those children have proper nutrition and make sure they have health coverage, but certainly this is every resident in Flint, not just children but also the elderly and everybody who is a resident of that city.

What has been so frustrating about this effort is that certainly we know this is the State's responsibility. The State broke it. They need to fix it. The State needs to put substantial resources in place. The Governor was here today talking about some of those efforts. He needs to do a whole lot more. Everybody agrees the State has to do a whole lot more, and taking responsibility means making sure the resources are there to provide the services that are going to be necessary—not just now but for what will likely be many decades in the future.

What I am concerned about, what the residents of the city of Flint are concerned about, is that although right now this issue has received national attention and the eyes of the country are focused on Flint, they know that sooner or later the TV cameras will go, that the lights will not be shining on Flint, and people may forget what happened in Flint. However, the people of Flint will be left dealing with this problem for decades to come. We cannot let that happen. These people cannot be forgotten. Certainly Senator STABENOW and I have been working aggressively to hopefully force the Governor to create a future fund that will provide resources for years to come for the people who have been impacted by this horrible crisis.

Even though this is a State responsibility and the State needs to step up and do more, there is also a role for the Federal Government. Wherever there has been a disaster anywhere in the country, the Federal Government has stepped up and helped those folks who have been the victims of disaster. Some argue this is a manmade disaster, the Federal Government shouldn't be involved in it, and we only deal with natural disasters, but I would just say ask the people of Flint: Does it matter who actually caused this problem? Can we be there to help folks? They don't care. They don't really care where it came from. They just know their children have been poisoned. They have ingested lead. They know they can't use the water. Even now, although they have filters, a lot of them can't use the water. They are living on bottled water.

Today I had a woman named Gladys who came up to me. She traveled to Washington to tell her story. She brought a bag with hair in it. She is losing her hair as a result of using some of this water. She can't use her home. She was in tears as she talked about the lost value of her home, her entire life's savings in this house. Now she doesn't know what that house is worth because she is not sure whether the water is safe to drink.

Folks in Flint don't care who caused this problem, they just need help. In the past, the Federal Government and this body, the Senate, have always stepped up to help those in need. That is the right thing to do. That is what the American people expect us to do. The American people look to make sure that they are always in a position to help those in need. It is our values. It is who we are as a country. It is who we are as a people. Yet it has been extremely difficult to get that help out of this body.

I am pleased to say that in the last 2 months we have made some progress. Senator MURKOWSKI of Alaska and Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma have been great in working with Senator STABENOW and me. We have been able to build a list of cosponsors who are also helping us in this effort: Senator BURR, Senator CAPITO, Senator KIRK, and Senator PORTMAN. A number of Senators have come together on both sides of the aisle to say: Here is a solution we can get behind.

The proposal Senator STABENOW and I have worked on will provide money through the Safe Drinking Water Fund. It will provide grants for any community that has an emergency. Any community, not just Flint, that finds itself in an emergency of this kind could reaccess these resources. Although Flint is the only community right now that would qualify, we believe there are other communities that will likely qualify in the future. In fact, there may be some in a relatively short period of time.

It also creates a loan fund of potentially up to $700 million—perhaps even more—that every single community can access. This is an issue every community in our country may potentially face. With aging infrastructure, we know there are incredible infrastructure needs that have to be met, and the legislation we have worked on helps every community of every single State deal with this very important issue.

It also addresses some of the health issues I mentioned earlier in my talk—issues that help the children and the residents who have been poisoned by lead—by plussing up public health programs for lead abatement and helping the CDC do its great work to help folks.

This is a commonsense proposal that addresses some of the pressing needs in the city of Flint, while also addressing some of the pressing needs we face as a country to make sure we are investing in water infrastructure so that a citizen, no matter where they live or who they are, can turn on their tap and have clean drinking water come out of it.

We have also worked hard to address some of the concerns we heard from the other side of the aisle, in addition to the fact that this is open to all communities, not just Flint. We also heard that folks wanted it paid for, and certainly Senator STABENOW and I believe that as well. So we are fiscally responsible. We found a pay-for in a program that deals with vehicle technology but one we thought was important to use to help the people of Flint and help water infrastructure projects across the country.

The important thing about this, in addition to dealing with the problem and in addition to its being completely paid for, is that it also reduces the deficit. It will actually generate more money than is necessary to pay for this bill and will reduce the deficit.

In the past, when we have had a national disaster such as the one we have seen in Flint, normally we see emergency funds being used, as we have done with bridge collapses and oil refinery fires and water main breaks. Even though that is probably the best source to fund this—if you treat the people of Flint like we treat other folks all around the country, we would use emergency funds—we went the extra distance to take a fund and make sure it would completely pay for this program, while at the same time reducing the deficit.

We have done backflips and have worked with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle and have built support, and I believe if this bill went to the floor, it would pass. I think it would pass by a good margin. We believe we have very strong support for it. Yet here we are today, about ready to break for 2 weeks, and we are going to break without addressing this issue that has such strong bipartisan support. This has been a work in progress for over 2 months. It is ready to be voted on, yet we are going to leave without that vote.

We are going to leave because there is basically one Senator out there who doesn't want to see it move forward—one Senator who doesn't really like this proposal. I am not going to speak for that individual, but they have their issues and they continually want more and more. The folks who are suffering right now are the people of Flint. I wish that one Senator who has the hold would have met with the people I met with this morning and that Senator STABENOW and some of our other colleagues met with this morning. I wish that Senator would have heard their stories, heard their anguish, and saw the tears in their eyes as they talked about what they are dealing with. Yet this Senator continues to have a hold.

Now, I understand the Senator may have a problem with a particular piece of legislation. That happens. We are not going to agree on everything. I would just ask that we allow this legislation to come to the floor and the one Senator who has the hold—if he doesn't like the legislation, that is fine—can vote no if he likes. That is certainly his prerogative as an elected Member of this body—to vote no. But please let the other 99 Senators in this body have a say. That is all we are asking for. Put it on the floor and let this body make the final decision as to whether or not this is an appropriate response to an absolutely catastrophic disaster that has hit a community in this country of ours. I don't think that is asking a lot.

Now, I am a new Member here. I am new, but I cannot imagine that folks here in the Senate will not allow legislation that is so important for people who have been impacted in such an extreme way to come to the Senate Floor. What would our Founding Fathers think if they were to look upon the Senate? They were concerned about factions and political parties and a body that would be paralyzed to really work on the tough issues that our country was going to face. I can't imagine looking in the eyes of our Founders and saying: The Senate—the deliberative body, the body that is supposed to take up the really tough issues facing us as a country—refuses to act and refuses to even put it on the floor so it can be debated and voted upon.

So I will close and pass this on to my colleague, the senior Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW, and let her continue. I am certainly disappointed, and I would ask all of my colleagues to please join with us to work to get this to the floor so we can have a vote. The people of Flint cannot wait any longer. The rest of the country is looking at the Senate and they are shaking their heads wondering why the Senate is incapable of putting this issue on the floor and having a simple up-or-down vote.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, first I want to thank my partner and colleague, Senator PETERS, for his wonderful friendship and commitment to the people of Flint. We both share this. This has really become a second full-time job for us, given what has happened in Flint, in reaching out on behalf of the 9,000 children who are under the age of 6 who have been exposed and the homes that have exposure of lead that is higher than a toxic waste dump.

As a mom and now as a grandmother, I can't imagine what that must feel like for the moms and dads and the grandpas and grandmas and the fear and horror they feel, as well as for the adults and the seniors who are exposed and everyone who is paying a price. Certainly, the business community is concerned now about people coming and doing business and going to restaurants in the city of Flint, despite the fact that there is wonderful work going on downtown in rebuilding this community. There are wonderful, exciting things happening, and now they have really been knocked off their feet because of what has happened.

Across the way in the other Chamber today, there are hearings going on. There is a lot of effort back and forth in talking about who is to blame for what happened. We certainly understand what happened, coming from Michigan, but I have to tell you that we are laser-focused on the folks who had nothing to do with what happened—nothing to do with what happened. These are the people of Flint, who assumed, like each one of us does, that when you get up in the morning and turn on the faucet, when you take a shower or you feed your children, clean water is going to come out of the pipes. We all assume that. That is pretty much a basic human right, certainly in America. It may not be in other countries, but it certainly is in America, where we assume that is the case.

In America, when a community is struck by this kind of catastrophe—a catastrophe they did not cause—we come together as Americans. That is what we do. We pitch in. We do what we can to help. That is what Senator PETERS and I have been hoping to accomplish on behalf of the people of Flint.

Since we have started debating these issues, we have found other communities as well that have challenges—none to the extent we are seeing in Flint, where 100,000 people and the entire city have been exposed to lead poisoning and the whole water system is in shambles. But there are other communities that have challenges, and we believe it is important to help them as well. So we have come up with something, as Senator PETERS said.

We have been working hard for the last 8 weeks to find a bipartisan plan—a compromise—that is not only fully paid for but out of something that I authored in the 2007 Energy bill, by the way. Because of the importance of this to the people of Flint, I said: OK, we will give something we care about here. We will restructure it. We will shorten the time of the program, and we will pay for it out of that.

Senator PETERS, when he was in the House, was the champion for this particular advanced manufacturing loan program. We are saying: OK, we are willing to have that end in order to be able to pay for what is happening in Flint. On top of a fully paid-for program out of a program that Republican colleagues don't like—so we are going to be ending something that folks would like to end—tens of millions of dollars in deficit reduction come along with this for the score. So it doesn't get any better than this.

We were told to find something that is a pay-for that is not going to infringe with what other people care about. We did that. We were told no earmarks. We did that. We were told no new programs built on current programs. We did that. And we added deficit reduction. Yet the children of Flint are still waiting. The children of Flint—for the last 8 weeks—and their families are still waiting.

As Senator PETERS said, we met some of these people this morning, and it just breaks your heart. People are looking at us and saying: OK, you have been working on this and you have this bipartisan group; isn't that great. But what is happening? The children of Flint are waiting.

So we are at a point where this has to stop. We need a vote. We need a vote. We have a bipartisan bill, and we need a vote. We are at a point where we need to have a vote and stop this ability of one person to just hold things up.

First, I want to thank our Republican colleagues as well as Democratic colleagues who have been working with us. First of all, our main Republican sponsor, the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator INHOFE, has been a true champion for supporting water infrastructure investments nationally. I am so grateful he came forward and offered the idea of not only being able to support Flint but to activate a financing program set up in the last water resources bill that would address communities across the country as well. That is terrific. If we can help other communities, along with what we need to do to support the families of Flint, that is great. So we thank him for his diligence. He has really stepped up, and we are so grateful.

I want to thank the chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the ranking member, Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator CANTWELL, who have been stellar. I can't count how many hours we have talked on the phone, we have had meetings, and we have talked on the floor, and the lengths to which both of them have been willing to go to support us in solving this problem. They have been wonderful—even as late as a couple of hours ago in talking to us to figure out how we could move forward both to address this water infrastructure bill to help Flint and other communities and also to move forward on the Energy bill. So we need to be doing both, and we are at a point where that needs to get done.

We have 10 cosponsors of the bill, and I want to thank Senator PORTMAN and Senator BROWN, Senator KIRK, Senator REED of Rhode Island, Senator BURR, Senator DURBIN, Senator BOXER, Senator MIKULSKI, Senator CAPITO, and Senator BALDWIN. People from both parties have come together to do something that will make things better for the families and the communities that we represent. There are a number of other Members and staff who have been working behind the scenes. We are so grateful for their kind words and encouragement and for the people who have offered their support for what we are doing.

I particularly want to thank our appropriations leaders, Senator COCHRAN and Senator MIKULSKI, for going the extra mile to figure out some strategy that would satisfy the Senator from Utah to get beyond this hold and to come together.

Unfortunately, despite strong bipartisan support and our best efforts, we find ourselves still in a spot, even though we have had conversations today—and I appreciate that, and folks say they still want to work together, but it seems like we go round and round and round and round. We need to stop and have a vote at this point in time. At one point, we thought we had agreement. As I said, we met again today. It would make sense in moving forward to offer the Senator the opportunity to have a second-degree amendment to our proposal. He has a different idea on structuring that. We are willing to make the case, let him make the case, and decide. That is what the Senate is about—have a vote, decide.

The children of Flint need our help. Somehow this procedural stuff—talking to folks about holds and cloture and all this—is not going to turn on the water in Flint. It is not going to help the children who have already been exposed and their families. We need the sense of urgency they have.

When we look around the country—and, believe me, our focus is on Flint. Even though there are certainly other communities in Michigan with water issues, others around the country, we are laser-focused on the place where the water has been destroyed and the people have been poisoned because of a whole range of what happened, and people have not been able to take a bath or cook with water out of a tap or to be able to care for their children or themselves for almost 2 years.

It is also true that when we talk to colleagues in putting together this bill, there are drinking water infrastructure needs around the country to be addressed. Utah will require $3.7 billion in drinking water infrastructure over the next 20 years to meet minimum human health and safety requirements. In Jackson, MS, last month—after random samples showed lead levels above Federal action levels—the mayor issued a warning to pregnant women and children 5 years of age and younger to stay away from tapwater. The mayor also said: This is not Flint because we are telling people about it and we are taking action, which, unfortunately, did not happen to protect the health and safety of the people in Flint.

Last month in Crystal City, TX, there was black sludge water coming out of the faucet, and residents were warned to boil tapwater before drinking it—in Texas. According to a recent survey by EPA, Texas will require nearly $34 billion in upgrades to its drinking water infrastructure over the next 20 years to comply with minimum safety standards.

Last month in Ohio, 13 water systems were under lead advisories. In Sebring, OH, lab tests last August found unsafe levels of lead in drinking water—and it took 5 months before the city told pregnant women and children not to drink the water and to shut down the taps and fountains in schools.

Just today, the USA TODAY network published a report that identified nearly 2,000 water systems where excessive lead levels have been detected in the last 4 years, and they serve 6 million people.

Virginia Tech professor Marc Edwards recently again sounded the alarm about lead pipes in Washington. In Cleveland, children have high levels due to exposure to lead in household paints. We could go on and on. Pennsylvania, high lead levels.

The reason I am saying this is because while the catastrophe has happened in Flint—for many reasons beyond the control of anybody in Flint—there are other communities now that need help as well, which is why the proposal we have is one that has broad bipartisan support to be able to activate a wider infrastructure-financing mechanism that allows communities around the country to be able to solve problems before they get to what happened in Flint on the early end to solve the problems so people don't get lead poisoning. That is in this bill. We step up, because these are Americans in Flint, MI, and say: We hear you. We see you. We care about you, and because you have a Federal emergency declaration we will provide the opportunity to get some help. In addition to accountability and responsibility of the State, the Federal Government, because of the EPA's role in this, will be a part of the solution in fixing these pipes.

We also address public health issues: the Centers for Disease Control Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund, HUD's Healthy Homes Program for lead both in water and in paint, and we address the opportunity to reach out and deal with the public health issues for children.

Needless to say, we are extremely disappointed—putting it mildly—in how we feel about coming to a point today, despite best efforts on many people's parts, frankly, despite our patience working with people, accepting them at their word, working, trying to get things done, looking at various alternatives to get beyond the roadblocks, despite a lot of effort. Again, we are grateful for those who have stood with us and worked so hard on our behalf. It is incredibly disappointing and frustrating and, frankly, maddening that we are here as the Senate is leaving for the next 2 weeks and we do not have action on Flint and on water systems across this country.

Again, I can tell you that for the people of Flint who have not gotten help

for so long, for the people of Flint who were told the water was OK and it wasn't—and I have now been watching coverups and slow-walking for going on 2 years—this is just one more time when they are watching inaction and we could be stepping up and doing something to help.

So that is what we are asking for; that when we come back, the children of Flint be a priority for action; that we work together, as we have done across the aisle, to put forward something that will address water infrastructures to help the people of Flint, to help people around the country so they don't find themselves in a situation like the people of Flint; and that we do that together; that we pass that bill; that we pass an energy bill; and that we move forward after weeks and weeks and weeks of good-faith efforts to get something done.

All we are asking for is a vote. That is all we are asking for, after all this effort, is the opportunity to vote. If someone believes it is not the right thing to do, they have the opportunity that we all have, to vote no, but the children of Flint deserve a vote. The children in Jackson, MS, and the people around the country are worried they might become the crisis, the catastrophe in Flint, and are asking us simply to vote.

Lead poisoning is a frightening thing. It gets in your body and never leaves. It goes from your blood to your bones. When a woman gets pregnant, it goes into the fetus. It is a frightening form of poison. If that is not a national emergency worthy of action by the Senate and the House—the Congress of this country—I don't know what is.

Frankly, there are a whole lot of people who have lost faith in the government right now of Flint, who are asking us to see them, to care about them, and to help.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. PERDUE. Madam President, regarding the vacancy on the Supreme Court, many of our colleagues in the minority party have said the same things we are saying today. Let's stop kidding each other. This kind of political showmanship—and, yes, indeed, hypocrisy—is exactly what makes everyone in my home State absolutely apoplectic with Washington.

The last time I addressed the Supreme Court vacancy on the Senate floor, I urged my colleagues on the other side of the aisle not to let the nominations process get bogged down in partisan politics—that is not what this should be about—not to let this process turn into political theater because that is exactly what has happened far too often in this body ever since the Bork nomination way back in 1987.

The organized campaign of vilification and character attacks surrounding Judge Bork's nomination was so unprecedented and so extreme that it took the creation of a new word, ''to Bork,'' to describe what had happened.

The process for nominating Justices to the Supreme Court has been thoroughly politicized ever since. That politicization has done great damage not only to the Court but to this body, the U.S. Senate. It has expanded beyond just Supreme Court nominees and now affects so many of our nominees for circuit judgeships as well. That is what happened in 2013, when then-Majority Leader REID broke a tradition almost as old as the Senate itself by invoking the nuclear option and breaking the Senate's filibuster rule to stack various circuit courts.

I don't think I need to remind any of my colleagues that when the Democrats were in the minority, there was no shortage of protests heard in this room about how sacred an institution the filibuster was. Keep in mind that the nuclear option was invoked after the Senate confirmed the President's first nominee to the DC Circuit by a unanimous 97-to-0 vote. It was an act of raw political power, the nuclear option.

We heard yesterday that the President has named his nominee to the Supreme Court, but let's be clear, any previous confirmation or record as a judge or professional qualifications are not the issue for any nominee. What is at stake is the integrity of the process, not the person. It is the principle, not the individual, because our judicial nominees to the Supreme Court, the circuits, and the district courts deserve better than to be used as pawns in any political fight, and that is exactly what would happen if the Senate were to consider any nominee in the middle of this political season.

I am a new Member to this institution, but this has been the view of my colleagues in both parties who have served in the Senate far longer than I have. This was their view no matter who the nominee was. This was their view even when there wasn't a vacancy to fill.

The former chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Vice President BIDEN, recognized this in 1992, when he said:

> Once the political season is underway, and it is, action on a Supreme Court nomination must be—I want to emphasize that ''must''—must be put off until after the election campaign is over. That is what is fair to the nominee and is central to the process. Otherwise, it seems to me, we will be in deep trouble as an institution.

I agree. The Vice President correctly saw that when we inject a nomination into a contentious election-year atmosphere, we do a disservice not only to the nominee but to the institution of the United States Senate itself. It is my view that enough institutional damage has already been done to the Senate through these politicized nominations.

I wish to say a little about the text of the Constitution. We hear both sides talk about this, but let's see it in detail.

I have heard so many of my Democratic colleagues claim that the Senate has an obligation to schedule hearings and hold a vote on this nominee. We have all read article II, section 2, of the Constitution. Every Member of this body knows the Constitution says nothing about hearings or votes on judicial nominees. It is simply not there.

Senators of both parties have always understood this and have said so for years, regardless of who was in the majority. In 2005, Minority Leader REID said: ''Nowhere in the Constitution does it say the Senate has a duty to give Presidential appointees a vote.'' Before that, in 2002, the former chief judge of the DC Circuit, Abner Mikva, who was a Carter appointee, said: ''The Senate should not act on any Supreme Court vacancies that might occur until after the next presidential election.'' The senior Senator from Nevada and Judge Mikva were right then, and Chairman GRASSLEY and my Republican colleagues are right now.

Despite many of them previously making the exact same points we are today, my Democratic colleagues are continuing this diatribe of telling us to do our job. I would respectfully say to my Democratic colleagues today, we are doing our job. Our job as Senators is to decide how to responsibly exercise the powers of advice and consent delegated to us under our Constitution.

The responsibile course of action here—a course of action endorsed by both Democrats and Republicans for decades—is to refrain from initiating the nomination process in the midst of an election-year political fight. The responsible course of action is to avoid the political theater this nomination would become.

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.

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

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

HONORING NEBRASKA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN COMBAT

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise today to continue my tribute to Nebraska's heroes and the current generation of men and women who lost their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of these Nebraskans has a special story to tell. Throughout this year and beyond, I will continue to honor their memory here on the Senate floor.

FIRST LIEUTENANT JACOB FRITZ

Today, I wish to highlight the life of 1LT Jacob Fritz of Verdon, NE. Jake,

as he was known to his friends and loved ones, grew up on his family's farm near Verdon, NE, a town with fewer than 200 people. While attending Dawson-Verdon High School, Jake thrived and stood out as a model student. He was an all-around athlete and played the baritone in the honor band. He was also passionate about helping others in need and regularly devoted his time to organizations that combat substance abuse in Verdon and around the State.

Jake's former principal, John Eickhoff, described him as ''a great kid, student and athlete.'' Principal Eickhoff recalls, ''If I had a school full of Jacob Fritzes, I wouldn't have had anything to do.''

When Jake entered his senior year in high school, his focus remained on his commitment to helping others, and he began pursuing a career in the U.S. military. His mother Noala recalls Jake's dream of serving his country, which was inspired by his grandfather, a retired Air Force officer. Karen Mezger, a family friend, recalls that Jake wanted to have a career in the Army and more than anything come back to Verdon and live the life of a gentleman farmer.

With the support of his family and the nomination from then-Senator Chuck Hagel, Jake left Nebraska in June of 2000 to begin his first year at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. As soon as he arrived, Jake earned the reputation among his fellow cadets as a warm and supportive person. His friend, 1LT Travis Reinfold, recalls Jake's midwestern values. ''I called him 'Jolly Jake,'" Lieutenant Reinfold remembers, ''because no matter who you were, he always gave you a warm country smile.'' Lieutenant Reinfold also noted Jake's superb voice as a member of the West Point Glee Club. His voice was always filled with conviction and beauty, particularly when singing the hymn ''Mansions of the Lord.''

After 4 years, Jake graduated from West Point with a bachelor's degree in systems engineering. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army on May 28, 2005. Following speciality training, Jake was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, at Fort Richardson, AK.

Not long after Jake's arrival at Fort Richardson, the 2nd Battalion was deployed to Iraq. It was 2006, and the war was escalating. The insurgency was in full force and threatening to erase the progress made by American troops. By the end of that year, President Bush announced a counterassault known as the ''surge'' and deployed an additional 30,000 troops to the region. Lieutenant Fritz joined this effort and routinely volunteered at Forward Operating Base Karbala to assist Iraqi soldiers. Jake had a natural instinct to step up and take charge. He felt an obligation and a commitment to the mission, which often required volunteering for these types of assignments.

But shortly after Jake arrived at Karbala, all hell broke loose. On January 20, 2007, enemy militants disguised as friendly soldiers entered the base and attacked. In a matter of minutes, Lieutenant Fritz and three other American soldiers were captured. The militants rushed Jake and the other hostages east towards Mahawil. American troops quickly located their trail and they followed in hot pursuit. Shortly after crossing the Euphrates River and with American forces gaining, the militants attempted to hasten their escape by executing the four captives. The American soldiers were stripped of their identification and shot as the militants fled the scene, and Jake was mortally wounded. As his heartless murderers fled into the abyss, Jake realized his body might not be identified, and so in a final act of bravery, he managed to scrawl a few letters in the dust of an abandoned vehicle. So when the American troops arrived at the scene, they saw his body and the word ''Fritz.''

Back in Verdon, NE, it was a snowy day in late January of 2007. Jake's mother Noala arrived home to find two strange cars in the driveway. Men dressed in uniform approached her as she walked to the back door. She instinctively knew why they were there, and she refused to listen to the words no mother should ever hear. It was clear that her son would not be coming home.

First Lieutenant Jacob Fritz was laid to rest on January 31, 2007. He received full military honors, and he was buried in a church ceremony just 4 miles from his home. Family and friends paid their final respects in a moving service that honored the courage, commitment, and sacrifice of this local hero. Jake was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Prisoner of War Medal, and the Combat Action Badge.

His two younger brothers later followed in his footsteps, and they earned commissions in the Army. They serve to this day with the same distinction and the honor they learned from their big brother.

Jake's mother retired from teaching and spends much of her time helping Gold Star families throughout Nebraska.

Meanwhile, Jake's memory lives on in the hearts and minds of the State he served. Nebraskans are forever indebted to his sacrifice.

First Lieutenant Jacob Fritz is a hero, and I am honored to tell his story.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATIONS OF BETH COBERT AND MICHAEL MISSAL

Mr. CARPER. Thank you, Mr. President. It is good to see the Presiding Officer on this St. Patrick's Day, and I am pleased to have a chance to rise and to urge my colleagues to confirm two very important nominees. Some of my colleagues have scattered across the country to go home for a 2-week recess, but the Presiding Officer is here. Hopefully, the words that I am saying here today will find their way to our colleagues wherever they are or wherever they are headed.

One of the nominees is a woman named Beth Cobert, who has been nominated to be the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and the other is Michael Missal, who has been nominated to be the inspector general of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Like many of my colleagues, I have grown frustrated over the years as, too often, senior positions in the Federal Government have been left vacant or filled by someone serving in an acting capacity for far too long. A lack of critical leadership at agencies can—and oftentimes does—undermine the effectiveness of Federal programs. I know all of us want Federal agencies to work more efficiently to provide the most value to American taxpayers, and having strong leadership in place is key to that effort. I hope we can move to quickly confirm both of these nominees when the Senate returns after the recess.

Let me start with a few words about Beth Cobert. I don't know if the Presiding Officer has had a chance to meet with her. She is one of the most impressive leaders of this administration or any administration whom I have had the privilege to know. She is an excellent nominee to head OPM. Right from the start, I have been very impressed with her work, with her leadership, with her work ethic, and with her ability to get people to work together at OMB and now during her time at OPM in this acting capacity. Before that, she was Deputy Director for Management within the Office of Management and Budget. I just think we are really lucky in this country that she is willing to continue to serve in this capacity as well as serving in her previous capacity. She comes out of the private sector, from McKinsey & Company, a brand new California operation. She did that and had a number of senior positions within that company and a great career.

The Office of Personnel Management performs critical functions affecting the entire Federal workforce. What they do every day has a direct impact on the quality of work at all executive branch departments and agencies. As my colleagues know, Ms. Cobert's time at OPM began in the aftermath of one of the worst cyber attacks committed against our government last year. One result of that incident has been a major effort to overhaul the information technology infrastructure, which

requires great levels of management attention and expertise.

Even before she came to OPM, Ms. Cobert was deeply involved in the OPM response to the breach from her Senate-confirmed role at OMB. If you look at her management and technology experience in the private sector, her experience at OMB, and the time she has already spent leading the Office of Personnel Management, she is the ideal candidate to lead OPM at such a critical time. I am only one of many who have been impressed by Ms. Cobert. In addition to receiving a unanimous vote from the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on her nomination to lead OPM, she has the support of Chairman JASON CHAFFETZ at the House and of Ranking Member ELIJAH CUMMINGS, who lead the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Representatives CHAFFETZ and CUMMINGS sent a letter to Majority Leader MCCONNELL and Minority Leader REID supporting Ms. Cobert's confirmation.

Here is a taste of what they had to say about her: ''[Ms. Cobert] is a qualified and competent choice to lead OPM, which is in need of strong leadership, and we urge the Senate to approve her nomination swiftly.''

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the full letter.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC, March 3, 2016.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND MINORITY LEADER REID: We write in support of President Obama's nomination of Beth Cobert to serve as Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). She is a qualified and competent choice to manage OPM, which is in need of strong leadership, and we urge the Senate to approve her nomination swiftly.

On February 1, 2016, the Inspector General of OPM, on his departure from federal service, sent a letter to President Obama praising Ms. Cobert's leadership:

''I am also comforted by the fact that Acting OPM Director Beth Cobert appears to have wrapped her arms around the multitude of challenges currently facing OPM. Further, she seems to be arduously striving to institute high standards of professionalism as she works to reinvigorate this great agency.''

We further expect that as Director, Ms. Cobert will continue to assist the Committee's ongoing investigation of the data breach that OPM announced in 2015, which resulted in the loss of personally identifiable information for over 21.5 million individuals. On February 3, 2016, the Committee issued a subpoena to Ms. Cobert—who has served as OPM's Acting Director since July 10, 2015—for documents related to the data breach investigation. The agency produced some responsive documents by the February 16, 2016, deadline and has agreed to produce outstanding documents on a rolling basis; however, there are still outstanding documents that have not been produced to the Committee. We expect the agency to fully comply with the subpoena and produce all outstanding documents.

Please contact Katie Bailey of the Chairman's staff or Tim Lynch of the Ranking Member's staff with any questions. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman.

ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS,
Ranking Member.

Mr. CARPER. Ms. Cobert is a highly qualified nominee. We are fortunate indeed that she is willing to serve in this capacity and take on the many challenges that are currently facing OPM.

I urge my colleagues to quickly confirm her so she can continue to do the good work that she is doing at OPM.

I have known people who are show horses and folks who are workhorses. This woman is a workhorse—I like to think people look at us as workhorses as well—but she is focused on getting the job done. She is especially good at surrounding herself with terrific people. She did that at OMB, she did that at OPM, and she did that before when she was in her very significant position at McKinsey & Company.

Let me just turn the page and talk about Michael Missal. I want to talk about him and thank him for his willingness to step up and serve as the inspector general for the Department of Veterans Affairs. He served 5 years of Active Duty in a hot war as a naval flight officer in Southeast Asia and another 18 years as a P–3 aircraft mission commander in the Navy right up to the end of the Cold War.

As Governor for 8 years in Delaware and commander in chief of the Delaware National Guard, we send people from Delaware. Right now we have people in Afghanistan. We have sent people over the years to any number of places where they are in harm's way.

I care a lot about veterans. My dad was a veteran. A bunch of my uncles were veterans. One of them got killed in World War II, the victim of a kamikaze attack on his aircraft carrier in the western Pacific. So veterans' concerns run deep in my family.

As we all know, our inspectors general play an extremely important role in our government. Their work helps us to save money while also revealing and prosecuting wrongdoing, promoting the integrity and efficiency of our government, and hopefully increasing the confidence and faith that the American people have in their government. I believe the work of inspectors general, along with that of GAO, is invaluable with respect to the work of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, in which I am privileged to serve, and the whole Senate as we look for ways to get better results for less money and further reduce our Federal deficit down from $1.4 trillion a half dozen years ago to about close to a quarter of that—which is still too much. We are making progress, but we need to make more. The IG is a big part of helping us to meet that goal. I think it is critical that we have qualified, experienced people in place to serve these important roles. This is tough work. We are blessed by the many IGs we have.

We have seen far too many IG positions, including the one Mr. Missal has been nominated to fill, sit vacant or be filled by someone serving in an acting capacity for far too long. In fact, the VA, of all agencies, given the concern we have heard and seen across the country in recent years—the IG vacancy at the VA—has been without a permanent, Senate confirmed inspector general for more than 2 years. In the past several years, I have joined all the members of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in sending letters to the President, urging him to nominate people to fill all the IG vacancies, including one letter that specifically pointed out the importance of the one I am talking about today, the inspector general position at the VA.

Our committee held a hearing last year on IG vacancies and pointed out the importance of having permanent IGs in place to ensure the independence of this office.

I want to thank the President for responding to our committee's letters. He has done this by sending the Senate a number of well-qualified nominees, including Mr. Missal, for our consideration. These words have been heard in the last couple of weeks. He is doing his job, and now it is time for us to do our job with respect to these nominations.

I was pleased that both the Veterans Affairs' Committee and our committee, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, were able to move quickly to consider Mr. Missal's nomination. I want to thank my colleagues on our committee for making it a priority.

However, since early this year, there has been no action by the Senate on Mr. Missal's nomination. This is an inspector general vacancy in Veterans Affairs, where we know there have been hospitals and facilities across the country that are troubled, and we need the best leadership we can find at the VA in this position. Again, I think the President has given us a very good person. He is willing to do the job. We need to get him confirmed.

As we know, the VA has been facing significant challenges over the last couple of years. I believe that confirming a permanent IG at the VA will help provide much needed oversight, while helping to point out and resolve some of the problems at the VA that are negatively impacting the lives of our veterans every day.

Leaving this position vacant impedes much needed progress on identifying and addressing serious issues at the VA that impact our veterans. If we want to do more to fix the VA, we need a strong

and independent inspector general to be our partner in that effort. Delaying this nomination also delays improvements to the services that our veterans receive.

Permanent leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General is long overdue and will go a long way toward providing stable leadership and oversight of the agency. I urge my colleagues to quickly confirm Mr. Missal so he can go to work on behalf of our veterans and the American people—not in a couple of months or later this year; we can do it now, as soon as we come back from the recess that begins tomorrow.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to talk about an issue that is both concerning and tragic; that is, the rapid spread of the Zika virus in Central and South America in recent months. This is a virus we have known about ever since I was born, and that has been about 69 years. I think the first time somebody detected this was maybe on an island in the South Pacific. It has ebbed and flowed over the years, and now it is flowing big time.

Every day researchers are discovering more about this virus and its potential impact, particularly on pregnant woman and their unborn children. The findings are not good. In fact, they are deeply troubling. There are strong indications that the virus is connected to a developmental birth defect that can lead to underdeveloped brains. We have seen the photographs of smaller heads in too many children.

Additional studies are also examining a potential connection between the Zika virus and other health concerns. With the World Health Organization estimating that as many as 4 million people could be infected in the region this year, it is clear that we must act swiftly to combat this threat. That is why I was pleased to see President Obama and his administration take an early and proactive role in addressing the Zika virus. For example, a coordinated Federal response led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working with State, local, and international public health partners to step up mosquito control efforts and to ensure that health officials have the equipment they need to test people for this disease.

To further these efforts, President Obama has recently submitted a supplemental funding request to Congress. These funds would go toward developing vaccines, mosquito control efforts, and diagnostic testing, among other things. The Senate should take a long, hard look at the President's request in the coming days and weeks and consider what measures we need to take to ensure we are ready for Zika and for other future outbreaks.

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, in closing, I want to do something I think the Presiding Officer has heard me do before. I try to come to the floor once a month and talk about some of the employees who work at the Department of Homeland Security. They work for us across this country and really around the world.

This is the youngest Department, if you will, that we have in the Federal Government. It is about 12 years old. It sort of formed on the heels of 9/11. Twenty-two agencies that have some commonality in their focus or the way they touch the security of our homeland and the people who live in it kind of glommed together.

The morale in the Department has not been good. There has been a great, sustained effort—and certainly we are trying to support it in our Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs—to turn a corner and let people know that not only is the work they do important, but we appreciate their efforts.

I wish to say a few words today about some of the men and women who work tirelessly to keep us safe and secure, often without a lot of recognition and thanks. I am talking about the good people at the Transportation Security Administration, now led by retired Coast Guard Admiral Neffenger, Peter Neffenger, a very able and impressive leader.

As the Easter holidays approach, many Americans will be traveling to spend time with their families around the country and even around the world. If you head to an airport, as many of my colleagues, their colleagues, and their constituents will be doing very soon, chances are you will interact with some of the hard-working men and women of the TSA who keep our skies safe. Nearly 59,000 people work at TSA. Many are focused on securing our aviation system, while others work to protect our service transportation networks, such as the train I took to work this morning and will be jumping on later today to go home.

TSA's work is not only carried out by frontline employees whom we see at the airports as we check in and go through security, have our bags checked, our bodies checked, there are also many dedicated people who are hard at work behind the scenes. We never actually see them, but they are there keeping us safe too. These men and women perform the critical work of gathering and analyzing intelligence in order to identify potential threats to our transportation system and to mitigate them in real time.

I would like to use the remainder of my time to highlight the outstanding efforts of some of these individuals. I learned about them yesterday while meeting with Admiral Neffenger, who happened to be in a meeting that we had in my office and was with me again today for a secure briefing in the SCIF. He shared with me something I was very happy to learn about. He told me of six members of the current intelligence team within TSA's Office of Intelligence and Analysis and how they recently received the 2015 Intelligence Community Counterterrorism Award for Education and Training from the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. That is a mouthful, but it is quite an award, quite a recognition. These six individuals—three men, three women—developed a counterterrorism threat briefing for all frontline employees who man our checkpoints and transit systems so they can better understand the connection between intelligence and TSA security operations.

In essence, these individuals are helping TSA frontline officers understand the ''why,'' if you will, behind their work. According to the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, these six or seven men and women ''exemplified the essential attributes of the counter-terrorism community: expertise, integration, collaboration, and information sharing.''

While I cannot state their names here, maybe for obvious reasons, I do wish to say to all of you out there—you know who I am talking about—thank you for the work you do every day to ensure that your fellow Americans, people who work here and the people we represent, can travel safely and that our transit systems are secure. Thank you for the work you have done to ensure that your fellow TSA employees have the tools they need to carry out the critical work they do. Your dedication and your invaluable service are appreciated by me, by all of our colleagues in the Senate, our staffs, and by millions of Americans who travel throughout our country every single day.

With that, I have probably said enough. I will say to the Presiding Officer, the staff, and everybody who might be tuned in, happy St. Patrick's Day. We hope good fortune shines on all of us and on our country, not just over this holiday and upcoming recess and a special day today but for a long time after that.

Some of the people we have talked about today—their job is to make sure we are not just lucky, but that we are safe, secure, and successful going forward. There is an old saying: The harder I work, the luckier I get. I am talking about some people who work very hard so we can be fortunate and blessed in this country. I bid you a happy St. Patrick's Day.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO MIKE DUNCAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a distinguished Kentuckian, a man who knows the meaning of public service, who I am proud to call a friend. Robert M. ''Mike'' Duncan will be celebrating his 65th birthday next month, and I want to wish him great happiness and every success on such a special occasion.

Mike is well known in Kentucky and nationally for wearing many hats. Currently he serves as the president and CEO of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, a national nonprofit organization that advocates for coal miners in Kentucky and elsewhere and for the use of coal as an affordable and reliable resource in our Nation's energy mix.

Mike has served the Republican Party in many roles, most notably as the 60th Chairman of the Republican National Committee, RNC, from 2007 to 2009. He came to that role having previously served as treasurer and general counsel of the RNC before his election as chairman.

During his career, Mike's served on the campaigns of five Presidents. He worked in the White House as the assistant director of the Office of Public Liaison. He was appointed to the President's Commission on White House Fellows in 2001, and later served as the chairman and a board member of the Tennessee Valley Authority. He served in various roles with the U.S.-China High Level Political Party Leaders Dialogue and the Center for Rural Development.

Mike is also active politically in Kentucky at every level. He has served as a precinct captain to a county chairman to the State chairman to the national chairman. In 1998, he chaired Jim Bunning's successful U.S. Senate race. Mike's involvement with Kentucky politics dates back to his time interning for the Kentucky General Assembly, when he got the chance to serve as President Richard Nixon's driver when the President was campaigning for reelection in the Bluegrass State.

Mike is also active with numerous nonprofit organizations. He is a trustee of the Christian Appalachian Project and runs a student mentoring program. He has been recognized with honorary degrees from several schools, including the College of the Ozarks, Cumberland College, and Morehead State University.

In his professional life, Mike is the principal owner, along with his wife, Joanne, of two community banks with five offices in eastern Kentucky. He has served as the president of the Kentucky Bankers Association and as a director of the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank Cincinnati Branch.

Mike holds degrees from Cumberland College and the University of Kentucky College of Law. He and Joanne call Inez, KY, their home; and they have a son, Rob, who is an assistant U.S. attorney.

Mike was 8 years old when his uncle ran for superintendent of schools. It was volunteering for his uncle's campaign that sparked his love of politics, and we are glad that it did. He has been of great service to the people of Kentucky and to the people of this Nation for many years, and we owe him our gratitude.

I want to wish Mike a very happy birthday, and I know my colleagues join me in recognizing his achievements and wishing him many happy returns.

Thank you, Mike, for your service to the Party and to our country.

THIRD ANNUAL CESAR CHAVEZ DAY-LAS VEGAS FESTIVAL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the third annual Cesar Chavez Day-Las Vegas Festival. Since 2013, the Las Vegas City Council, the Cesar Chavez Committee, and Councilmember Bob Coffin have organized this community festival in Las Vegas to honor the lasting legacy of civil rights activist and labor leader, Cesar Chavez.

Cesar Chavez led a courageous and humble life. He was born on March 31, 1927, in a small farm outside of Yuma, AZ. His experiences as a laborer and migrant worker in the fields of the southwest United States encouraged his pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento, CA. He brought attention to the workplace inequities experienced by those who tilled America's soil and harvested America's crops. Alongside Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and United Farm Workers, Cesar Chavez fought tirelessly to raise salaries and improve the working conditions of farm workers. He organized migrant workers to raise awareness for the humane and fair treatment of all workers. Today Mr. Chavez's legacy inspires hope, action, and prosperity for those who are often burdened by marginalization and discrimination. His contributions will forever be embedded in the fabric of our country, and we owe gratitude to the indelible mark that Cesar Chavez has left on our Nation.

Cesar Chavez dedicated his time to a life of purpose in bringing social justice and dignity to the workplace. As we commemorate his meaningful work and contributions, it is vital that we continue his legacy by fighting for higher wages, worker rights, and the fair treatment of all workers. I commend the Las Vegas City Council, the Cesar Chavez Committee, and Councilmember Bob Coffin for commemorating Cesar Chavez, and I join in honoring Mr. Chavez's visionary leadership.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 29 years ago, March was designated National Women's History Month. It is hard to imagine, but as recently as the 1970s, history books largely left out the contributions of women in America. This began to change in 1978, when a small group set out to revise the school curriculum in their community—Sonoma County, CA. The idea was to create a Women's History Week, and its goal was to write women back into history books. It was an idea that was long overdue. And Women's History Week took off around the county . . . around the State . . . and across the Nation. It didn't take long before organizers lobbied Congress and even the White House. And on February 28, 1980, it paid off.

President Jimmy Carter announced for the first time that March 2–8, 1980, would be designated as National Women's History Week. He urged libraries, schools, and community organizations to focus on leaders who struggled for equality: Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cody Stanton, Harriet Tubman, and Alice Paul. In 1981, the cause gained further momentum when an unlikely partnership between then-Representative BARBARA MIKULSKI and Senator ORRIN HATCH cosponsored a congressional resolution for National Women's History Week. And 6 short years later, National Women's History Week became National Women's History Month. And last November, Senator MIKULSKI was awarded the Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in part for her work on equal pay for women—what an honor.

Throughout history, women have achieved significant progress in the face of discrimination and, time and time again, blazed new trails. So it is appropriate that Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI would play such an integral role in creating National Women's History Month. After all, she understands the role of a trailblazer better than many. And during her last year in the U.S. Senate, it is fitting we honor some of her accomplishments. Senator MIKULSKI was the first woman elevated to a leadership post in the U.S. Senate and the only current Member of Congress in the National Women's Hall of Fame. She is also the first woman elected to Congress in her own right, not because of a husband or a father or someone who served before her in higher office. Senator MIKULSKI embodies what National Women's History Month is all about, particularly this year, when its theme is ''Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government.''

So with that in mind, I would like to tell you a story about Senator MIKULSKI, also known in this chamber as the Dean of Women. Following the election of a number of esteemed women into the Senate, a lot of reporters deemed 1992, the Year of the Woman, but Senator MIKULSKI didn't like the sound of that.

She said: ''Calling 1992 the Year of the Woman makes it sound like the

Year of the Caribou or the Year of the Asparagus. We're not a fad, fancy or a year.''

That is classic for Senator MIKULSKI.

Today there are a record 20 female Members in the Senate, but BARBARA would be the first to point out that is still a minority, and we can do better. Well, after 40 years in Congress, Senator MIKULSKI will be sorely missed. Without the leadership and determination of Senator MIKULSKI, the fight gets a little harder, and there is plenty of work to do.

Women still receive an average of 78 cents for every dollar earned by men, and it is even greater for women of color. African-American women make 64 cents for every dollar earned by men, and Hispanic women only make 56 cents. It is not right, and it is long past time that Congress pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to provide women with the necessary tools to fight wage discrimination. It is also time to guarantee paid family and medical leave for all. Making this a reality will mean that when major life events happen, birth of a new child or caring for an aging parent, hard-working Americans will not have to choose between their family and debt, bankruptcy, or losing their job. But America can overcome these challenges. We have done it before. Just look how far we have come.

Here are just a few of the problems women faced and overcame since the 1970s: women could be fired from the workplace for being pregnant; sexual harassment wasn't recognized in the workplace; women couldn't get a credit card; and marital rape wasn't considered a crime in most States. But we solved these discriminatory and heinous practices. You see, America's democracy has indeed been imperfect, but throughout our history, we have sought to address our Nation's imperfections. Because the story of the United States is not a story of a perfect union, It is a story about the pursuit to create ''a more perfect union.''

Let me close with this. Years ago, in my home State of Illinois, then First Lady Hilary Clinton said: ''If you go to the poorest places on Earth struggling from social problems of poverty, disease, and hunger and all that comes with it, and you can only ask one question to determine if they have a chance, the question you should ask is this: How do you treat your women?''

If you give women an equal playing field, status, education, and opportunity, you are giving them and your country a chance to thrive.

This March, as we pay tribute to all the brave women who have moved this country forward and in doing so inspired each and every one of us, let's challenge ourselves to build on their legacies and make our country a more equal society for our mothers, sisters, and daughters.

TRIBUTE TO DON HOOPER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize Don Hooper, a great Vermonter who is soon to retire from the National Wildlife Federation.

Don is a great environmental conservationist whose advice I have sought for at least 20 years on issues affecting Vermont, the United States, and indeed the planet. For 17 years, Don has helped lead the National Wildlife Federation, NWF, in Vermont and the region. He helped to bring the peregrine falcon back from the brink of extinction in Vermont and to restore our State's breeding population of bald eagles. Beyond Vermont, he advocated for piping plovers, wolves, Atlantic salmon, and more. Don helped the NWF become one of the first organizations to sound the alarm about the accelerating impacts of climate change and to pull together coalitions of environmental advocates, conservationists, and sportsmen and sportswomen to push for solutions.

Don's public service extends beyond his conservation leadership. He worked hard in the mid-1990s as Vermont's Secretary of State to reduce barriers to the ballot box and to make government more open and accessible, priorities both he and I share.

Many Vermonters also celebrate Don's 8 years representing the towns of Randolph, Brookfield, and Braintree in Vermont's General Assembly, when Don led efforts to divest pension funds from South African investments, helped to craft significant environmental and planning legislation, and achieved what would be unthinkable in most States—a political redistricting map that was adopted by near consensus.

And as is the story with any great Vermonter, Don's foundation has been his family. Since 1974, the Hooper's Brookfield farm, worked by Don, his wife, Allison, and sons, Sam, Jay, and Miles, has been a mainstay of the community. They have sold hay, vegetables, goat's milk, and meat from the farm to friends and neighbors. Don helped found the Montpelier Farmers Market that Marcelle and I visit whenever we are home in the summer. With Allison in the lead and Don doing much heavy lifting and dishwashing, the Hoopers became cheesemakers and founded the Vermont Butter and Cheese Company, which has thrived for 32 years, employs 77 people directly, supports many more Vermont farmers, and has Vermont's specialty cheese industry on the international culinary map.

On top of all of this, Don is a volunteer for the fire department and a member of the local Farm Bureau. It is hard to think of a more dedicated member of the community.

These are just some of the layers of Don's life in Vermont. He has also done great work as a Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana and in the leadership of national organizations. Don Hooper stands as tall as ever in retirement, and while this might conclude his leadership of the NWF in Vermont, I know it will not be the last we hear and see of this great Vermonter.

RECOGNIZING THE ''USS MONTPELIER''

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as a native of Montpelier and as one who attended the christening of the USS *Montpelier*, I was so happy to see an article in the Times Argus regarding its return to the United States after a 6-month deployment last month. Steve Martin and Debra Smith have both been involved for years and supported the crew of the USS *Montpelier*. Marcelle and I had a memorable time at a picnic they held for the crew in Middlesex. As a Vermonter, they both make me proud, and I wanted my fellow Senators to see what they have done.

I ask unanimous consent that the Times Argus article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Times Argus, Feb. 8, 2016]

USS MONTPELIER RETURNS TO STATES

(By Josh O'Gorman)

NORFOLK, Va.—The USS Montpelier has returned home to the United States following a six-month deployment.

Friday afternoon, the submarine—the third naval vessel to share the name of Vermont's capital—docked at Naval Station Norfolk after logging more than 38,000 nautical miles during its most recent deployment.

The crew of the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine, which includes 15 officers and 129 enlisted crew, spent the recent deployment supporting national security interests in Europe and the Middle East, with stops in Bahrain, France, Greece and the United Arab Emirates.

''I have been connected with this amazing group of men for 14 or 15 years now,'' said Debra Smith, of Middlesex, who chairs the Veterans and Family Support Committee for the Montpelier VFW.

Smith's support for the sailors of the USS Montpelier began with her efforts to keep them entertained while at sea. Smith, who used to operate Capital Video in Montpelier before it closed, would send the sailors movies to watch during their down time.

Most recently, Smith organized an effort in which students from Hardwick Elementary School are making ''Welcome Home'' and Valentine's Day cards, which are expected to go out in the mail to the crew this week.

Both Smith and Steve Martin, also of Middlesex, have been passengers of the 360-foot submarine, which was commissioned in 1993 and which launched the first Tomahawk cruise missiles during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

''It was pretty awesome,'' Martin said. ''It's pretty tight in there. We spent the day out at sea and when they surfaced we were able to go up on the bridge with the captain.''

He also described the steepness with which the submarine dives and surfaces.

''You're keeping your balance and your face is a few feet from the floor,'' Martin said.

Next month, Smith and Martin will take a road trip that will include a stop in Norfolk to visit the boat and its crew.

REMOVAL OF NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, on December 18, 2015, I placed a hold on the nomination of Dr. Janine Ann Davidson to be Under Secretary of the Navy. As I made clear in my statement at that time, my action was not directed at Dr. Davidson; rather, it was directed at the pending promotion by the Navy of RDML Brian Losey and concerns I had related to findings by the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General concerning Rear Admiral Losey's retaliation against whistleblowers. I have been informed by the Navy that Rear Admiral Losey will not be promoted. Consequently, I am removing my hold on Dr. Davidson's nomination and will support her confirmation.

To quickly review why I took this action, the DOD OIG conducted several extensive investigations into allegations of retaliation by Rear Admiral Losey against senior members of his joint command. In three of those investigations, the DOD IG concluded that he wrongfully retaliated against his staff even after he was advised not to do so. The DOD IG also concluded that his immediate subordinates carried out retaliatory actions at his behest in two of those cases.

I found the OIG findings compelling. In a January 14, 2016, letter to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, Senator MCCAIN and Senator REED, in their capacity as chairman and ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, also cited the OIG findings in support of their request to Secretary Mabus that Losey not be promoted.

Notwithstanding Rear Admiral Losey's long service to our country, the Navy would have been wrong to dismiss the OIG findings and promote him. Doing so would have sent exactly the wrong message, namely that retaliation against whistleblowers is acceptable.

One of the pillars of our system of government is the rule of law; a principle that applies no less to our military and to the vital principle of civilian control over the military. It is illegal to retaliate against whistleblowers, whether civilian or military, and I commend the DOD inspector general and his staff for their diligence in these investigations.

I commend Secretary Mabus and the Navy for taking what I believe is the right course of action in this situation, but my concern with the protection of whistleblowers did not begin with the Losey case, and it will not end with the Losey case. I will continue to work here in the Senate to ensure that those who come forward to expose waste, fraud, or abuse are protected.

In the meantime, I encourage the nominee, Dr. Janine Ann Davidson, to focus on the hard work she has before her in addressing whistleblower retaliation issues in the military.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration. I applaud the work of my colleagues Senators THUNE and NELSON. Their leadership on this important legislation was critical. I would like to make clear that, while we took important steps forward with this legislation, more work remains to be done to ensure the United States remains a global leader in aviation, safety, and innovation.

Going into this year, many on the Commerce Committee, along with Department of Transportation Secretary Foxx and FAA Administrator Huerta and key stakeholders, aimed high on FAA reauthorization. We aimed high because there are big ideas we need to address when it comes to aviation in this country.

From the current state and financing of our airport infrastructure, to completing NextGen implementation, to accelerating commercial use of UAS technology, to new proposals about our Air Traffic Control system, there were a lot of innovative ideas on the table, and while we made strides on some, more work remains to be done. There is widespread agreement that the status quo is not acceptable, and I was pleased to join my colleagues in taking this initial step forward to reauthorize the FAA for the upcoming 18 months.

Furthermore, I am pleased that I was able to put forth amendments that were included in this bill to ensure adequate staffing levels at the Newark air traffic control tower. In addition, we were able to secure a much-needed study of the New York and New Jersey airports, which cover the busiest airspace in the country. Findings from this study will enable us to make informed decisions about how best to address this staffing problem in the future.

I am also concerned about staffing levels at the Transportation Security Administration, TSA. There have been incredibly long delays at Newark airport because of inadequate staffing of TSA agents at our airport. Safety is absolutely paramount in our airports. It is my hope that we can achieve both topnotch security and an efficient, reliable process for travelers using our airports. Increased staffing should help us achieve that goal.

In this reauthorization, I was pleased to work with Senator CANTWELL to increase competition in the Newark airport with the hope that increased competition and opening up more flight slots at the airport may yield more options and price points for consumers. But I must stress that these changes cannot move forward without ensuring the airport is equipped to handle more traffic and passengers. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on this issue and am excited by the opportunities this could bring for my constituents.

We also made progress on furthering the integration of unmanned aerial systems, UAS, or drones into our airspace in our legislation. This technology is literally taking off around the world. It has the power to enhance search and rescue, deliver humanitarian aid, improve agriculture practices, and newsgathering. I introduced the Commercial UAS Modernization Act to help advance this technology and was pleased to see many of our ideas incorporated in this legislation. I worked with committee leadership to further advance a microUAS rule, which would allow U.S. businesses to fly micro-drones under 4.4 pounds responsibly and safely.

Advancing microUAS use will bring tremendous innovations and new efficiencies across the country and will keep the United States on par with other developed nations who have been making great strides ahead of us in utilizing this technology. From improving research to providing unmanned bridge inspections, the benefits of this technology are truly limitless. UAS has the power to save lives and create new efficiencies across industries. I am excited to see what the innovators and entrepreneurs come up with as a result of our rule which sets forth clear safety guidelines for responsible operation.

Finally, I want to address a couple of amendments that I put forth that were not included in this legislation and express my sincere hope that the chairman and ranking member will work with me before this bill gets to floor. I introduced two amendments to the bill that would address disadvantaged business enterprise, or DBE, projects. The goal of this program, of course, is to promote equity and inclusion in federally financed transportation projects. While neither of these amendments were incorporated into this legislation as of yet, I am confident that we can work together to advance this important policy goal. One amendment would ensure conformance of the DOT size standard for small businesses to the metric defined by the Small Business Administration.

This update will enable more minority and women-owned businesses to compete for infrastructure work. The second amendment sets goals for minority and women-owned businesses on projects financed only by passenger facility charges, or PFCs. I ask the chairman and ranking member to continue to work with me as this bill goes to the floor to advance these two important goals.

Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE ENZI

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, on March 29 in Laramie, the University of Wyoming will recognize the work of Senator MIKE ENZI with an official dedication of the Michael B. Enzi STEM Facility. It is a well-deserved honor and one that I would like to share with my fellow Senators.

The state of the art facility opened in January of 2016. With more than 107,000 square feet and over 30 labs, the University of Wyoming Michael B. Enzi STEM Facility will allow 900 students from multiple disciplines to be actively engaged in lab studies at the same time. The design of the facility allows students to enjoy an active learning environment that encourages continuous interaction between instructors and students. Classrooms are laid out in such a way that instructors have the flexibility to adjust their lessons to accommodate the needs and interests of the students, ensuring that they are always in an environment most conducive to learning.

There is no better way to honor the lifetime work of Senator ENZI than to name this facility in his honor. Throughout his years as an accountant and in elected office, MIKE has been a solid leader who is willing to take on tough challenges. From his time as mayor in Gillette, a town that truly represents the definition of an American boomtown, to his work in the U.S. Senate, MIKE studies and works through an issue and always approaches the problem with an ''I will solve this and make it better'' attitude. This approach to problem solving has helped MIKE succeed as chairman of both the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Senate Budget Committee.

Senator ENZI recognizes that if you provide people the tools to succeed, many will. MIKE understands human nature and recognizes that a one size fits all approach to serious problems is not always the best way to fix things. Senator ENZI believes in the ability of people to learn, whether in the classroom, on the job, or through personal experiences, and to take that knowledge and use it in a way to better themselves and others.

The Michael B. Enzi STEM Facility is a perfect reflection of the man: give people an opportunity to learn, to interact, to share, and in an environment that works for them, and they will achieve great things.

In praising his effort to improve education in Wyoming, Chris Boswell, University of Wyoming's vice president for governmental and community affairs, said the following about MIKE ENZI: ''He has been very influential in crafting legislation that garners bipartisan support in the Senate. These have been bills that moved significant education initiatives forward. Whether as chairman or ranking member, Senator ENZI knows how to move bills through to become law, and Wyoming and the country are the better for it.''

I agree completely, and I congratulate Senator ENZI on this honor.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, on March 15, we commemorated the 25th anniversary of the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between the United States and the Republic of Albania. Over 25 years ago, Albania emerged from nearly five decades of isolation and Communist rule to establish a multiparty democracy and forge closer ties with the free world. A quarter century later, Albania has made significant progress. Albania's economy grew and its people participated in elections judged as largely free and fair. Albanians enjoy freedom of religion, movement, unrestricted Internet access, and academic freedom. Today Albania is a NATO ally and a candidate for accession into the European Union, EU.

Since its emergence from isolation, Albania has been an active and contributing member of the international community. Over the course of two decades, Albania deployed more than 6,500 military personnel in support of operations lead by NATO, the EU, and the United Nations. In 2003, Albanian troops deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Between 2002 and 2014, Albania deployed over 3,000 personnel to support U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan. Albanian personnel continue to serve in Afghanistan.

Despite a quarter century of notable strides, pervasive corruption, high unemployment, organized crime, and underrepresentation of women in business and politics, among other issues, prevent Albania from realizing its full potential. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, I have consistently voted to support assistance to Albania to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, promote sustainable economic growth, and assist with its regional and international integration. As co-chair of the Senate Albania Caucus, I will continue to work with my colleagues on to strengthen the U.S.-Albania relationship and support Albania's ongoing efforts to become a prosperous, democratic state and pillar of stability in the Balkans.

HONORING OFFICER JACAI COLSON

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the tragic death of a Marylander. Officer Jacai Colson of the Prince George's Police Department was killed in the line of duty, on Sunday, March 13, 2016. Officer Colson was an upstanding law enforcement officer whose death shocked and saddened so many in Maryland and the national law enforcement community. America is the great Nation it is in no small part because of our respect for the rule of law. Officer Colson and his fellow Prince George's County police officers put their lives on the line every day to uphold the rule of law.

Officer Colson was only 28 years of age. Today, March 17, 2016, would have been his 29th birthday.

On Sunday, March 13, 2016, the district III station in Prince George's County came under fire in what was a deliberate attack on law enforcement and on the rule of law itself. Officer Colson arrived on the scene. After finding himself in the middle of a firefight, Officer Colson had the composure to return fire. During the firefight, Officer Colson was shot and killed.

Every member of the U.S. Senate, every Marylander, and every American should be inspired by the life of Officer Jacai Colson. Officer Colson was an undercover narcotics agent. He had a dangerous job with zero margin for error. Officer Colson did not make errors. He was a 4-year veteran of the Prince George's Police Department. The commander of the Prince George's County Police Department's narcotic enforcement division said of Officer Colson: ''Not only is he good at his job, he's that guy that you wanted on your team.'' The president of the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 89, described Officer Colson as ''. . . always the first person here in the morning, ready to work and put in a full day's work.''

Officer Colson was a native of Boothwyn, PA. He came from a law enforcement family. His grandfather, Sergeant James G. Colson, Jr., retired from the Delaware County, PA, police department after more than 40 years of service. Officer Colson was the quarterback of his high school football team. He attended Randolph Macon University, where he also played football. He sang in the Ujima Gospel Choir and worked in the admissions office and in the marketing and communications department. Officer Colson gave of himself to improve his community while he was in college. He was a member of Brothers 4 Change, a student organization devoted to community service, and he also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.

I am thankful to the Colson family for sharing such a promising young man with the people of Prince George's County. The pain they are going through right now is a pain no family should have to endure. Most tragically, they are not alone. So far in 2016, 23 law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty. In February, two of Officer Colson's Maryland colleagues from the Harford County Sheriff's office, Senior Deputy Mark Logsdon and Senior Deputy Patrick Dailey were killed responding to a call.

The loss of Officer Colson represents the loss of one of the best and brightest among us. He could have done anything with his life, and he chose to protect his fellow Americans. I am thankful that Officer Colson was able to enrich and save the lives of so many people during his life. On behalf of the people of Maryland and my fellow U.S. Senators, I offer my deepest condolences to

the family and friends of Officer Colson. I hope they are able to find solace in the fact that Jacai Colson was a true hero.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH 2016

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to join the American people in celebrating Women's History Month. It is clear that 1 month is hardly enough time to recognize all that women have done, what they are doing, and what they have yet to accomplish. Despite the persistence of dogmatic opposition, women have played a major role in advancing every society on earth.

I am a proud husband, father, and grandfather. In my time representing the people of Maryland, in the U.S. Senate, I have traversed the State many times. As a member and now ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I have had the chance to travel and meet with people from very diverse backgrounds.

At home and abroad, I have found it difficult and often imprudent to make generalizations with regard to policy. One common truth, however, that easily crosses national borders, ethnic lines, political divides, and religious devotions is this: the way a nation treats its women is very much a barometer as to how well that nation is doing.

And so this March we will celebrate women on the forefront of industry and innovation, science and social justice, policy and patriotism, and so much more. We must also remember that Women's History Month is not just about celebrations. Women's History Month should be a time when all Americans come together for a frank conversation about the well-being of women at home and abroad. That conversation must lead to concrete action because, if we want to improve any aspect of our society, starting with empowering and lifting up women is an investment that will return the greatest dividends.

Throughout American history, we have made progress in so many arenas because women had the bravery to break the proverbial glass ceiling. One such woman who I think deserves accolades during this Women's History Month, and every month for that matter, is a Member of this very body. This Congress boasts the most female representatives in history. I suspect that number would be larger if we gave the people of Washington, DC, full statehood and a voting Senator, but I will discuss that another time.

The record number of women in Congress is not an accident; it took hard work and grit. The living embodiment of that grit and know-how is the senior Senator from Maryland, my colleague Senator MIKULSKI. There is a wonderful sense of symmetry in the fact that in 1981, then-Congresswoman MIKULSKI co-sponsored the first Joint Congressional Resolution proclaiming a Women's History Week, and today she is being celebrated as a role model during Women's History Month.

Senator BARB has been more than a dedicated champion for the State of Maryland. She has fought tirelessly for the welfare of all Americans across the country. In the Halls of the Senate, she opened doors that had previously been closed to women. Sometimes she used gentle politicking, and sometimes she knocked the doors off the hinges. No matter how she did it, Senator BARB refused to accept second-class treatment because of her gender and fought to be recognized as an equal. To take that one step further, Senator BARB refused to let other women be treated like second-class citizens by the rule of law or antiquated social norms. I don't have the time to list all that she has done for Marylanders and working families across the country in her long and distinguished career, but I will share a list of hard-fought firsts: first Democratic woman elected to the U.S. Senate in her own right; first Democratic woman to serve in both Houses of Congress; first woman to be elected to statewide office in Maryland; first Democratic woman Senator elected to a leadership position; first Democratic woman to serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee; first woman to chair an Appropriations Subcommittee—the Commerce-Justice-Science Subcommittee; first woman to serve on the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee; first woman to serve on the Senate Small Business Committee; first woman to serve on the House Interstate & Foreign Commerce, now known as the Energy & Commerce Committee—first woman on the Health Subcommittee; most senior woman in the Senate on January 3, 1997; longest serving woman Senator in U.S. history on January 5, 2011; and longest serving woman in Congress in U.S. history on March 17, 2012.

Senator BARB will be leaving the Senate when her term ends next January. That does not mean that she will stop doing what she does best, fighting for what is right. Generations of young women who choose to participate in public life or who dream of joining the U.S. Senate have benefited from Senator BARB's trailblazing legacy.

As we begin to fathom life in the U.S. Senate without Senator BARB, we should take a minute to analyze the current state of politics and policy as it relates to women in America.

Regardless of any Member's political support of anyone running to replace President Obama, it is worth noting that there is a chance that a woman, a former U.S. Senator, a former Secretary of State, and Former First Lady could potentially be the next President of the United States.

The 2016 election should serve as a chance to audit how our political system is working on behalf of women, including in terms of health care.

The Affordable Care Act, ACA, has played a role in creating greater gender equality in this country. Under the ACA, being a woman is no longer a ''preexisting condition.'' What does that mean? It means insurance companies can no longer force women to pay more based on their gender.

The ACA also provides more preventive services for women at no cost. Lifesaving preventive services like mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, and prenatal care are now covered at no additional cost for roughly 48.5 million American women with private insurance. Access to these services means that fewer women will be sidelined from the job market, unable to support families because of preventable illnesses. There is no question that we are making progress in women's health care, in terms of cost, equity, and in providing much-needed services.

We have further to go. Gender-based disparities in medical research still remain. Some medical trials today do not consider the impact of gender in their research, and diseases like heart disease, which is the leading cause of death for American women, are often misdiagnosed or overlooked.

That is why I have continuously fought for robust funding for the National Institutes of Health, NIH, which pioneers much of our Nation's groundbreaking medical research and clinical trials. I was very encouraged to see the NIH receive a $2 billion increase in the fiscal year 2016 Omnibus spending bill—thanks in large part to Senator MIKULSKI. That is the largest increase NIH has received since 2003. By ensuring that NIH has all of the tools it needs to continue such urgent work, we can address persistent disparities and continue to build on the gains in our health care system made under the ACA. One thing is certainly clear: we only stand to gain from increased resources for our medical community to improve the health of women.

Improving health care is only one part of the equation involved in empowering and uplifting women in the United States.

I have previously spoken about the need to close the gender pay gap, the need to pass meaningful legislation to reduce the number of women killed by guns during instances of domestic violence, and the need to ensure women can continue to make choices concerning their own reproductive health. All of these are critically important to the well-being of women in America.

America was built on the promise of equal rights. Our history is defined by groups struggling to achieve full equality under the law. I think many Americans would be shocked to find out that the Constitution still lacks a provision ensuring gender equality. Think about that: women still lack the same constitutional protections as men. I think this is wrong and have introduced legislation to remove the deadline for States to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, which 35 States have ratified already—just three more to go.

The Equal Rights Amendment is slightly longer than two tweets, but

would finally give women full and equal protection under the Constitution. It reads as follows:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

It is that simple. When Congress passed the ERA in 1972, it provided that the measure had to be ratified by three-fourths of the States, 38 States, within 7 years. This deadline was later extended to 10 years by a joint resolution enacted by Congress, but ultimately only 35 out of 38 States had ratified the ERA when the deadline expired in 1982. To put that in context, in 1992, the 27th Amendment to the Constitution prohibiting immediate Congressional pay raises was ratified after 203 years.

Article V of the Constitution contains no time limits for ratification of constitutional amendments, and the ERA time limit was contained in a joint resolution, not the actual text of the amendment. The Senate could pass my legislation removing the 10-year deadline right now. I hope that the majority leader will bring this legislation up for a vote because American women deserve to know that their most fundamental rights are explicitly protected by our Nation's most venerated document.

I would like to take a moment to discuss some issues that apply more to women outside of the United States but still affect every American.

I serve as the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In that position, I have seen firsthand how the relatively small amount of money allocated for foreign assistance saves both lives and American tax dollars over time. At less than 1 percent of the Federal budget, foreign assistance helps us rely less on costly military operations and prevent international catastrophes before they happen.

As I previously stated, the way a nation treats its women is very much a barometer as to how well that nation is doing. And just as in the United States, giving women outside United States the tools they need to succeed uplifts families, communities and nations. The millennium development goals, MDGs, were some of the most aggressive and successful attempts to combat global poverty and improve the quality of life for millions of women and families in the developing world.

The millennium development goals, first established in 2000, brought together nations, businesses, international organizations, and foundations in a focused and coordinated effort to reduce poverty and disease by 2015. Over the last two decades, the number of people worldwide living in extreme poverty has been cut in half, from about one in every six people in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. We have made progress in global education, with a 20 percent increase in primary school enrollment in sub-Saharan Africa and a nearly 50 percent decrease in the number of out-of-school children of primary school age.

In terms of gender equality, we still have a long way to go, but today we can cheer the fact that women have gained more parliamentary representation in ninety percent of the countries of the world than twenty years ago. The rate of maternal mortality has declined by forty-five percent worldwide, including by sixty-four percent in Southern Asia and forty-nine percent in sub-Saharan Africa.

When it comes to combating HIV/AIDS, we have made truly incredible strides over the past fifteen years. New HIV infections dropped by forty percent between 2000 and 2013, and the number of people living with HIV that were receiving anti-retroviral therapy increased seventeenfold from 2003 to 2014.

Behind these impressive numbers are countless women who are alive and strengthening their families and communities because of the millennium development goals, but there are still many areas where we need to make more progress.

In September 2015, more than 150 world leaders gathered at the United Nations General Assembly to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 sustainable development goals, SDGs. The SDGs aim to build on the successes of the millennium development goals and catalyze further progress.

One area where there is still much work to be done concerns child marriages. I am pleased the sustainable development goal 5 includes a target to eliminate child, early and forced marriages.

According to the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, each year, 14.2 million girls are married before their 18th birthday. Some of these girls are as young as 9 years old. Childhood marriage robs girls of their adolescence, denies them an education, greatly increases the risk of maternal mortality, and decreases their chance of becoming economically independent. Pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of death for young girls in low- to middle-income countries. And children of young mothers have higher rates of infant mortality and malnutrition compared to children of mothers older than 18.

Terrorist groups often use forced marriages to sustain their efforts. Last April, for instance, Boko Haram kidnapped over 250 girls in Nigeria. Some of those girls were later forced to marry their kidnappers. The so-called Islamic State is also notorious for forcing local women and girls to marry its fighters. Forced marriage is deplorable for many reasons, not the least of which is that is it used as a weapon of war.

The women and girls being forced into these marriages are the very same women and girls who could be leaders, business owners, teachers, and doctors if given the chance. It is in the best interest of these girls and of the United States that the international community speak with a united voice against this practice. As ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I invite all members of Congress to work together to find a way to address this pressing human rights issue.

I am an original co-sponsor of S. Res. 97, a bipartisan resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day. After seeing the impacts that the MDGs have had on vulnerable populations around the world, I have no doubt that the goals contained in this resolution can be accomplished if the United States is willing to take the lead in organizing the international community.

I have mentioned only a small portion of legislative priorities the Senate could act on right now.

As we move through Women's History Month, let us remember that strong and empowered women have gotten us to this point in history and will help lead us to a brighter future.

BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY WEEK

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I wish to request that, for the second year in a row, the U.S. Government officially recognize the last week in March as Black Women's History Week. During the week of March 28, 2016, as part of Women's History Month and in honor of the second year of the United Nation's International Decade for People of African Descent, several leading social justice organizations will be holding their second annual week of events to honor Black women and recognize their current struggles in American society. This week will shed light on the reality that Black women confront many intersectional challenges in American society, yet their concerns are often pushed to the margins of public attention and intervention. This week marks the perfect occasion to attend to the often hidden experiences of Black women and to generate attention to address the challenges they face.

Black women have traditionally gone above and beyond the call of duty in their contributions to American society. Black women have been inspirational symbols of strength and perseverance through their high voter turnout and historic leadership of racial justice movements. Even in the face of grave oppression throughout our Nation's history, Black women have continued to stand strong and contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities, and our country as a whole; yet at the same time, Black women continue to face undue burdens and obstacles to their own well-being. Acknowledging both the centrality of Black women in our history and social fabric as well as the unique inequalities they face is critical in our efforts

to build a society that ensures equality and justice for all.

In conjunction with the congressional declaration, a coalition of organizations advocating for the well-being of women and communities of color will partner to elevate the stories, histories, and realities of Black women's lives, building off the momentum generated by Black Women's History Week in 2015. Our charge is to ensure that the lives of Black women and girls are not overlooked and that efforts to generate information about their well-being is widely shared across public agencies and partner institutions.

Thank you.

BLEEDING DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today is St. Patrick's Day. It is a great day for those of us in this country whose ancestors came here to find a better life. And today, like many of us here, I got up and put on a green tie, but I switched it out for this one, a red one, to highlight support for those who suffer from serious conditions that many Americans don't speak much about or know much about.

This March is the first Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month. It also marks the 30th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's one-time declaration of March as Hemophilia Awareness Month.

Tens of thousands of Americans have been diagnosed with bleeding disorders, including more than 100 Alaskan families. These families are spread all across my State, in Anchorage and Fairbanks, but also in rural communities like Chevak, Elim, Tuntutuliak, Kodiak, and Klawock. These Alaskans face serious health challenges with strength and grace and form a vibrant tight-knit community, and I want to thank those communities for supporting their fellow Alaskans.

Hemophilia is the most expensive chronic condition to treat. There are Alaskan children whose daily dose of medication exceeds $1,800 per day. The good news is there is treatment that continues to improve.

I want to highlight the work done by the Alaska Hemophilia Association, a chapter of the National Hemophilia Foundation, which provides services and support for the Alaskan bleeding disorder community. They work to provide access to care and insurance and support our youth by hosting an annual summer camp for Alaskan children with bleeding disorders and their siblings. Camp Frozen Chosen allows these youth to interact with others with similar bleeding disorders. They are also able to learn to manage and take ownership of their condition and their lives, enabling them to be leaders of their generation.

The Alaska Hemophilia Association and the Alaska bleeding disorder community are the epitome of Alaskan grit and determination and are part of what makes Alaska such a wonderful place.

I would ask that we think of those this month who are suffering from these disorders and that we continue to work together to find solutions and to offer support.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING TAMARA D. GRIGSBY

• Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of Tamara D. Grigsby, whose untimely passing at the age of 41 has left Wisconsin without one of its greatest champions for equality and justice. Tamara committed her life to public service and making a difference in the lives of others. She was known for her honesty, dedication, and ability to see beyond partisan posturing to become a voice for those too often forgotten.

Growing up in Madison, WI, Tamara's path in life was shaped by her experiences confronting economic disparity and racial bias as a student in what is considered Wisconsin's most liberal city. When asked about the apparent dichotomy of this circumstance, she simply responded: ''I'm a liberal. But liberal doesn't mean enlightened, and it doesn't mean informed.'' That statement embodies the essence of who Tamara was.

After earning a bachelor's degree at Howard University and a master's degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Tamara put her energy and skills to work as a social worker in the Milwaukee office of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. Upon seeing the impact she could have on individual lives, she became convinced of the need for effective advocacy on a larger scale.

In 2004, she successfully ran for the Wisconsin Legislature. Her drive and passion to change the world around her led to her success in a three-way primary and an unopposed general election to represent the 18th Assembly District in Milwaukee. During her tenure in the assembly, Tamara was a strong advocate for disadvantaged families and at-risk children, who were too often overlooked and marginalized.

Tamara quickly gained the respect of her colleagues as a passionate, strong voice for equity, fairness, and the expansion of opportunity. She immersed herself in the legislative process as a member of the joint finance committee and as chair of the assembly committee on children and families. She was an outspoken and effective advocate on critical issues such as access to scientifically based sex education and birth control, expansion of transitional jobs to connect unemployed individuals with work, examination of the State's disproportionate Black incarceration rate, and the collection of racial data in police traffic stops. She stood fast against opposition to low-income tax credits and quality health care for low-income Wisconsin residents.

Although an unexpected illness ended her 8 years as a State representative in 2012, her public service continued. She worked in the Milwaukee Public School system and was tapped to lead Dane County's Department of Equity and Inclusion. It is in this role that Tamara's life came full circle. She was once again in Madison challenging the status quo on the issues that inspired her to become a fierce advocate for the poor and underrepresented.

Although Tamara's time with us was too short, she leaves behind a legacy for future leaders to emulate. She will always be remembered for having the courage to speak for those who didn't have a voice.•

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE ELLEN M. HELLER

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the career of Judge Ellen M. Heller. Judge Heller has served the people of Baltimore and Maryland in several capacities for many decades. She is well known and well respected in the legal and nonprofit and communities across our State. In 2010, Judge Heller brought her considerable talents to the Weinberg Foundation, one of Baltimore's most effective nonprofit organizations. After 6 years, Judge Heller will be concluding her role as chair of the board on March 1, 2016, and she will come to the end of her current term as a trustee of the Weinberg Foundation on May 16, 2016.

Judge Heller has helped change lives while she has served at the Weinberg Foundation. Her commitment to service and her steadfastness have made her an incredibly effective chairwoman. For my colleagues who may be unfamiliar with the Weinberg Foundation, the organization does incredible work on behalf of low-income and vulnerable people from Maryland to Hawaii and from the former Soviet Union to Israel and beyond. The responsibility of chairing the board at the Weinberg Foundation is significant; we are fortunate Judge Heller's personal and professional experiences helped make her uniquely suited for the job.

Judge Heller is no stranger to hard work. She graduated from the Johns Hopkins University, cum laude. She also graduated from my alma mater, the University of Maryland School of Law, cum laude. She earned both degrees while raising two sons. Judge Heller's accomplished legal career began as an assistant attorney general. She soon became an associate judge in the Baltimore City Circuit Court, the eighth judicial circuit, and would spend 6 years as the judge in charge of the civil docket.

In 1999, Judge Heller became the first woman to serve as a circuit administrative judge on the eighth circuit. She championed numerous reforms, including the practice of alternative dispute resolution, ADR, in circuit court cases and the introduction of court-ordered mediation in certain civil cases. She also directed the establishment of a new pretrial discovery process, including the appointment of two felony discovery judges. Her dedication not only

to justice as a concept, but to improving the process by which justice is administered, would serve her well at the Weinberg Foundation.

Judges are the public face of the rule of law. I am thankful that so many people will associate justice with such a capable and revered judge. In 2003, Judge Heller retired from the bench and began to lend more of her time and talent to various worthy causes around Maryland and around the world. For instance, Judge Heller served as president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, gaining experience in international aid missions. In her long and illustrious career, Judge Heller has worked with many other distinguished groups: the Maryland School for the Blind, the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene & Public Health, the Task Force on Women in Prison, Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, the Public Trust and Confidence Implementation Committee, the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, and the World Jewish Restitution Organization. I have omitted many more organizations, but the underlying point here is that Judge Heller brought a wealth of experience and talent to the Weinberg Foundation.

The Weinberg Foundation has a long track record of tackling issues head on. The foundation has been a national leader on addressing the basic human needs of healthcare, housing, economic stability, and food security. The Weinberg Foundation has also established itself as an effective advocate for people living with disabilities, the elderly, and our veterans.

Judge Heller has helped the Weinberg Foundation accomplish extraordinary feats during her time on the board. She oversaw the Baltimore Library Project which to seeks to design, build, equip, and staff new or renovated libraries in selected schools where existing public funds can be leveraged. The Weinberg Foundation, with the help of 40 partners, will create as many as 24 of these inspirational spaces. The Weinberg Foundation has committed a total of $10 million for what is expected to be a legacy project.

Judge Heller doubled the amount of funding provided under the employee giving program. The Weinberg Foundation's employee giving program awards grants to their deeply committed staff to fund direct outreach programs.

Judge Heller and the Weinberg Foundation have done immeasurable good for people across the State of Maryland and around the world. As Judge Heller prepares to step down from the foundation, I would like to thank her for her dedication to lifting up all people. I would also like to thank her husband, Shale D. Stiller, and the rest of her loving family for sharing such an incredible woman with humanity. Judge Heller has placed the Weinberg Foundation on solid footing to continue to carry out its important missions. I know I join my colleagues in congratulating Judge Heller on everything she has accomplished and wishing her all the best in her future endeavors.●

RECOGNIZING THE EIGHTH GRADE CLASS AT BIG TIMBER GRADE SCHOOL

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the eighth grade class at Big Timber Grade School. The class recently took over the writing for the Big Timber Pioneer Newspaper.

The Big Timber Pioneer participated in Newspapers in Education Week, and the lucky new young writers were the eighth graders of the Big Timber Grade School. This very special edition of the newspaper was compiled of stories written by the individuals of the class. There are 38 students in the class and they all wrote an article.

Big Timber is located in southern Montana. It is a small town of roughly 1,600 people. I am sure this was a huge honor for the eighth grade class, their parents, and the whole town.

Thank you to Lindsey Kroskob, the managing editor of the Big Timber Pioneer, for making this a goal of hers since 2015 and for making it happen this year. It is people like you that can help shape the minds of our young Montanans to realize that anything is possible.

Congratulations to the eighth grade class for getting the opportunity to write for the newspaper. I look forward to reading your very special edition and learning about the students of Big Timber Grade School. Maybe I will see your names someday in national publications across our country.●

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT LOUGH

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Robert Lough for his tireless effort in helping Nevada's brave servicemembers after they have returned home from the battlefield. Mr. Lough has been a volunteer with the Henderson Municipal Court's Veterans Treatment Court program since its opening in 2011, going above and beyond to help fellow veterans in need.

The Henderson Municipal Court's Veterans Treatment Court program is an invaluable resource to the southern Nevada community, providing our veterans with vital services that range from job placement to suicide prevention. This program assists our nation's servicemembers as they return home and readjust to life in their communities. The court program includes representatives from the legal system and volunteers who work to rehabilitate veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or drug or alcohol issues. Although there is no way to adequately thank the men and women who lay down their lives for our freedoms, the Henderson Municipal Court's Veterans Treatment Court program acts as a one-stop solution for veterans who find themselves in a position of need. The State of Nevada is fortunate to have someone like Mr. Lough, who demonstrates unwavering loyalty to Nevada veterans, working in support of this important program.

Mr. Lough, a veteran himself, served in the U.S. Navy from 1967 to 1973. No words can properly thank him for his service to our country, but I offer my deepest gratitude for his sacrifices in defending our freedoms. In addition, he is a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America in Henderson and Boulder City Chapter 1076. In February, Mr. Lough was recognized as Veteran of the Month by Governor Brian Sandoval for his efforts in the Henderson Municipal Court's Veterans Treatment Court program, an accolade that is well deserved. Mr. Lough is truly a role model to all not only for his service to our country, but also for his ambitions in caring for our Nation's heroes. For the last 5 years, Mr. Lough has served as a mentor to struggling veterans who have lost their way. His charisma, caring character, and dedication to helping others are truly admirable.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning to civilian life after service. Congress has a responsibility to honor these brave individuals and ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am grateful to have someone like Mr. Lough working as an ally to ensure the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing Mr. Lough for his work at the Henderson Municipal Court's Veterans Treatment Court, a program with a mission that is both noble and necessary. I am honored to acknowledge Mr. Lough for his efforts, and I wish him the best of luck in all of his future endeavors.●

RECOGNIZING SANFORD CENTER GERIATRIC SPECIALTY CLINIC

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the opening of the Sanford Center Geriatric Specialty Clinic, the first of its kind in the Silver State. This facility's innovative and unique health care offerings will contribute greatly to Nevadans' quality of life and help improve the quality of medical care offered to seniors across northern Nevada.

The geriatric specialty clinic offers screenings and assessments on the University of Nevada, Reno campus inside the Center for Molecular Medicine. The facility provides geriatric assessment and care management to our elderly population, addressing a wide range of medical concerns, including arthritis, dementia, depression, high blood pressure, frailty, and more. The clinic takes on a comprehensive approach, allowing social workers, primary care physicians, nurses, and psychologists

to collaborate in order to make a comprehensive patient assessment. Effective communication within the facility connects both the physical and mental health of patients, creating a better understanding of the patient's needs. The facility also supports patients with multiple chronic conditions, coordinating home and clinical services. In addition, the Sanford Center for Aging is spearheading the start of a telemedicine program to support our rural communities. Those leading the way at this center stand as role models to our local community, demonstrating a genuine concern in improving the health and well-being of Nevadans. The State of Nevada is fortunate to have a facility like this available to our growing senior population.

The Silver State has one of the fastest growing elderly populations in the country, which is why I am pleased to see the clinic is dedicated to caring for Nevada's seniors throughout the aging process. As a member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, I am committed to ensuring the needs of this community are met. The opening of the Sanford Center Geriatric Specialty Clinic is another step in providing Nevada's seniors with the support they need and deserve. The groundbreaking care that this facility will provide is invaluable to northern Nevada.

Those serving at this clinic have gone above and beyond to address the needs of our senior community. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the opening of the Sanford Center Geriatric Specialty Clinic.●

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN S. WALDEN

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to LTC John Walden for his 29 years of exemplary dedication to duty while serving as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. I am grateful that he will continue to serve his family and the local community of Oxford after concluding his career with the Army. We wish him well in his retirement.

A native of Georgia, LTC John Walden was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Corps from Georgia Military College in 1988. He completed a bachelor of science in criminal justice from Georgia State University in 1995 and his masters of arts in leadership from Luther Rice University in 2013. His military education includes the Military Intelligence Officer Basic Course; Military Intelligence Officer Advance Course; Psychological Operations Officer Course; Counterintelligence Officer Course; Combined Arms Exercise; Command and General Staff College, Intermediate Level Education; and airborne school.

As an Army Reserve officer, Lieutenant Colonel Walden has served with military intelligence, psychological operations, and special operations units at the platoon, detachment, company, battalion, group, and major command level. Assignments have included: tactical intelligence officer, counterintelligence officer, HUMINT team chief, counter terrorism analyst, Iraq Threat Finance Cell OIC, deputy chief, counter terrorism analyst, intelligence training officer, and deputy commander.

As with all our citizen soldiers, it is important that we acknowledge his service in the civilian sector. Lieutenant Colonel Walden has extensive law enforcement experience, serving as both a deputy sheriff in the Rockdale County sheriff's office and as a detective and special investigator with the Valdosta Police Department. As an ordained minister, he was able to continue serving the community and provide mentorship to those in need. He has also worked at Ford Motor Company and the Maxell Corporation. It is because of all of their cooperation and understanding during his many tours of duty that he was able to make such a positive impact on the Army Reserve.

Considering his many positions and service in both the Army and civilian sector, we must acknowledge the tireless support of John's wife, Shelley, and his children, Johnathon, Lucy, and Samuel. I thank them for their sacrifices and wish them all the best for continued success in the future.

Throughout his 29-year career, LTC John Walden has made positive impacts on the careers and lives of his soldiers, peers, and superiors. I am grateful for his service to our country, his community, and that he chose to serve as an Army leader. I join my colleagues today in honoring his dedication to the United States of America.●

REMEMBERING GARY BRAASCH

● Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, Gary Braasch, a gifted photographer of the natural world, died on March 7, 2016. Gary dedicated his career to capturing visually striking portrayals of the devastating effects of climate change. His work has been published in Time, LIFE, the New York Times, National Geographic, and Discover and featured in the Boston Museum of Science, the Chicago Field Museum, and the California Academy of Sciences. Some of Gary's most well-known photos depict the retreat of glaciers. The juxtaposition of old photos from the turn of the 20th century with Gary's modern photos dramatically demonstrated large amounts of glacial melting. Some of these photos were featured in Al Gore's ''An Inconvenient Truth.''

Gary also documented the environmental effects of the fossil fuel industry. He famously captured the first images of Shell's ill-fated Kulluk oil rig, as it prepared to drill an exploratory oil well in the Arctic Ocean. The Kulluk is now regarded as a symbol of the recklessness and dangers of Arctic oil drilling and has become a powerful image of our need to transition to low-carbon, renewable energy.

Gary's photographs were also influential in the scientific and policy communities. He worked with scientists to determine how to use photography to accurately portray the science of climate change. He also visited Capitol Hill on numerous occasions, providing visual evidence of our changing environment to me and my colleagues in the House and Senate. His 2007 book ''Earth Under Fire'' graced my office for many years.

Gary died capturing breathtaking photos on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, a region particular vulnerable to the effects of climate change. His images resonated in a way words and data could never do alone and will stand on as a key component of our planet's record of climate change. Gary may no longer be with us but his work will continue to inspire the next generation of photographers and all of us who want to protect our planet and its people.●

REMEMBERING BARRY LYNN COATES

● Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, today I wish to honor one of South Carolina's veterans, Barry Lynn Coates. Mr. Coates recently passed away at the age of 46 on January 23, 2016, after a long battle with cancer. He became the voice for veterans across the nation as he fought hard to improve the Veterans Affairs medical system. He fought not for himself, but to improve the lives of all veterans suffering from delays in their medical care.

About a year after first complaining to his doctors of pain, he was finally able to get a colonoscopy. Doctors discovered a cancerous tumor the size of a baseball. At that point he had stage 4 cancer, and it was only a matter of time before he was overtaken by the illness. He suffered for months. A simple medical procedure might have saved his life, but he found himself on a growing list of veterans waiting for appointments and procedures. Barry Lynn Coates was courageous in his fight against cancer and in his fight for other veterans to receive the care they deserve.

Lynn is survived by his wife, their five children, five grandchildren, and a community that loved his bubbly personality and passion for pawn shops and for fixing things. He loved the beach, nature, his family above everything, and he lived for the service of his country.

It is with pride and honor we recognize Barry Lynn Coates and his family today and add their legacy to our March 17, 2016, CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We will never forget his sacrifice.●

TRIBUTE TO BETSY FLEMING

● Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, today I wish to honor one of South Carolina's great college presidents, Ms. Betsy Fleming. Ms. Fleming is the sitting president for Converse College. Converse College is a private master's university in Spartanburg, SC, providing a

distinctive undergraduate liberal arts education for women and innovative programs for co-ed graduate study. President Fleming has decided to step down at the end of the semester after 11 years of leadership at the College.

Through her leadership, Converse College has seen unprecedented growth and extraordinary success. Ms. Fleming has used her passion for the arts to make great strides at Converse, in Spartanburg and statewide. She is leaving quite a legacy in the endowment growth of the school, her decision to cut tuition by 43 percent, and the restructuring of the college to make it more financially sound.

President Fleming's love and understanding of the arts community has also brought value to the students and faculty at Converse College, and she has personified what it means to lead. Her vigorous involvement in the college as well as at the local and State level are second to none, and she truly represents what it means to be an outstanding leader, president, and trailblazer.

It is with pride and honor we recognize Ms. Betsy Fleming and her outstanding achievements today and add her legacy to our March 17, 2016, CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We will always remember her admiration for the arts, for Spartanburg, and above all for Converse College.●

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF THE JENKINS INSTITUTE

● Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I would like to honor and congratulate the Daniel Joseph Jenkins Institute for Children in North Charleston on their 125th anniversary.

In 1891, the Jenkins Institute was founded as Jenkins Orphanage. In 1892, the institute was chartered by the State of South Carolina with the mission of providing a loving and secure home to many children, specifically orphans, in the community.

The Jenkins Institute is an example of an organization that remains committed to the well-being of our community. For 125 years, they have opened their door to orphan children, regardless of their race or socioeconomic backgrounds.

Today the institute continues to welcome those in need of a safe place to call home. They have shown tremendous faith through works of charity, and their honorable legacy will forever be appreciated. I acknowledge with pleasure the Jenkins Institute's influence in North Charleston and therefore recognize their service, dedication, and 125 years rooted in love and faith. Because of places like the Daniel Joseph Jenkins Institute, our children will have a brighter future ahead of them.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a treaty which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:57 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, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4416. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project.

H.R. 4434. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project.

H.R. 4596. An act to ensure that small business providers of broadband Internet access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 10:59 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 2426. An act to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan in the International Criminal Police Organization, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 2:16 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1831) to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, 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. 4416. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4434. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4596. An act to ensure that small business providers of broadband Internet access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, March 17, 2016, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 2426. An act to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan in the International Criminal Police Organization, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. ALEXANDER, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

Report to accompany S. 1177, An original bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to ensure that every child achieves (Rept. No. 114–231).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MCCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Jennifer M. O'Connor, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Defense.

*Todd A. Weiler, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

*Army nomination of Gen. Joseph L. Votel, to be General.

*Army nomination of Lt. Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, to be General.

Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Sargent and ending with Brig. Gen. Robert D. Tenhet, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nominations beginning with Col. Jeffrey J. Johnson and ending with Col. Ronald T. Stephens, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nominations beginning with Col. Dennis P. LeMaster and ending with Col. Michael J. Talley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Michael K. Nagata, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, to be Lieutenant General.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Col. Bradley S. James and ending with Col. Kurt W. Stein, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 25, 2016.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Austin S. Miller, to be Lieutenant General.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators .

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

Air Force nominations beginning with James B. Anderson and ending with Hyral B. Walker, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jeremy V. Bastian and ending with Christopher A. Watson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Air Force nominations beginning with Christopher F. Abbott and ending with Devin Lee Zufelt, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Air Force nomination of Christopher T. Stein, to be Major.

Army nomination of Gregory L. Boylan, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Derek G. Bean, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Adrian R. Algarra and ending with Gregory B. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nominations beginning with Philip O. Adams and ending with Benjaman M. Wunderlich, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nominations beginning with Julia N. Alvarez and ending with April D. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nominations beginning with Wendy M. Adamian and ending with D012433, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nomination of Vernita M. Corbett, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Matthew H. Adams and ending with D012453, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Army nomination of William D. Rose, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Mark W. Manoso, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Eric F. Sabety, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Andrew R. Mciver and ending with Gerard C. Philip, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 3, 2016.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Aaron R. Craig and ending with Christopher T. Steinhilber, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 28, 2016.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Jimmy W. Darsey and ending with Gerald E. Pirk, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 28, 2016.

Navy nominations beginning with Matthew T. Allen and ending with Joshua F. Zimmer, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Navy nominations beginning with Richard W. Lang and ending with Bradley E. Shemluck, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2016.

Navy nomination of Michael L. Hipp, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Ronald H. Nellen, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Ashley A. Hockycko, to be Lieutenant Commander.

*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. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2700. A bill to update the authorizing provisions relating to the workforces of the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. 2701. A bill to require consideration of the impact on beneficiary access to care and to enhance due process protections in procedures for suspending payments to Medicaid providers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 2702. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals with disabilities to save additional amounts in their ABLE accounts above the current annual maximum contribution if they work and earn income; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. BURR):

S. 2703. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow rollovers between 529 programs and ABLE accounts; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. BURR):

S. 2704. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the age requirement with respect to eligibility for qualified ABLE programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2705. A bill to authorize Federal agencies to establish prize competitions for innovation or adaptation management development relating to coral reef ecosystems and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 2706. A bill to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on Federal land and to open up opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. 2707. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to nullify the proposed rule regarding defining and delimiting the exemptions for executive, administrative, professional, outside sales, and computer employees, to require the Secretary of Labor to conduct a full and complete economic analysis with improved economic data on small businesses, nonprofit employers, Medicare or Medicaid dependent health care providers, and small governmental jurisdictions, and all other employers, and minimize the impact on such employers, before promulgating any substantially similar rule, and to provide a rule of construction regarding the salary threshold exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 2708. A bill to provide for the admission to the United States of up to 10,000 Syrian religious minorities as refugees of special humanitarian concern in each of the fiscal years 2016 through 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL:

S. 2709. A bill to require the posting online of certain government contracts; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2710. A bill to increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 2711. A bill to expand opportunity for Native American children through additional options in education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2712. A bill to restore amounts improperly withheld for tax purposes from severance payments to individuals who retired or separated from service in the Armed Forces for combat-related injuries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 2713. A bill to provide for the implementation of a Precision Medicine Initiative; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL:

S. 2714. A bill to vest responsibility for inspector general duties for the National Background Investigations Bureau of the Office of Personnel Management in the Inspector General of the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL:

S. 2715. A bill to amend section 2302 of title 5, United States Code, to include the suspension or revocation of access to classified information as a personnel action, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2716. A bill to update the oil and gas and mining industry guides of the Securities and Exchange Commission; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2717. A bill to improve the safety and address the deferred maintenance needs of Indian dams to prevent flooding on Indian reservations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. AYOTTE):

S. 2718. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to support innovative approaches to career and technical education and redesign the high school experience for students by providing students with equitable access to rigorous, engaging, and relevant real world education through partnerships with business and industry and higher education that prepare students to graduate from high school and enroll into postsecondary education without the need for remediation and with the ability to use knowledge to solve complex problems, think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and develop academic mindsets; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2719. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to improve

the protections provided to members of the uniformed services and their families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2720. A bill to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to amend certain regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 2721. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to credit individuals serving as caregivers of dependent relatives with deemed wages for up to five years of such service; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 2722. A bill to amend the Home Owners' Loan Act to allow Federal savings associations to elect to operate as national banks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2723. A bill to amend the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 to apply whistleblower protections available to certain executive branch employees to legislative branch employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. LEE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. SASSE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 2724. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, with respect to the judicial review of agency interpretations of statutory and regulatory provisions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KIRK, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2725. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to the ballistic missile program of Iran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COATS, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MORAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 2726. A bill to hold Iran accountable for its state sponsorship of terrorism and other threatening activities and for its human rights abuses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2727. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to allow preservation leasing as a form of compensatory mitigation for discharges of dredged or fill material affecting State or Indian land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SULLIVAN:

S. 2728. A bill to facilitate the import of marine mammal products into the United States by Alaska Natives; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2729. A bill to require full spending of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, provide for expanded uses of the Fund, and prevent cargo diversion, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2730. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, known as the ''Ghost Army'', collectively, in recognition of its unique and incredible service during World War II; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 2731. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a land exchange involving land within the boundary of the Cape Cod National Seashore, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2732. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to exempt Indian tribes from compensatory migration requirements in connection with certain discharges of dredged or fill material, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. LEE):

S. 2733. A bill to ensure that venue in patents cases is fair and proper, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MURPHY:

S. 2734. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion of gain or loss from the sale or exchange of certain brownfield sites from unrelated business taxable income, and to extend expensing of environmental remediation costs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 2735. A bill to strengthen the enforcement of explosive materials prohibitions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. KING, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2736. A bill to improve access to durable medical equipment for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 2737. A bill to improve medical device innovation; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 2738. A bill to amend the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 to require the disclosure of political intelligence activities, to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for restrictions on former officers, employees, and elected officials of the executive and legislative branches regarding political intelligence contacts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2739. A bill to provide for equitable compensation to the Spokane Tribe of Indians of the Spokane Reservation for the use of tribal land for the production of hydropower by the Grand Coulee Dam, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BENNET, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. Res. 403. A resolution designating the week beginning April 24, 2016 as ''National Industrial Assessment Center Week'' in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Industrial Assessment Centers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 404. A resolution designating March 2016 as ''National Middle Level Education Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. Res. 405. A resolution designating Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as the site of the centennial commemoration of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, in coordination with Vision 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. Res. 406. A resolution recognizing the Girl Scouts of the United States of America on the 100th Anniversary of the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in the Girl Scouts, which has stood for excellence and leadership for girls everywhere since 1916; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. Res. 407. A resolution congratulating the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team for winning the 38th annual United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association national championship; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 408. A resolution designating April 2016 as ''National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FISCHER, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. CARPER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. Res. 409. A resolution recognizing March 2016 as ''National Women's History Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. Con. Res. 34. A concurrent resolution providing for an adjournment of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 453

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 453, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to States to streamline State requirements and procedures for veterans with military emergency medical training to become civilian emergency medical technicians.

S. 491

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New York

(Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 491, a bill to lift the trade embargo on Cuba.

S. 774

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 774, a bill to amend the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 1082

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1082, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes.

S. 1208

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1208, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require gas pipeline facilities to accelerate the repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of high-risk pipelines used in commerce, and for other purposes.

S. 1209

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1209, a bill to establish State revolving loan funds to repair or replace natural gas distribution pipelines.

S. 1333

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1333, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude cannabidiol and cannabidiol-rich plants from the definition of marihuana, and for other purposes.

S. 1383

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1383, a bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to subject the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to the regular appropriations process, and for other purposes.

S. 1631

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1631, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify certain provisions relating to multiemployer pensions, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1890, a bill to amend chapter 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction for the theft of trade secrets, and for other purposes.

S. 2085

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2085, a bill to clarify that nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity may accept donated mortgage appraisals, and for other purposes.

S. 2102

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2102, a bill to amend the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act to provide that the Federal Trade Commission shall exercise authority with respect to mergers only under the Clayton Act and only in the same procedural manner as the Attorney General exercises such authority.

S. 2125

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2125, a bill to make the Community Advantage Pilot Program of the Small Business Administration permanent, and for other purposes.

S. 2216

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2216, a bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 2377

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2377, a bill to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and protect and secure the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2390

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2390, a bill to provide adequate protections for whistleblowers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

S. 2437

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor 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. 2494

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2494, a bill to amend the Federal Power Act to provide that any inaction by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that allows a rate change to go into effect shall be treated as an order by the Commission for purposes of rehearing and court review.

S. 2502

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2502, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to ensure that retirement investors receive advice in their best interests, and for other purposes.

S. 2505

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2505, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that retirement investors receive advice in their best interests, and for other purposes.

S. 2531

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2531, a bill to authorize State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2531, supra.

S. 2603

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2603, a bill to deny corporate average fuel economy credits obtained through a violation of law, establish an Air Quality Restoration Trust Fund within the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes.

S. 2613

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2613, a bill to reauthorize certain programs established by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006.

S. 2630

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2630, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to require certain disclosures be included on employee pay stubs, and for other purposes.

S. 2632

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2632, a bill to promote freedom, human rights, and the rule of law as part of United States-Vietnam relations and for other purposes.

S. 2633

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2633, a bill to improve the ability of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide health care to veterans through non-Department health care providers, and for other purposes.

S. 2646

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr.

BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2646, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Choice Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve health care provided to veterans by the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 2693

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2693, a bill to ensure the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission allocates its resources appropriately by prioritizing complaints of discrimination before implementing the proposed revision of the employer information report EEO–1, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 383

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 383, a resolution recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation.

S. RES. 391

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 391, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to oppose the transfer of foreign enemy combatants from the detention facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to the United States homeland.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 2706. A bill to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on Federal land and to open up opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, last summer, I set out on a tour of Oregon's Seven Wonders to hear from Oregonians in every corner of the State about how to improve access to outdoor recreation. Recreation is a big economic multiplier for my State, and Oregonians are the true experts on—outdoor recreation—it is in our DNA.

Oregon's recreation and tourism economy generates an estimated $10 billion a year in direct economic impact for the state and supports more than 101,000 jobs—enough people essentially to fill every seat in Autzen and Reser stadiums, home to the University of Oregon Ducks and Oregon State Beavers. Recreation supports communities and businesses large and small throughout urban and rural Oregon and can have astounding benefits on veterans, youth, and seniors.

Not only do you have outfitters and the crafts people who produce recreation products, like canoes, kayaks, bikes, and fishing poles, recreation supports the broader travel and tourism industry including equipment retailers and gear shops. But the benefit doesn't stop when the sun goes down. Then visitors go to the brewpubs and restaurants, and they stay overnight at the hotels and the motels. So what we need to do is ensure that recreation is a higher priority for the future so it can continue to boost economies large and small.

Yet on my tour of Oregon's Seven Wonders, I consistently heard one troubling theme that's yanking our recreation economy's potential back down to earth. Simply put, red tape is tying down the opportunities for Oregon recreation and tourism to lift off to even greater heights. Outfitters and guides must navigate confusing permit processes only to wait months or years for their permits to get approved, and outdoor enthusiasts searching for outdoor recreation opportunities often get lost in the paperwork before they ever hit the trails.

That is why today I am introducing the Recreation Not Red-Tape, RNR, Act to ensure that recreation is a priority for Federal agencies and to cut the bureaucratic red tape in the recreation permitting process to make accessing outdoor recreation opportunities easier and much more fun. I gathered input from Oregonians who enjoy public lands, entrepreneurs in the outdoor travel and tourism industry, and community leaders from Oregon and across the Nation. The bill focuses on making sure everyone has easier access to the outdoors, recognizing and building on recreation as an economic driver, and making the repair and management of our recreational public lands easier. Additionally, the bill supports improving access to outdoor recreation for veterans, seniors, and youth.

My friend and colleague, Representative EARL BLUMENAUER, is today introducing the House companion of the Recreation Not Red-Tape Act. The bill is supported by over 50 Oregon and national organizations, from American Alpine Club to Vet Voice.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 2708. A bill to provide for the admission to the United States of up to 10,000 Syrian religious minorities as refugees of special humanitarian concern in each of the fiscal years 2016 through 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, 6 months ago, a 12-year-old boy stood before a crowd in a Syrian village not far from Aleppo. This boy was Christian and standing above him were Islamic State terrorists holding knives. In the crowd was the boy's father, a Christian minister. Methodically, the terrorists began cutting off the young boy's fingers. Amidst his screams, they turned to the minister, his father. If he renounced his faith and in their terms returned to Islam, his son's suffering would stop. In the end, however, these ISIS terrorists killed the boy, killed his father, and killed two other Christians solely over the faith they professed. They did so by crucifixion.

In the time of Christ, the cross was not just a means of execution but a brutal and public warning to all. Because of Christ's suffering, the cross was transformed into a revered symbol of His sacrifice and promise of salvation, but today it is clear ISIS seeks to turn the cross once again into a message of dread.

Eight other Christians in the village that day were also killed. They were executed by public beheading, but not before ISIS barbarians raped the two women among the victims and forced the crowd to witness the atrocity.

Today was the deadline set by law for Secretary of State Kerry to present Congress with an evaluation of the persecution of Christians, Yazidis, and other religious minorities in Syria and Iraq. I am heartened Secretary Kerry this morning took the needed step of declaring the systemic murder of religious minorities by ISIS what it plainly is: genocide.

The nature of these horrific crimes of ISIS has not been a secret. It is no secret that the story of the torture and death of that 12-year-old Syrian boy, his minister father, and 10 other Christians is repeated many times over in different villages, with different victims of different religions throughout the region. It is no secret that hundreds of thousands of religious minorities in Syria and Iraq have been driven by war and violence from homes and lands they have held for generations. It is no secret ISIS terrorists have destroyed Christian churches, desecrated holy ancient shrines, and dug up Christian graves and smashed their tombstones. It is no secret bishops, priests, and other clerical leaders are being abducted and murdered. It is no secret ISIS terrorists capture Yazidi women and girls and lock them into a life of sexual slavery and repeated rape. Many of these victims choose to take their own lives, seeing suicide as their only escape amidst hopelessness and unimaginable suffering. It is no secret that thousands of Christians and other religious minorities have been systematically raped and tortured, beheaded, crucified, burned alive, and buried in mass graves, if buried at all. It is no secret the word we should use to describe the whole of these atrocities—the word we must use—is ''genocide.''

The plain reality is that the Islamic State is seeking to eradicate Christians, Yazidis, Sabean-Mandeans, Jews, and other religious groups it sees as apostates and infidels. This is part of its fanatical focus on establishing a caliphate first in the Middle East and eventually across the rest of the world.

Christians, Yazidis, and others who have managed to find refuge have seen ISIS's genocidal campaign firsthand. They can list name after name of missing family members—wives and daughters kidnapped into sexual slavery,

sons and brothers killed, and others spirited away to unknown fates. These victims know the truth of the genocide occurring in Syria and Iraq, and now that truth is recognized officially by the United States of America.

There are those who wavered on whether this was genocide. They feared that uttering this truth would compel U.S. action to stop the genocide. My answer is—and? A mortal enemy who wishes to commit mass terrorist atrocities against the United States is also systematically persecuting and exterminating Christians and other religious minorities. When will our national security interests ever overlap more perfectly with our moral sentiment than now? We can and we ought to stop ISIS dead, stop them before they kill more Americans, stop them before they eliminate Christian communities that have existed since the days of Christ himself.

Still others argue that while a genocide may be occurring, recognizing it may somehow play into ISIS's propaganda that it is fighting a righteous jihad against a supposed new Crusade. I never understood this argument. To stay silent in the face of ISIS's propaganda is to accommodate that propaganda. To cede any power to ISIS's narrative is to bend the light of truth to the hard darkness of a lie. Standing up for the practitioners of religions born in the Middle East and calling the region home since the beginning of recorded history is not a new Crusade. It is a defense of world order demonstrated through the periods of peaceful coexistence of the many religions in those ancient lands—an existence that today is threatened with extinction by ISIS's barbarism.

Today the United States rightly recognizes this genocide, but we must also take action to relieve it. ISIS is a threat to the United States, our allies, and to the stability of the whole Middle East. Destroying ISIS and stopping its malignant expansion is a core national security interest of the United States, but stopping ISIS and the depraved ideology that enables it is also a pursuit that aligns with our highest ideals and humanitarian principles.

I and many of my colleagues in the Senate have deep disagreements with the President's policy to defeat ISIS. For 2 years his policy of confusion, delay, and paralysis has failed to stop these terrorists. An entirely new approach that has the United States in the lead of a determined coalition is badly needed, but it is not only President Obama's strategic approach that is ill-considered. His policy on Syrian refugee resettlement is as well. Because the United States unwisely relies on the United Nations for all referrals of refugees seeking resettlement in the United States, Christians and other religious minorities fleeing persecution are the victims of unintentional discrimination when seeking asylum and protection in the United States.

Last year, of the 1,790 Syrian refugees resettled in the United States, only 41 were religious minorities. Of that 41, 29 were Christian. That means that while 13 percent of Syria's prewar population consisted of religious minorities, only 2.3 percent of the refugees who make it to the United States are religious minorities. Without doubt, Syrians of all confessions are being victimized by this savage war and are facing unimaginable suffering, but only Christians and other religious minorities are the deliberate targets of systemic persecution and genocide. Their ancient communities are at risk of extermination. Their ancestral homes and religious sites are being erased from the Middle Eastern map. Christians and other minorities should not be shut out from the small number of refugees who find shelter in the United States. We ought to help ensure that these faith communities survive, but why are Christians underrepresented among the refugees? There are a number of factors. Perhaps chief among them is that the United States, for all intents and purposes, relies exclusively on the U.N. refugee agency to identify candidates for resettlement. According to the State Department, less than 1 percent of the thousands of Syrian refugees referred by the U.N. to the United States are religious minorities.

Let me stress that this underrepresentation is not the result of intentional discrimination. The U.N. does praiseworthy and hard work in relieving the suffering of refugees around the world and, as a result, improving the security and stability of nations in and near conflict and disaster zones, but it is well established that many religious minorities in Syria are very reluctant to register as refugees with the United Nations because they fear facing even more persecution. The U.N. itself has reported that minority communities ''fear that registration might bring retribution from other refugees'' in camps or other areas in which they sought safe haven. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has reported that Christians refrain from registering with the U.N. because they fear being marked for revenge by forces loyal to Bashar al-Assad should he remain in power in Syria.

Whether these fears are well-founded or not, the reality is, they exist and they deter Christians from seeking U.N. protection. While the U.N. has sought to educate minority populations on the safety of the registration system, the fact remains that only 1 percent of the millions of Syrian refugees who registered with the U.N. are non-Muslim.

The United States ought not to depend solely on the U.N. for refugee resettlement referrals. If we are to do our part in saving ancient faith communities from genocide, we must find alternate ways to identify persecuted people to whom we can grant safe haven.

Today I am introducing legislation to create that alternate way. The Religious Persecution Relief Act would grant religious minorities fleeing persecution from groups like ISIS and other groups in Syria priority status so they can apply directly to the U.S. resettlement program, without going through the U.N. first. It will set aside 10,000 resettlement slots annually that must be devoted to religious minorities.

The priority status, known as P–2 status, will allow religious minorities to skip the U.N. referral process, and it will fast track the process by which we confirm that they are in fact targets of persecution and genocide. To answer in advance a most urgent and understandable question, those who apply for P–2 status will be subject to the exact same security vetting process as all other refugee applicants. It is my strong position that the United States must work with known religious leaders in the region and pursue other proven vetting methods to ensure that those who enter this country are not threats to the security of the American people.

Extending a hand to help persecuted people in this manner is not a new idea. In 1989, the late Senator from New Jersey, Frank Lautenberg, crafted what has been called the Lautenberg amendment, which granted P–2 priority status to Soviet Jewry, Vietnamese nationals, and other religious minorities seeking refuge. In 2004, the late Senator from Pennsylvania, Arlen Specter, expanded the Lautenberg amendment to cover religious minorities fleeing oppression from the Ayatollahs in Iran. In 2007 the late Senator from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy, passed a bill that granted priority status to certain Iraqi religious minority members.

The bill I am introducing today follows this bipartisan tradition of the Senate and our country. Among the first Americans were Pilgrims from religious persecution in the Old World. That is one reason we have a long tradition of defending religious minorities here and around the world.

In the coming weeks, I will discuss this bill with my fellow Senators. My hope is, it will pass and pass soon because each day will bring another Christian child who is tortured, another minister crucified, and another girl raped. Faith communities in the Middle East are slowly being strangled out of existence.

We are coming upon Easter, the day of Christ's resurrection. The message of Easter is one for all of humanity; that in times of pain and suffering, trial and tribulation, there can ultimately be salvation, there can ultimately be triumph over death.

I try to keep this message in mind, particularly amidst these times when religious conflict and oppression do not seem to be waning but waxing. Today Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world. Other religions are not far behind in the scope and depth of the oppression they face. While the United States cannot save all those

who are suffering from religious persecution, when the persecutors are rabid terrorists who want to kill Americans and we have the means not only to defeat those terrorists but to also protect the innocent, we ought to act. Certainly we have an obligation to stop the unintentional discrimination in our own refugee process that unfairly blocks Christians and other religious minorities from seeking safety in the United States.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2710. A bill to increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, March is Women's History Month. So this morning I would like to highlight the progress women have made in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math—or the STEM fields—challenges that persist, and legislation that I will be introducing to help overcome these challenges.

Today we rely on computers for much of our modern life. For that, we thank pioneer RDML Grace Hopper, who was one of the first computer programmers. Space travel is one of the most technologically challenging endeavors that humankind has undertaken. The road to becoming an astronaut requires intelligence and toughness, not to mention fortitude. Astronauts like Sally Ride, the first American woman in space, have shown that women belong in every endeavor.

Hawaii is home to women leaders in STEM fields. Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott was raised in rural Hana on the island of Maui. She became the first Native Hawaiian woman to receive a Ph.D. in science and went on to discover over 200 species of algae. She remains a leading expert on Pacific algae. These women persevered and rose to great heights of success in the STEM fields. However, we must do better to make sure that many more women have the opportunity to pursue STEM careers. While girls and boys express a similar level of interest in STEM at an early age, studies have found that women start to lose interest in STEM as early as in middle school. This loss of women and minorities continues at nearly every stage of the STEM career trajectory. For example, women are more likely to switch from a STEM to non-STEM major in their first year of college than their male counterparts.

Girls and women report many reasons for losing interest in STEM. These include negative stereotypes about women in STEM, perceived gender barriers, feelings of isolation, and a lack of female role models and mentors. Gender bias and institutional barriers still slow the advancement of girls and women. Research shows that issues of bias can hinder interest in STEM, influence academic performance, and influence whether faculty encourages female students to pursue STEM careers. Furthermore, bias—whether conscious or unconscious—can harm the hiring, promotion, and career advancement of women in STEM. Bias can even hurt female researchers' chances of winning competitive science grants. Approximately half of the U.S. population and workforce is made up of women. But women make up just over a quarter of the STEM workforce.

As our economy becomes more global, our entire population—men and women—must be engaged in fields that will keep America competitive on the world stage. Expanding the number of women and minorities in STEM fields is essential to meeting that challenge. The importance of growing the U.S. STEM workforce is acknowledged by leaders and businesses in all fields at all levels. For example, this recognition was very evident in the Senate's immigration reform debate. When I served on the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2013, increasing our STEM workforce through immigration policy drove major sections of the bipartisan immigration reform bill passed by the Senate.

In Hawaii and elsewhere, there are programs that expose students to STEM careers through mentoring and interactive activities such as robotics. I want to focus on one school in Hawaii that created these opportunities for their students—Molokai Middle School. This is a school that struggled with science and math scores, but when their teachers established a robotics programs, students from all backgrounds got interested in science. The year the program started, the Molokai Middle School robotics team overcame all odds to represent Hawaii in a national robotics tournament. This year, they will compete in an international robotics competition in Kentucky. Molokai is an island of only about 7,000 people. Their students have thrived and succeeded through their STEM experience. While programs like these have a positive impact on encouraging students to stay excited about STEM fields, there are not enough of such programs.

That is why today I am proud to be joined by Senators GILLIBRAND, MURRAY, FEINSTEIN, HEINRICH, BALDWIN, STABENOW, and BROWN to introduce the Women and Minorities in STEM Booster ACT to improve the recruitment, retention, and success of women and minorities at all stages of the STEM pipeline. This bill authorizes the National Science Foundation to award competitive grants for outreach, mentoring, and professional development programs.

The STEM booster act also authorizes funding for STEM education outreach programs at the elementary and secondary school levels, funding for mentoring programs, and programs to increase the recruitment and retention of women and minority faculty.

I am also working on another bill to address some of the cultural and institutional barriers that I mentioned today, which impede women's and minorities' advancement in STEM fields. In addition to increasing mentoring and outreach programs, the second bill will improve guidance, training, and coordination among Federal STEM agencies and universities to proactively combat bias and discrimination.

We are on the right track to grow our STEM workforce in the United States, but we still need to move forward faster. We must act now to speed this process. My bill will help expose more girls, women, and minorities to opportunities in STEM fields and accelerate their participation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting women and minorities in STEM now.

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 2711. A bill to expand opportunity for Native American children through additional options in education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to help tackle the challenging problem of fixing our broken education system on Indian reservations. The bill, known as the Native American Education Opportunity Act, would expand the education opportunities of Native American student living on reservations by allowing their parents to take full advantage of Education Savings Account which would be funded by the Bureau of Indian Education, BIE.

Under this bill, eligible students could apply for up to 90 percent of the per pupil expenditure that BIE would spend on them at a BIE school and use those funds to pay for private school tuition, tutors, online curriculum courses, special needs services, and other K–12 education needs. This funding would be provided through the use of Education Savings Accounts, or ESA's, which are established State-administered programs in the States of Arizona, Mississippi, Florida, Tennessee, and Nevada.

Across the Nation, there is a growing interest in State legislatures in enacting ESA's because of the freedom and opportunity they give to families, but in particular low-income students. My home State of Arizona is at the forefront of this revolutionary approach of empowering parents-To customize their child's education. I believe that families living on Indian reservations in my state and elsewhere should reap the benefits of ESA's too.

As my colleagues know, the need to improve Indian County is a crisis issue. I'm of course referring to the broken Bureau of Indian Education system which consists of 185 schools and 41,000 students. By some estimates, the BIE's

average per pupil spending is $15,000—higher than the national average. Less than 7 percent of all Native American students attend a BIE school, but the performance disparity between BIE students and Native American students attending non-BIB schools is staggering. Almost half of BIE students do not graduate from high school. Their test scores trail by double digits compared to their peers. Some BIB schools have facilities that are unsuitable as a learning environment. A series of recent reports by the Government Accountability Office, GAO, have focused on the disrepair of schools and bureaucratic mismanagement. Some schools desks, school supplies, and even heat.

I wholeheartedly agree that Congress must intervene and implement administrative reforms and maintenance improvements. But, let us consider that market competition could be a powerful tool for improving teacher retention, diversifying education options, and improving test scores and graduation rates in Indian Country more so than any 5-year BIB plan developed in Washington.

This bill is particularly useful for rural Indian reservations with large land bases where children living on the reservation have little choice but to attend a BIB school. Take for example the Navajo Nation where non-BIB public schools can be over 50 miles away, and private school options are few and far between. It is unconscionable to leave students stranded in failing schools when we can create the option of expanding their educational opportunities in even the most remote parts of Indian County. We can and should do more to create a market that attracts private schools and other education services willing to open shop on remote Indian reservations.

School choice initiatives, while still relatively new, are building a track record of success. One example is a Federal program set up 12 years ago to address the beleaguered public school system in our Nation's capital, Washington, D.C. Congress established the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program which at one time provided up to $20 million in scholarships to low income families to pull their children out of a failing DC public schools and place them in a private school. The DC program transformed the future of thousands of children in the District. In 2011, a U.S. Department of Education study found that graduation rates, particularly among minority students jumped by as much as 20 percent for the kids who participated in the program.

The situation in the BIE school system is failing, and it is a reflection of our failure in our solemn obligation to meet certain needs of Native Americans living on Indian reservations. I believe that opening up education opportunism beyond BIE schools for Native American families can prove to be one of the most effective agents for change for education in Indian Country. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2716. A bill to update the oil and gas and mining industry guides of the Securities and Exchange Commission; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to require the Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, to update its industry guides for oil, gas, and mining companies.

In November 2015, Peabody Energy agreed to provide comprehensive SEC disclosures about climate change risks facing the company when it settled charges of misleading investors. The company executed this settlement with the New York Attorney General after an investigation discovered that Peabody Energy ''repeatedly denied in public financial filings to the SEC that it had the ability to predict the impact that potential regulation of climate change pollution would have on its business, even though Peabody and its consultants actually made projections that such regulation would have severe impacts on the company.''

Unfortunately, it appears that the SEC had no role in this settlement, in which Peabody Energy agreed to amend its SEC disclosures, admitting that ''concerns about the environmental impacts of coal combustion . . . could significantly affect demand for our products or our securities.''

It is clear that the SEC needs to do more when it comes to critically reviewing the disclosures being filed by publicly traded companies, but it is also clear that the SEC's industry guides for oil, gas, and mining companies should be updated to reflect the growing risk of climate change to these companies. By so doing, the investing public can access the material information necessary to make informed decisions when investing in these types of companies. Indeed, it is for this reason that the SEC has established industry guides for certain industries with complex financial and non-financial data.

These disclosures are important to investors, such as Allianz Global Investors, which is a global diversified active investment manager with nearly $500 billion in assets under management. Allianz has specifically called for ''achieving better disclosure of the effects of carbon costs on the Oil & Gas companies.''

In updating the industry guides for oil, gas, and mining companies, my legislation would direct the SEC to work with the SEC's Investor Advisory Committee. This Committee was established by the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to advise and consult with the SEC on regulatory priorities, the regulation of securities products, trading strategies, fee structures, disclosure effectiveness, and on initiatives to promote investor confidence and the integrity of the securities marketplace.

I thank Ceres for their support, and I also thank Representative CARTWRIGHT for introducing companion legislation in the House of Representatives today. I urge our colleagues to join us in supporting this legislation.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2717. A bill to improve the safety and address the deferred maintenance needs of Indian dams to prevent flooding on Indian reservations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Dam Repairs and Improvements for Tribes Act of 2016 or DRIFT Act. This important legislation is intended to address the flood prevention and dam safety needs in Indian Country. It would address the deferred maintenance needs of Bureau of Indian Affairs, BIA, dams, as well as reform tribal programs within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The BIA has 137 high-hazard dams and over 700 low-hazard dams across the United States. Nearly all of the high-hazard dams are in Western United States, including two high-hazard dams on the Wind River Reservation in my home State of Wyoming—Washakie Dam and Ray Lake Dam. According to the BIA staff, on average these dams are 70 to 80 years old and have over $500 million in deferred maintenance needs. Funding is simply not keeping up with the maintenance needs of these dams and the threat to public safety in and around Indian Country is very real. The United States has a trust obligation to maintain and operate these dams and prevent what could be a future dam failure.

The legislation I am introducing today would require the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of the Army, to address the maintenance backlog of BIA dams by establishing a High-Hazard Indian Dam Safety Deferred Maintenance Fund and a Low-Hazard Indian Dam Safety Deferred Maintenance Fund. The high-hazard fund would receive $22,750,000 each year from fiscal years 2017 through 2037. The low-hazard fund would receive $10,000,000 for the same time period. The bill funds low-hazard dams if their needs are critical as well and are not being addressed by available scarce resources. Neglecting the deferred maintenance needs of these dams may result in them becoming high hazard dams in the near future.

The DRIFT Act establishes criteria for how the money would be prioritized, looking at criteria such as threats to public safety, natural or cultural resources, and economic concerns. The criteria also looks at the ability of increasing water storage capacity of BIA dams to prevent flooding to downstream communities.

The legislation also seeks to make other important flood prevention and

dam safety policy reforms for both the BIA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Specifically, the DRIFT Act establishes a 4-year pilot program for a BIA flood mitigation program for tribes; establishes a Tribal Safety of Dams Committee within the Department of the Interior to make recommendations to Congress for modernizing the Indian Dam Safety Act; and mandates that tribes regularly report their dam inventory to BIA.

The bill requires the BIA to report annually on the safety status of their dams to Congress; makes reforms to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Tribal Partnership Program to allow the Corps to pay for any feasibility study of a project costing not more than $10,000,000; allows in-kind contributions by tribes to count towards a cost-share of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' feasibility study; and allows tribes to not have a cost share for studies and projects that cost up to $200,000. This is the same cost-sharing requirements the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allows for U.S. territories.

It is time to make sure that we make the necessary changes to ensure that tribes and surrounding communities are protected, and that the Federal Government collaborates with and empowers Indian tribes to secure their communities.''

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. AYOTTE):

S. 2718. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to support innovative approaches to career and technical education and redesign the high school experience for students by providing students with equitable access to rigorous, engaging, and relevant real world education through partnerships with business and industry and higher education that prepare students to graduate from high school and enroll into postsecondary education without the need for remediation and with the ability to use knowledge to solve complex problems, think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and develop academic mindsets; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, the demands of today's competitive global market require that students have the right skills and knowledge to succeed in postsecondary education and enter the workforce. Providing students with an engaging experience that is relevant to the workforce and integrates partnerships with industry and higher education is critical to our Nation's future. Unfortunately, these opportunities are lacking in many of today's high schools, leaving students unprepared for 21st century careers.

Career and technical education, CTE, is often overlooked in discussions on increasing relevancy and rigor in our Nation's schools—despite the fact that a strong focus on academics is the cornerstone of high-quality CTE. When the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education conducted a 4-year longitudinal study in three states, they found that students participating in CTE programs or career pathways outperformed their peers on the number of credits they earned in science, technology, engineering and math, STEM, and AP classes, while also earning higher grade point averages in their CTE classes.

That is why I am introducing with my colleagues, Senators PORTMAN, BALDWIN, and CAPITO, the CTE Excellence and Equity Act. This bipartisan legislation supports funding for innovation in career and technical education to help redesign the high school experience for historically underserved students. It would authorize grants to partnerships among school districts, employers, and institutions of higher education in Virginia and other states that help students earn industry recognized credentials or credit toward a postsecondary degree or certificate. The bill also places an emphasis on understanding the relevance of coursework in the context of a future career by placing an emphasis on teaching workplace skills through job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships.

CTE programs are critical components to every student's education. I am pleased to be introducing this bipartisan legislation to strengthen CTE programs in high school so that students are better prepared for postsecondary studies and the workforce. I hope that my colleagues consider this legislation as we move to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins CTE Act.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2719. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to improve the protections provided to members of the uniformed services and their families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have often said when our nation sends men and women to war we commit to taking care of them when they return home. We also promise them important legal protections to allow them to focus on their mission and in recognition that while they are deployed or away from home servicemembers often do not have the resources to respond to a range of financial and legal issues. Despite these protections, too many servicemembers have been cheated on their student loans, on their mortgages, and on their credit cards.

When our men and women in uniform are serving our country, they should not have to worry about whether our government is going to hold up its end of the bargain and fulfill its responsibilities to them.

So today I introduce the SCRA Enhancement and Improvement Act of 2016, which will put an end to many of these predatory practices and give servicemembers and the government the tools they need to fight back when banks and student loan servicers deny servicemembers their rights.

In 2014, I learned of allegations that at least one major student loan servicer had been overcharging men and women in uniform on their student loans while they were on active duty. That's unacceptable. One servicemember overcharged on their student loans is one too many.

That is why this bill will end the unfair and improper practices of student loan servicers by requiring them to automatically apply the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, SCRA, interest rate cap, respond within 14 days to any request for SCRA protections, and provide a full explanation any time they deny an SCRA protection, along with clear instructions on how to remedy the situation so the servicemember can receive that protection. It will also require student loan servicers to have a designated service representative or point of contact for servicemembers and ensure these individuals are properly trained on the needs of servicemembers, how the military operates, and the protections required by SCRA, the Higher Education Act, and other laws.

The bill will hold servicers accountable for their conduct and treatment of servicemembers by requiring them to retain all communications with servicemembers so we can conduct thorough oversight.

The SCRA Enhancement and Improvement Act will also hold the Department of Education accountable for enforcing standards and the law with its student loan servicers. Following numerous allegations of servicemembers being mistreated by student loan servicers who were not complying with the SCRA interest rate caps, and at least 69,000 servicemembers who were overcharged by one Federal contractor, I asked the Department to review how many servicemembers had been improperly denied their benefits under SCRA. Shockingly, the Department told us that the servicers were complying in the ''vast majority of cases.'' This was inconsistent with what the Department of Justice and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau had found.

I wrote to the Department of Education's Inspector General and asked her to review the Department's findings. Two weeks ago the IG released their report, and it showed that instead of doing a thorough investigation to find out exactly how many servicemembers may have been overcharged on their student loans, the Department's review was riddled with errors and papered over mishandling of military borrowers' loans.

The bill I am introducing today will require sufficient notice to be given when a loan is transferred or sold, and that all benefits or protections for the servicemember are seamlessly transferred to the new loan servicer. It will

also forgive all Federal and private student loan debt in the event the servicemember dies in the line of duty.

The SCRA Enhancement and Improvement Act also expands protections beyond student loans. I was concerned when several years ago some of the nation's largest mortgage servicers improperly overcharged and foreclosed upon deployed servicemembers in violation of the SCRA. Thousands of servicemembers and veterans were wronged over several years. After those allegations came to light, and after the Department of Justice reached a settlement with those mortgage servicers, GAO released a report in 2014 looking at the importance of mortgage and foreclosure protections in the SCRA. The results were concerning, especially when they found at one mortgage servicer that 82 percent of loans that would have benefitted from the SCRA's interest rate cap still had rates in excess of 6 percent.

This bill would reduce the interest rate cap to three percent to provide meaningful protection to servicemembers, including a zero percent cap for servicemembers eligible for hostile fire or imminent danger pay. It would expand the SCRA interest rate protection to all of a servicemember's debt regardless of when it was incurred, in order to cover consolidation loans and in recognition that the same challenges exist for military borrowers regardless of when a debt was first incurred. It would also strengthen the protections that prevent judgements against a servicemember who cannot appear in court because of military service.

As the daughter of a World War II veteran, I know how much our military families sacrifice on behalf of their country. So I believe protecting our military men and women from predatory practices is an absolutely essential commitment we make to them. We will not allow our servicemembers to be taken advantage of.

Finally, as we have seen too often, these protections are only as good as our ability to enforce the law and hold people accountable. The SCRA Enhancement and Improvement Act will give servicemembers, the Department of Justice, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau the legal and oversight tools they need to hold entities accountable. It would clarify that servicemembers may bring a private right of action to enforce their rights and make arbitration clauses unenforceable unless all parties agree after a dispute arises. The bill will give the Attorney General the authority to issue civil investigative demands in SCRA investigations. It would double the fines against parties found to be violating the protections afforded by the SCRA.

With the number of Federal entities involved, it is essential the departments and agencies work collaboratively to protect servicemembers. The Defense Department must ensure it is providing clear, useful information to servicemembers on their rights and how to invoke them, and that the training stays current. I especially commend the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for its dedicated work on behalf of our men and women in uniform.

Our servicemembers deserve better than what they have gotten over the last several years. The SCRA Enhancement and Improvement Act will go a long way to ensuring our servicemembers are protected, putting a stop to the predatory practices of banks and student loan servicers, and change the apathy that has characterized the Department of Education's oversight. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2730. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, known as the ''Ghost Army'', collectively, in recognition of its unique and incredible service during World War II; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act to honor the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, called the ''Ghost Army,'' which was a top-secret unit of the United States Army that served in the European Theater of Operations during World War II. The unit was actively engaged in battlefield operations from June of 1944 through March of 1945. The deceptive activities of the Ghost Army were essential to several Allied victories across Europe and are estimated to have saved thousands of lives.

I was inspired to introduce this bill after hearing the story of Jack McGlynn of Medford, MA. I have known Jack for decades going back to my time in the Massachusetts State Legislature, but I never knew that he was a member of the Ghost Army. Like many World War II Veterans, Jack returned home to Massachusetts after the War, started a family, and got involved in local politics. Jack was a city councilor, Mayor, and State Representative. He kept his service in the Ghost Army a secret from everyone, even his wife and 6 children. Finally in 2008, Jack read that it was declassified and he finally shared the story with his family and friends.

In evaluating the performance of the Ghost Army after the War, a U.S. Army analysis found that ''Rarely, if ever, has there been a group of such a few men which had so great an influence on the outcome of a major military campaign.''. Many Ghost Army soldiers were specially selected for their mission, and were recruited from art schools, advertising agencies, communications companies, and other creative and technical professions.

The first four members of the Ghost Army landed on D-day and two became casualties while camouflaging early beach installations. The Ghost Army's secret deception operations commenced in France on June 14, 1944, when Task Force Mason landed at Omaha Beach to draw enemy fire and protect the 980th Artillery.

Task Force Mason was a prelude to full scale tactical deceptions completed by the Ghost Army. Often operating on or near the front lines, the Ghost Army used inflatable tanks, artillery, air planes and other vehicles, advanced engineered soundtracks, and skillfully crafted radio trickery to create the illusion of sizable American forces where there were none and to draw the enemy away from Allied troops.

Ghost Army soldiers impersonated other, larger Army units by sewing counterfeit patches onto their uniforms, painting false markings on their vehicles, and creating phony headquarters staffed by fake generals, all in an effort to feed false information to Axis spies. During the Battle of the Bulge, the Ghost Army created counterfeit radio traffic to mask the efforts of General George Patton's Third Army as it mobilized to break through to the 101st Airborne. It also provided assistance to elements of 10th Armored Division in the besieged Belgian town of Bastogne.

In its final mission, Operation Viersen, the Ghost Army deployed a tactical deception that drew German units down the Rhine River and away from the 9th Army, allowing the 9th Army to cross the Rhine into Germany. On this mission, the 1,100 men of the Ghost Army, with the assistance of other units, impersonated forty thousand men, or two complete divisions of American forces, by using fabricated radio networks, soundtracks of construction work and artillery fire, and more than 600 inflatable vehicles.

Three Ghost Army soldiers gave their lives and dozens were injured in carrying out their mission. Their activities remained classified for more than forty years after the war and I believe the extraordinary accomplishments of this unit are deserving of belated recognition. The United States will be eternally grateful to the Ghost Army for their proficient use of innovative tactics throughout World War II, which saved thousands of lives and were instrumental in the defeat of Nazi Germany.

I ask all my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation to give a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the Ghost Army.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 403—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING APRIL 24, 2016 AS ''NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL ASSESSMENT CENTER WEEK'' IN CELEBRATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDUSTRIAL ASSESSMENT CENTERS

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BENNET, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 403

Whereas Industrial Assessment Centers (IACs) are university-led programs funded by the Department of Energy that provide energy efficiency assessments to small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises in the United States for improving energy efficiency and reducing water usage and waste;

Whereas IACs increase the energy efficiency, productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness of manufacturers in the United States;

Whereas, since the inception of the IAC program in 1976, IACs have conducted more than 16,000 assessments at manufacturing plants across the United States;

Whereas the assessments conducted by IACs have saved an estimated 76,000,000,000,000 British thermal units, a quantity equivalent to meeting the energy needs of almost 1,400,000 homes in the United States;

Whereas IACs have saved participating manufacturers more than $1,000,000,000 in energy costs;

Whereas an estimated 6,000,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions have been avoided due to IAC assessments, a quantity equivalent to the emissions from more than 1,200,000 cars;

Whereas the IAC program equips undergraduate and graduate university students with the skills to conduct energy audits, improving workforce training and cultivating the next generation of energy engineers;

Whereas more than 3,000 students have graduated from the IAC program, with more than 60 percent continuing on to pursue careers in energy-related fields; and

Whereas 2016 marks the 40th anniversary of the IAC program: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning April 24, 2016 as ''National Industrial Assessment Center Week''; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States to observe National Industrial Assessment Center Week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 404—DESIGNATING MARCH 2016 AS ''NATIONAL MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION MONTH''

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 404

Whereas the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Association for Middle Level Education, the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals have declared March 2016 as ''National Middle Level Education Month'';

Whereas schools that educate middle level students are responsible for educating nearly 24,000,000 young adolescents between the ages of 10 and 15, in grades 5 through 9, who are undergoing rapid and dramatic changes in their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development;

Whereas young adolescents deserve challenging and engaging instruction and knowledgeable teachers and administrators who are prepared to provide young adolescents with a safe, challenging, and supportive learning environment;

Whereas young adolescents deserve organizational structures that banish anonymity and promote personalization, collaboration, and social equity;

Whereas the habits and values established during early adolescence have a lifelong influence that directly affects the future health and welfare of the United States;

Whereas research indicates that the academic achievement of a student in grade 8 has a larger impact on the readiness of that student for an institution of higher education at the end of high school than any academic achievement of that student in high school; and

Whereas in order to improve graduation rates and prepare students to be lifelong learners who are ready for an institution of higher education or a career and civic participation, the people of the United States must have a deeper understanding of the distinctive mission of middle level education: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2016 as ''National Middle Level Education Month'';

(2) honors and recognizes the importance of middle level education and the contributions of the individuals who educate middle level students; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Middle Level Education Month by visiting and celebrating schools that are responsible for educating young adolescents in the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 405—DESIGNATING PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, AS THE SITE OF THE CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, IN COORDINATION WITH VISION 2020

Mr. CASEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 405

Whereas the 19th Amendment to Constitution of the United States was ratified on August 18, 1920, guaranteeing women in the United States the right to vote;

Whereas the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment will occur in 2020;

Whereas Vision 2020, developed by the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership at Drexel University, has launched the Vision 2020 Campaign for Equality—

(1) to commemorate the centennial of women's suffrage; and

(2) to advance and achieve economic, social, and political equality for women in the United States by 2020;

Whereas Vision 2020 is partnering with national associations and professional organizations that represent more than 20,000,000 women and girls in the United States;

Whereas in 2020, celebratory events will take place in cities all across the United States, particularly in cities in which monumental historic events and people shaped the women's suffrage movement;

Whereas Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which was home to historic women who played significant roles in the women's rights movement, including Lucretia Mott, Alice Paul, Fanny Jackson Coppin, and Eliza Sproat Turner, should be designated as the headquarters and coordinating site to celebrate the centennial of women's suffrage;

Whereas the women's suffrage movement was closely tied to abolitionism and many suffragists gained previous experience in advocacy as antislavery activists;

Whereas the first major event in the women's suffrage movement occurred on July 19, 1848, the date on which Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the first convention on women's rights, the Seneca Falls Convention;

Whereas in 1850, Lucy Stone organized the National Women's Rights Convention and gave a speech that inspired Susan B. Anthony and others to join the cause for women's rights;

Whereas in 1851, Sojourner Truth gave her famous speech entitled ''Ain't I a Woman?'' at a convention in Akron, Ohio;

Whereas in 1869, women suffragists formed the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association, which were national organizations established to work for the right of women to vote that united in 1890 to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association;

Whereas in 1872, Susan B. Anthony and a group of women voted in the Presidential election and were arrested and fined for voting illegally;

Whereas in the late 19th century, the Senate voted on women's suffrage for the first time;

Whereas during the early 20th century, a new generation of women joined the women's suffrage movement and devoted time to marches and other active forms of protest, including the first picket lines in front of the White House;

Whereas women suffragists were often detained and sent to jail and some of those women who went on hunger strikes were aggressively force fed;

Whereas since the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the work begun by the suffragists continues to advance the equality of women in all political, social, economic, and cultural aspects of life in the United States, including shared leadership; and

Whereas the contributions of women suffragists who fought for and won, for women of the United States, the right to vote should be celebrated on the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the crucial role that the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution played in advancing the rights of women and promoting the democratic values at the core of the United States;

(2) designates Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as the site of the national centennial commemoration of the ratification of the 19th Amendment; and

(3) commends the efforts of Vision 2020—

(A) to orchestrate, lead, and coordinate that momentous occasion in Philadelphia; and

(B) to continue the fight for equality for women.

SENATE RESOLUTION 406—RECOGNIZING THE GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD, THE HIGHEST AWARD IN THE GIRL SCOUTS, WHICH HAS STOOD FOR EXCELLENCE AND LEADERSHIP FOR GIRLS EVERYWHERE SINCE 1916

Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 406

Whereas each girl who pursues the Girl Scout Gold Award aspires to transform an original idea and vision for change into an actionable plan with far reaching and sustainable results;

Whereas for more than a century preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (referred to in this preamble as the ''Girl Scouts'') has inspired girls to lead with courage, confidence, and character;

Whereas the Girl Scout Gold Award represents the highest form of the ideals of courage, confidence, and character;

Whereas the Girl Scout Gold Award calls on a Girl Scout in grades 9 through 12 to take on a project that has a measurable and sustainable impact on the community of the Girl Scout by—

(1) assessing a need;

(2) designing a solution to the need;

(3) completing the project; and

(4) inspiring others to sustain the project;

Whereas the highest award in Girl Scouting honors leadership in the tradition of the Girl Scouts;

Whereas the Girl Scout movement began on March 12, 1912, when Juliette ''Daisy'' Gordon Low, a native of Savannah, Georgia, organized a group of 18 girls and provided the group of girls with an opportunity to develop physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually;

Whereas the goals of Juliette ''Daisy'' Gordon Low were to bring girls of all backgrounds together to develop self-reliance and resourcefulness, and to prepare each girl for a future role as a professional woman and active citizen outside the home;

Whereas shortly after the inception of the Girl Scout movement, it was decided that there should be a special recognition for each girl who—

(1) represents the very best of the Girl Scouts; and

(2) through courage, tenacity, dedication, and skill, takes action in her community with an immediate and sustainable impact;

Whereas, in 1916, the Golden Eaglet was introduced as the highest award in Girl Scouting;

Whereas the highest award in Girl Scouting has been known as the Golden Eaglet, the Curved Bar Award, First Class, and, for the period of 35 years preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, the Girl Scout Gold Award;

Whereas although the name of the highest award in Girl Scouting has changed over the years, the conviction, dynamism, and idealism it takes to earn the award have not;

Whereas the Girl Scout Gold Award, like each girl who earns the award and the project the girl undertakes—

(1) stands as an enduring symbol of the fortitude and personal strength of a Girl Scout; and

(2) clearly demonstrates the tangible, real-world impact that participation in the Girl Scouts can have on the life of a girl, and by extension, the community of the girl and the world;

Whereas earning the Girl Scout Gold Award is comparable to achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America;

Whereas a girl who earns the Girl Scout Gold Award—

(1) joins an elite group of less than 6 percent of Girl Scouts each year; and

(2) may be eligible for a higher grade when enlisting in the Armed Forces of the United States or for scholarships at certain institutions of higher education;

Whereas according to a study of the Girl Scout Research Institute entitled ''The Power of the Girl Scout Gold Award: Excellence in Leadership and Life'', recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award, compared to non-recipient peers—

(1) report a more positive sense of self;

(2) are more engaged civically and in community service;

(3) have more confidence in their leadership abilities; and

(4) experience greater life satisfaction and success;

Whereas the Girl Scout Gold Award acknowledges the power and dedication of each young woman to better herself and to make the world a better place for other individuals;

Whereas during the century preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, millions of Girl Scout alumnae have positively impacted their communities and the world with creative, effective, and sustainable Take Action projects; and

Whereas in the centennial of the Girl Scout Gold Award, the Girl Scouts invites alumnae and supporters of the Girl Scouts everywhere to ''Celebrate 100 Years of Changing the World'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the remarkable impact that recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award during the century preceding the date of adoption of this resolution have had on—

(A) the lives of individuals in the United States; and

(B) the world;

(2) recognizes the lasting impact of the projects of recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award on the communities of the recipients;

(3) congratulates the Girl Scouts of the United States of America and Girl Scout Gold Award recipients everywhere on the centennial of the Girl Scout Gold Award; and

(4) joins the Girl Scouts of the United States of America in celebrating 100 years of the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today not only to recognize the 104th anniversary of the Girl Scouts, but also the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scout Gold Award. The Gold Award is the most prestigious award in Girl Scouting, only comparable to the Boy Scouts of America's Eagle Scout recognition.

Approximately one million Girl Scouts have earned this prestigious award. Girls who pursue their Gold Award aspire to transform an idea and vision for change into an actionable plan with measurable, sustainable, and far-reaching results. Since 1916, Gil Scouts have been planning and executing significant projects in response to pressing community needs. The Gold Award has inspired girls in Maryland and across the country to find greatness inside themselves and share their ideas and passions with their communities.

I love the Girl Scouts. I loved being a Girl Scout, especially when working on my badges. Those badges I earned served as symbols for success, leadership, and service to my community. It was during my time as a Girl Scout that I learned about the values and attitudes that serve as good guides throughout life, like courage, confidence, and strong character to help make the world a better place.

I also loved the camaraderie of working with other girls on various challenges. It really is about friendship. I am so proud to be among the more than 59 million women in the United States who are alumnae of the Girl Scouts of America. I could not have done it without the support of Ms. Helen Nimick, my Girl Scout leader. In fact, I wanted to grow up and be just like Ms. Nimick. She seemed to know how to do 43 different things with oatmeal boxes.

The Girl Scouts is an organization that has meant so much to me, and to this country. What started out as a group of eighteen girls in Georgia organized by Juliette Gordon Low has grown into an organization of more than 2 million girls and women, with over 800,000 adult volunteers. When the Girl Scouts started, women were not allowed to vote or have property in their name, and only few ever made it to college.

The founding of the Girl Scouts started a revolutionary movement to train and educate girls. Now, it is working to bring gender balance to leadership roles, whether it is in business or politics. I believe in that mission, and I know we can do it. While we have a long ways to go, we certainly have made progress. When I came to the Senate almost 30 years ago, there were only two women—Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas and myself. Today, there are 20 women in the Senate! Nearly 45 years ago, there was only one woman CEO of a Fortune 500 company; now there are 23.

I bring the lessons I learned from Girl Scouts with me to the United States Senate, every day and in every way. I love the Girl Scout promise: ''To serve God and my country, to help people at all times, and to live by the Girl Scout law.'' To this day, I still carry the Girl Scout law in my wallet. I believe that if you follow the Girl Scout law, you're in pretty good shape—it has certainly worked for me. ''I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and what I do, and to respect myself and others, to respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout, and a sister to every Boy Scout.''

While I am in the Senate now, in many ways I am still working on my badges. But instead of working on my cookie badge, the badges I am working on now are called ''ending gender discrimination in health care,'' ''guaranteeing equal pay for equal work,'' and ''promoting access to quality and affordable child care.''

In today's hectic and increasingly uncertain world, Girl Scouts are more important than ever before. The Girl Scouts are an important contribution to American society—they prepare the leaders of tomorrow, and every day they inspire millions across this country to make the world a better place. Ladies, let us put on our badges, square our shoulders, suit up, and work together to make a change.

SENATE RESOLUTION 407—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING MEN'S NORDIC SKI TEAM FOR WINNING THE 38TH ANNUAL UNITED STATES COLLEGIATE SKI AND SNOWBOARD ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 407

Whereas, on March 12, 2016, the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team won the 2016 United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (referred to in this preamble as the ''USCSA'') national championship in Lake Placid, New York, by sweeping all 4 events;

Whereas the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team has won consecutive USCSA national titles;

Whereas as members on the University of Wyoming Nordic ski teams, Will Timmons won the 2016 USCSA men's individual title and Elise Sulser won the 2016 USCSA women's individual title;

Whereas the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team placed 3 men among the top 10 overall individual finishers at the 2016 USCSA national event;

Whereas co-head coaches Christi Boggs and Rachel Watson have successfully guided the University of Wyoming men's and women's Nordic ski teams to multiple USCSA national titles;

Whereas the University of Wyoming men's and women's Nordic ski teams have each won 6 team USCSA national titles between 2003 and 2016: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team as the winner of the 2016 United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association national championship;

(2) commends the athletes, coaches, parents, and staff of the University of Wyoming Nordic ski teams for their hard work and dedication;

(3) recognizes the students, alumni, and loyal fans that supported the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team on the team's journey to win another national title; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate prepare an official copy of this resolution for presentation to—

(A) the president of the University of Wyoming;

(B) the athletic director of the University of Wyoming; and

(C) the co-head coaches of the University of Wyoming Nordic ski teams.

SENATE RESOLUTION 408—DESIGNATING APRIL 2016 AS ''NATIONAL CONGENITAL DIAPHRAGMATIC HERNIA AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. SESSIONS (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 408

Whereas congenital diaphragmatic hernia (referred to in this preamble as ''CDH'') occurs in individuals in which the diaphragm fails to fully form, allowing abdominal organs to migrate into the chest cavity and preventing lung growth;

Whereas the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes CDH as a birth defect;

Whereas the majority of CDH patients suffer from underdeveloped lungs or poor pulmonary function;

Whereas babies born with CDH endure extended hospital stays in intensive care with multiple surgeries;

Whereas CDH patients often endure long-term complications, such as pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary hypoplasia, asthma, gastrointestinal reflux, feeding disorders, and developmental delays;

Whereas CDH survivors sometimes endure long-term mechanical ventilation dependency, skeletal malformations, supplemental oxygen dependency, enteral and parenteral nutrition, and hypoxic brain injury;

Whereas CDH is treated through mechanical ventilation, a heart and lung bypass (commonly known as ''extracorporeal membrane oxygenation''), machines, and surgical repair;

Whereas surgical repair is often not a permanent solution for CDH and can lead to reherniation and require additional surgery;

Whereas CDH is diagnosed in utero in less than 50 percent of cases;

Whereas infants born with CDH have a high mortality rate, ranging from 20 to 60 percent, depending on the severity of the defect and interventions available at delivery;

Whereas CDH has a rate of occurrence of 1 in every 3,836 live births worldwide;

Whereas in the United States, CDH affects approximately 1,088 babies each year;

Whereas since 2000, CDH has affected more than 700,000 babies worldwide;

Whereas CDH does not discriminate based on race, gender, or socioeconomic status;

Whereas the cause of CDH is unknown;

Whereas the average CDH survivor will face postnatal care that totals not less than $100,000; and

Whereas Federal support for CDH research at the National Institutes of Health for 2015 is estimated to be not more than $3,300,000: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2016 as ''National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month'';

(2) encourages that steps should be taken—

(A) to raise awareness of and increase public knowledge about congenital diaphragmatic hernia (referred to in this resolving clause as ''CDH'');

(B) to inform all people of the United States about the dangers of CDH, especially groups of people that may be disproportionately affected by CDH or have lower survival rates;

(C) to disseminate information on the importance of quality neonatal care of CDH patients;

(D) to promote quality prenatal care and ultrasounds to detect CDH in utero; and

(E) to support research funding of CDH—

(i) to improve screening and treatment for CDH;

(ii) to discover the causes of CDH; and

(iii) to develop a cure for CDH; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States, interest groups, and affected persons—

(A) to promote awareness of CDH;

(B) to take an active role in the fight against this devastating birth defect; and

(C) to observe National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 409—RECOGNIZING MARCH 2016 AS ''NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH''

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FISCHER, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. CARPER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. BROWN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 409

Whereas National Women's History Month recognizes and spreads awareness of the importance of women in the history of the United States;

Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, whether in the home, at the office, in school, in the courts, or in wartime, women have fought for themselves, their families, and all people of the United States and played an essential role in the history of the United States;

Whereas, even from the early days of the United States, Abigail Adams urged her husband to ''Remember the Ladies'' when representatives met for the Continental Congress in 1776;

Whereas women were particularly important in the establishment of early charitable, philanthropic, and cultural institutions in the United States;

Whereas women led the efforts to secure suffrage and equal opportunity for women and also served in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, labor movements, civil rights movements, and other causes to create a more fair and just society for all people;

Whereas suffragists wrote, marched, were arrested, went on hunger strikes, and were force-fed in prison but were ultimately successful in achieving the enactment of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which provides, ''The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.'';

Whereas women have served and continue to serve as leaders in the forefront of social change efforts;

Whereas women of every race and background have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of the life of the United States, including by constituting a significant portion of the labor force working inside and outside of the home;

Whereas women now represent approximately ¼ of the workforce in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics;

Whereas women once were routinely barred from attending medical schools in the

United States but now represent 47 percent of medical school students;

Whereas women previously were turned away from law schools but now represent 47 percent of law school graduates but only 20 percent of law school deans and 27 percent of State and Federal judges;

Whereas women have served in the United States Armed Forces in volunteer and enlisted positions, with 201,400 active-duty women currently serving and women comprising approximately 10 percent of veterans;

Whereas more than 9,900,000 women own small businesses in the United States;

Whereas women in the United States contribute significantly to the artistic and literary advancements of the United States;

Whereas the 2016 theme of National Women's History Month is ''Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government'';

Whereas, in 1932, Hattie Wyatt Caraway of Arkansas was the first woman elected to the United States Senate;

Whereas Margaret Chase Smith of Maine was the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress;

Whereas, in the 114th Congress, 20 women serve as Senators and 84 women serve in the House of Representatives, both of which are records;

Whereas, in 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first proclamation designating March 2 through 8 as ''National Women's History Week'';

Whereas, in 1987, a bipartisan group of Senators introduced the first joint resolution to pass Congress designating ''Women's History Month'';

Whereas, in 1987, President Ronald Reagan issued the first Women's History Month proclamation; and

Whereas, despite the advancements of women in the United States, much remains to be done to ensure that women realize their full potential as equal members of the society of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2016 as ''National Women's History Month'';

(2) recognizes the celebration of National Women's History Month as a time to reflect on the many notable contributions that women have made to the United States; and

(3) urges the people of the United States to observe National Women's History Month with appropriate programs and activities.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 34—PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MCCONNELL submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Wednesday, March 23, 2016, through Friday, April 8, 2016, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 3:30 p.m. on Monday, April 11, 2016, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. (a) The Speaker or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the House to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the House adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the House shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3457. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. WYDEN)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 4721, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3457. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. WYDEN)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 4721, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2016''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—AIRPORT AND AIRWAY PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Extension of airport improvement program.
Sec. 102. Extension of expiring authorities.
Sec. 103. Federal Aviation Administration operations.
Sec. 104. Air navigation facilities and equipment.
Sec. 105. Research, engineering, and development.
Sec. 106. Compliance with aviation funding requirement.
Sec. 107. Essential air service.

TITLE II—REVENUE PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Expenditure authority from Airport and Airway Trust Fund.
Sec. 202. Extension of taxes funding Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

TITLE I—AIRPORT AND AIRWAY PROGRAMS

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 48103(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''$1,675,000,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''$2,652,083,333 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''.

(2) OBLIGATION OF AMOUNTS.—Subject to limitations specified in advance in appropriation Acts, sums made available pursuant to the amendment made by paragraph (1) may be obligated at any time through September 30, 2016, and shall remain available until expended.

(3) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.—For purposes of calculating funding apportionments and meeting other requirements under sections 47114, 47115, 47116, and 47117 of title 49, United States Code, for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall—

(A) first calculate such funding apportionments on an annualized basis as if the total amount available under section 48103 of such title for fiscal year 2016 were $3,350,000,000; and

(B) then reduce by 20.83 percent—

(i) all funding apportionments calculated under subparagraph (A); and

(ii) amounts available pursuant to sections 47117(b) and 47117(f)(2) of such title.

(b) PROJECT GRANT AUTHORITY.—Section 47104(c) of title 49, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''March 31, 2016,'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016,''.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF EXPIRING AUTHORITIES.

(a) Section 47107(r)(3) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''.

(b) Section 47115(j) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(c) Section 47124(b)(3)(E) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''$5,175,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016,'' and inserting ''$8,193,750 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016,''.

(d) Section 47141(f) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(e) Section 186(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (117 Stat. 2518) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(f) Section 409(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (49 U.S.C. 41731 note) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(g) Section 411(h) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (49 U.S.C. 42301 prec. note) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(h) Section 822(k) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (49 U.S.C. 47141 note) is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

SEC. 103. FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION OPERATIONS.

Section 106(k) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by amending subparagraph (E) to read as follows:

''(E) $7,711,387,500 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''; and

(2) in paragraph (3) by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

SEC. 104. AIR NAVIGATION FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT.

Section 48101(a)(5) of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(5) $2,058,333,333 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''.

SEC. 105. RESEARCH, ENGINEERING, AND DEVELOPMENT.

Section 48102(a)(9) of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(9) $124,093,750 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.''.

SEC. 106. COMPLIANCE WITH AVIATION FUNDING REQUIREMENT.

The budget authority authorized in this Act, including the amendments made by this Act, shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of subsections (a)(1)(B) and (a)(2) of section 48114 of title 49, United States Code, for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016.

SEC. 107. ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE.

Section 41742(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''$77,500,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016,'' and inserting ''$122,708,333 for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on July 15, 2016,''.

TITLE II—REVENUE PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FROM AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 9502(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''; and

(2) in subparagraph (A), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting ''or the Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2016;''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 9502(e)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF TAXES FUNDING AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND.

(a) FUEL TAXES.—Section 4081(d)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(b) TICKET TAXES.—

(1) PERSONS.—Section 4261(k)(1)(A)(ii) of such Code is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(2) PROPERTY.—Section 4271(d)(1)(A)(ii) of such Code is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

(c) FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP PROGRAMS.—

(1) TREATMENT AS NON-COMMERCIAL AVIATION.—Section 4083(b) of such Code is amended by striking ''April 1, 2016'' and inserting ''July 16, 2016''.

(2) EXEMPTION FROM TICKET TAXES.—Section 4261(j) of such Code is amended by striking ''March 31, 2016'' and inserting ''July 15, 2016''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''HealthCare.gov: A Review of Operations and Enrollment.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Reviewing the Administration's Nuclear Agenda.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 2 p.m., in room SH–219 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 9:45 a.m., in room SD–562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resource' Subcommittee on National Parks be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 3 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL MANAGEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2016, at 9 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Examining Agency use of Deference, Part II.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Priyanka Hooghan, a fellow serving in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 114th Congress.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 439 and 488.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Janine Anne Davidson, of Virginia, to be a under Secretary of the Navy; and Todd A. Weiler, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Davidson and Weiler nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 486, 489 through 494, 496, 497, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE COAST GUARD

The following named officer for appointment to a position of importance and responsibility in the United States Coast Guard and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., Section 50:

To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Karl L. Schultz

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be general

Gen. Joseph L. Votel

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be general

Lt. Gen. Raymond A. Thomas, III

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army Medical Service Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 624 and 3064:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Sargent
Brig. Gen. Robert D. Tenhet

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army Medical Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 624 and 3064:

To be brigadier general

Col. Jeffrey J. Johnson
Col. Ronald T. Stephens

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army Medical Service Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 624 and 3064:

To be brigadier general

Col. Dennis P. LeMaster
Col. Michael J. Talley

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Michael K. Nagata

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps Reserve to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Bradley S. James
Col. Kurt W. Stein

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Austin S. Miller

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN1164 AIR FORCE nominations (16) beginning JAMES B. ANDERSON, and ending HYRAL B. WALKER, JR., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1165 AIR FORCE nominations (14) beginning JEREMY V. BASTIAN, and ending CHRISTOPHER A. WATSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1166 AIR FORCE nominations (2068) beginning CHRISTOPHER F. ABBOTT, and ending DEVIN LEE ZUFELT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1167 AIR FORCE nomination of Christopher T. Stein, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

IN THE ARMY

PN1077 ARMY nomination of Gregory L. Boylan, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 11, 2016.

PN1107 ARMY nomination of Derek G. Bean, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 28, 2016.

PN1168 ARMY nominations (120) beginning ADRIAN R. ALGARRA, and ending GREGORY B. WILLIAMS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1169 ARMY nominations (50) beginning PHILIP O. ADAMS, and ending BENJAMAN M. WUNDERLICH, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1170 ARMY nominations (27) beginning JULIA N. ALVAREZ, and ending APRIL D. WILLIAMS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1171 ARMY nominations (178) beginning WENDY M. ADAMIAN, and ending D012433, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1172 ARMY nomination of Vernita M. Corbett, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1173 ARMY nominations (44) beginning MATTHEW H. ADAMS, and ending D012453, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1175 ARMY nomination of William D. Rose, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1176 ARMY nomination of Mark W. Manoso, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1177 ARMY nomination of Eric F. Sabety, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1197 ARMY nominations (2) beginning ANDREW R. MCIVER, and ending GERARD C. PHILIP, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 3, 2016.

IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE

PN464 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (7) beginning Eric Del Valle, and ending Ryan Truxton, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2015.

PN952 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (11) beginning Cheryl L. Anderson, and ending Melissa A. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN953 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (37) beginning Jennifer M. Adams, and ending Sunil Sebastian Xavier, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN1086 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (4) beginning Daryl Arthur Brehm, and ending Melinda D. Sallyards, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 19, 2016.

PN1087 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (23) beginning Scott D. Hocklander, and ending Catherine Mary Trujillo, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 19, 2016.

PN1089 FOREIGN SERVICE nomination of Holly S. Higgins, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 19, 2016.

PN1156 FOREIGN SERVICE nomination of John McCaslin, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1157 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (11) beginning Laurie Farris, and ending James Rigassio, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN1117 MARINE CORPS nominations (5) beginning AARON R. CRAIG, and ending CHRISTOPHER T. STEINHILBER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 28, 2016.

PN1130 MARINE CORPS nominations (2) beginning JIMMY W. DARSEY, and ending GERALD E. PIRK, JR., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 28, 2016.

IN THE NAVY

PN1178 NAVY nominations (53) beginning MATTHEW T. ALLEN, and ending JOSHUA F. ZIMMER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1179 NAVY nominations (4) beginning RICHARD W. LANG, and ending BRADLEY E. SHEMLUCK, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 22, 2016.

PN1198 NAVY nomination of Michael L. Hipp, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 3, 2016.

PN1200 NAVY nomination of Ronald H. Nellen, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 3, 2016.

PN1202 NAVY nomination of Ashley A. Hockycko, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 3, 2016.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

ENSURING PATIENT ACCESS AND EFFECTIVE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 368, S. 483.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 483) to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act of 2016''.

SEC. 2. REGISTRATION PROCESS UNDER CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—

(1) FACTORS AS MAY BE RELEVANT TO AND CONSISTENT WITH THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY.—Section 303 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(j) In this section, the phrase 'factors as may be relevant to and consistent with the public health and safety' means factors that are relevant to and consistent with the findings contained in section 101.''.

(2) IMMINENT DANGER TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH OR SAFETY.—Section 304(d) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 824(d)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''(d) The Attorney General'' and inserting ''(d)(1) The Attorney General''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) In this subsection, the phrase 'imminent danger to the public health or safety' means that, due to the failure of the registrant to maintain effective controls against diversion or otherwise comply with the obligations of a registrant under this title or title III, there is a substantial likelihood of an immediate threat that death, serious bodily harm, or abuse of a controlled substance will occur in the absence of an immediate suspension of the registration.''.

(b) OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN PRIOR TO REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION.—Subsection (c) of section 304 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 824) is amended—

(1) by striking the last three sentences;

(2) by striking ''(c) Before'' and inserting ''(c)(1) Before''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) An order to show cause under paragraph (1) shall—

''(A) contain a statement of the basis for the denial, revocation, or suspension, including specific citations to any laws or regulations alleged to be violated by the applicant or registrant;

''(B) direct the applicant or registrant to appear before the Attorney General at a time and place stated in the order, but not less than 30 days after the date of receipt of the order; and

''(C) notify the applicant or registrant of the opportunity to submit a corrective action plan on or before the date of appearance.

''(3) Upon review of any corrective action plan submitted by an applicant or registrant pursuant to paragraph (2), the Attorney General shall determine whether denial, revocation, or suspension proceedings should be discontinued, or deferred for the purposes of modification, amendment, or clarification to such plan.

''(4) Proceedings to deny, revoke, or suspend shall be conducted pursuant to this section in accordance with subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code. Such proceedings shall be independent of, and not in lieu of, criminal prosecutions or other proceedings under this title or any other law of the United States.

''(5) The requirements of this subsection shall not apply to the issuance of an immediate suspension order under subsection (d).''.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in coordination with the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration and in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall submit a report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate identifying—

(1) obstacles to legitimate patient access to controlled substances;

(2) issues with diversion of controlled substances;

(3) how collaboration between Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies and the pharmaceutical industry can benefit patients and prevent diversion and abuse of controlled substances;

(4) the availability of medical education, training opportunities, and comprehensive clinical guidance for pain management and opioid prescribing, and any gaps that should be addressed;

(5) beneficial enhancements to State prescription drug monitoring programs, including enhancements to require comprehensive prescriber input and to expand access to the programs for appropriate authorized users; and

(6) steps to improve reporting requirements so that the public and Congress have more information regarding prescription opioids, such as the volume and formulation of prescription opioids prescribed annually, the dispensing of such prescription opioids, and outliers and trends within large data sets.

(b) CONSULTATION.—The report under subsection (a) shall incorporate feedback and recommendations from the following:

(1) Patient groups.

(2) Pharmacies.

(3) Drug manufacturers.

(4) Common or contract carriers and warehousemen.

(5) Hospitals, physicians, and other health care providers.

(6) State attorneys general.

(7) Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

(8) Health insurance providers and entities that provide pharmacy benefit management services on behalf of a health insurance provider.

(9) Wholesale drug distributors.

(10) Veterinarians.

(11) Professional medical societies and boards.

(12) State and local public health authorities.

(13) Health services research organizations.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 483), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

PROVIDING AUTHORITY TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE A TOLL BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 374, S. 2143.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2143) to provide for the authority for the successors and assigns of the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company to maintain and operate a toll bridge across the Rio Grande near Rio Grande City, Texas, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 2143) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2143

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. STARR-CAMARGO BRIDGE.

Public Law 87–532 (76 Stat. 153) is amended—

(1) in the first section, in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) by inserting '', and its successors and assigns,'' after ''State of Texas'';

(B) by inserting ''consisting of not more than 14 lanes'' after ''approaches thereto''; and

(C) by striking ''and for a period of sixty-six years from the date of completion of such bridge,'';

(2) in section 2, by inserting ''and its successors and assigns,'' after ''companies'';

(3) by redesignating sections 3, 4, and 5 as sections 4, 5, and 6, respectively;

(4) by inserting after section 2 the following:

''SEC. 3. RIGHTS OF STARR-CAMARGO BRIDGE COMPANY AND SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Starr-Camargo Bridge Company and its successors and assigns shall have the rights and privileges granted to the B and P Bridge Company and its successors and assigns under section 2 of the Act of May 1, 1928 (45 Stat. 471, chapter 466).

''(b) REQUIREMENT.—In exercising the rights and privileges granted under subsection (a), the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company and its successors and assigns shall act in accordance with—

''(1) just compensation requirements;

''(2) public proceeding requirements; and

''(3) any other requirements applicable to the exercise of the rights referred to in subsection (a) under the laws of the State of Texas.''; and

(5) in section 4 (as redesignated by paragraph (3))—

(A) by inserting ''and its successors and assigns,'' after ''such company'';

(B) by striking ''or'' after ''public agency,'';

(C) by inserting ''or to a corporation,'' after ''international bridge authority or commission,''; and

(D) by striking ''authority, or commission'' each place it appears and inserting ''authority, commission, or corporation''.

ADDING ZIKA VIRUS TO THE FDA PRIORITY REVIEW VOUCHER PROGRAM ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 389, S. 2512.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2512) to expand the tropical disease product priority review voucher program to encourage treatments for Zika virus.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Adding Zika Virus to the FDA Priority Review Voucher Program Act''.

SEC. 2. EXPANDING TROPICAL DISEASE PRODUCT PRIORITY REVIEW VOUCHER PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE TREATMENTS FOR ZIKA VIRUS DISEASE.

Section 524(a)(3) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360n(a)(3)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraph (R) as subparagraph (S);

(2) in subparagraph (Q), by striking ''Filoviruses'' and inserting ''Filovirus Diseases''; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (Q) the following:

''(R) Zika Virus Disease.''.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2512), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AUTHORIZING USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 111, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 111) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 111) was agreed to.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING MEN'S NORDIC SKI TEAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 407, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 407) congratulating the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team for winning the 38th annual United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association national championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 407) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL CONGENITAL DIAPHRAGMATIC HERNIA AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 408, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 408) designating April 2016 as ''National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 408) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 409, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 409) recognizing March 2016 as ''National Women's History Month.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on the adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 409) was agreed to.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that 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 preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 34.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 34) providing for an adjournment of the House of Representatives.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion 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 concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 34) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 114–11

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on March 17, 2016, by the President of the United States: Treaty with Kazakhstan on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Treaty Document No. 114–11. I further ask that the treaty be considered as having been read the first time; that it be referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed; and that the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

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

The message of the President is as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Kazakhstan on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Washington on February 20, 2015. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties negotiated by the United States to more effectively counter criminal activities. The Treaty should enhance our ability to investigate and prosecute a wide variety of crimes.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Under the Treaty, the Parties agree to assist each other by, among other things: producing evidence (such as testimony, documents, or items) obtained voluntarily or, where necessary, by compulsion; arranging for persons, including persons in custody, to travel to another country to provide evidence; serving documents; executing searches and seizures; locating and identifying persons or items; and freezing and forfeiting assets or property that may be

the proceeds or instrumentalities of crime.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 17, 2016*.

REPORTING AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the Senate's adjournment, committees be authorized to report legislative and executive matters on Monday, March 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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

APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2016, THROUGH MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Monday, March 21, at 10 a.m.; Thursday, March 24, at 11 a.m.; Monday, March 28, at 11:30 a.m.; and Thursday, March 31, at 6:30 p.m. I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Thursday, March 31, it next convene at 3 p.m., Monday, April 4; 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, I ask that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2016, AT 10 A.M.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:33 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 21, 2016, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

DOUGLAS BARRY WILSON, OF DELAWARE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2017, VICE ELIZABETH F. BAGLEY, TERM EXPIRED.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

HEIDI NEEL BIGGS, OF OREGON, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2017, VICE ERIC J. TANENBLATT, TERM EXPIRED.

WESTLEY WATENDE OMARI MOORE, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2016, VICE STAN Z. SOLOWAY, TERM EXPIRED.

WESTLEY WATENDE OMARI MOORE, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2021. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ANNE HALL, OF MAINE, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

JEFFREY A. ROSEN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2021, VICE LOUIS J. GIULIANO, TERM EXPIRED.

UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION

ALMO J. CARTER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS, VICE PATRICIA CUSHWA, TERM EXPIRED.

LARRY T. GLENN, OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS, VICE ISAAC FULWOOD, JR., RETIRED.

THE JUDICIARY

LISABETH TABOR HUGHES, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT, VICE BOYCE F. MARTIN, JR., RETIRED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

LAURA S. BARCHICK
CHRISTOPHER A. BROWN
CHAD C. CARTER
W. SHANE COHEN
PAUL R. CONNOLLY
ERIK C. COYNE
PAUL E. CRONIN
DON D. DAVIS III
JOEL F. ENGLAND
JOHN E. GILLILAND
PAULA M. GRANT
JENNIFER C. HYZER
JUDY L. KING
CHRISTINE A. LAMONT
JEFFREY G. PALOMINO
TODD W. PENNINGTON
JULIE L. PITVOREC
JULIE L. RUTHERFORD
MICHAEL W. SAFKO
CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR SMITH
RONALD L. SPENCER, JR.
DAVID E. VERCELLONE
KEVIN J. WILKINSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

MICHELLE D. AASTROM
REGINA D. AGEE CRUZ
JOHN F. BAER
BARBARA A. CAIN
RUSSELL D. CARTER
JULIET T. DEGUZMAN
KAREY M. DUFOUR
DONNA M. EGGERT
INGRID D. FORD
JEANETTE L. FRANTAL
RUSSEL L. FRANTZ, JR.
TRICIA ROCHELLE GARCIA
ERWIN N. GINES
LORRAINE S. GRAVLEY
LINDA A. HAGEMANN
GACQUETTE R. JENNINGS
KAREE M. JENSEN
DEBORAH K. JONES
JOHN L. MANSUY
GINGER S. MILLER
JOANN V. PALMER
PATRICK W. STILLEY
PATRICIA A. B. TATE
JENNIFER L. TRINKLE
SHEELAH Z. WALKER
RICHARD E. WALLEN
JOHN J. WEATHERWAX
CYNTHIA J. WEIDMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

LAIRD S. ABBOTT
PHILIP F. ACQUARO
KIRSTEN G. AGUILAR
JENNIFER J. ALLEE
MATTHEW S. ALLEN
MICHAEL P. ALLISON
JAMES JAY ALONZO
AARON D. ALTWIES
STEVEN J. ANDERSON
DAVID R. ANZALDUA
CHRISTOPHER E. AUSTIN
MAURICE C. AZAR
BRIAN J. BACARELLA
STEPHEN G. BAILEY
JEREMIAH W. BALDWIN
CHAD A. BALETTIE
JENNIFER M. BARNARD
WILEY L. BARNES
JOHN R. BARNETT
JEREME A. BARRETT
WILLIAM A. BARRINGTON, JR.
BENITO J. BARRON
CHRISTIAN A. BARTHOLOMEW
ROBERT R. BASOM
JAMES EARL BASS
TODD A. BEAN
JASON L. BECK
ERIC J. BEERS
STEPHEN M. BEHM
STEVEN G. BEHMER
SCOTT J. BELANGER
ANTHONY P. BELLIONE
MATTHEW J. BIEWER
MICHAEL R. BLACK
STEVEN M. BOATRIGHT
MICHAEL C. BOGER
RHETT CAMERON BOLDENOW
BARTHOLOMEW G. BONAR
CHAD B. BONDURANT
STEVEN P. BORDING
PHILLIP G. BORN
JOHN P. BOUDREAUX
JOSHUA D. BOWMAN
BRIAN L. BRACY
SEAN A. BRADLEY
KENNETH B. BRATLAND
THEODORE A. BREUKER
ROBERT M. BRINKER
DOUGLAS F. BROCK
CHRISTOPHER J. BROMEN
KATHRYN A. BROWN
MICHAEL D. BROX
DAVID R. BUCHANAN
ROSS M. BULLOCK
PAUL C. BURGER
WILLIAM H. BURKS
PAUL K. CARLTON III
MICHELLE C. CARNS
PHILIP E. CARPENTER
JEFFREY F. CARTER
MICHAEL B. CASEY
RONALD E. CHEATHAM
STEVEN R. CHERRINGTON
ANDREW M. CLARK
TAD D. CLARK
ROBERT K. CLEMENT
SPENCER C. COCANOUR
SHAWN T. COCHRAN
JASON J. COCKRUM
STEVEN P. COLLEN
THOMAS R. COLVIN
JOSHUA W. CONINE
CEIR CORAL
ALFREDO CORBETT
JASON E. CORROTHERS
CHARLES R. COSNOWSKI
LARRY T. COUNCELL
WILLIAM E. COURTEMANCHE
SEAN J. COVENEY
AARON S. COWLEY
DANE B. CRAWFORD
KEITH I. CRAWFORD
JEFFREY S. CRIDER
JAMES R. CULPEPPER
MICHAEL A. CURLEY
SARA A. CUSTER
CAMERON DADGAR
TODD D. DARRAH
CHAD J. DAVIS
GREGORY A. DAVIS
MICHAEL T. DAVIS
WILLIAM A. DAYTON
CHRISTOPHE J. DEGUELLE
ANTHONY M. DELUCA

JUSTIN D. DEMARCO
WILLIAM S. DENHAM
DAVID R. DETHLEFS
DUANE JEFFREY DIESING
MITCHELL K. DIXON
MICHAEL W. DONAHUE II
DAVID A. DOSS
JESS W. DRAB
CHARLES M. DROUILLARD
CLIFTON M. DURHAM
DEBORAH KAYE DUSEK
SCOTT T. EKSTROM
JOHN W. ELLER
DAVID C. EPPERSON
CHARLES B. ERICSON
ROBERT T. EWERS III
MICHELLE E. EWY
WILLIAM B. FARLOW
BRIAN J. FARMER
PETER P. FENG
DEREK R. FERLAND
DERON L. FRAILIE
JOHN C. FRAZIER
LANCE R. FRENCH
CHRISTOPHER K. FULLER
DANIEL L. GABLE
FRANKLIN D. GAILLARD II
JACK P. GARDNER
KRISTOFER W. GIFFORD
RONALD E. GILBERT
MARCUS K. GLENN
JEFFREY L. GOGGIN
JERRY GONZALEZ
RICHARD A. GOODMAN
CHRISTOPHER E. GOODYEAR
BETH D. GRABORITZ
JEFFREY H. GREENWOOD
RICHARD GRESZLER, JR.
G. JOHN GRIMM
BRIAN J. GROSS
SCOTT A. GRUNDAHL
PETER J. GRYZEN
MICHAEL C. GUISCHARD
NICHOLAS O. GUTTMAN
ROBERT F. HAAS
JAMES R. HACKBARTH
DAVID A. HAMMERSCHMIDT
LINDA M. HAMPTON
JON T. HANNAH
ROBERT L. HANOVICH, JR.
JOHN C. HANSEN
TIMMY W. HARBOR
MARK E. HARRIS
MICHAEL C. HARVEY
BRENT R. HATCH
WALTER C. HATTEMER
DAVID R. HAUCK
JEREMIAH S. HEATHMAN
DANIEL G. HENDRIX
JOHN A. HENLEY
SCOTT A. HERITSCH
CURTIS L. HERNANDEZ
JOSHUA L. HETSKO
RENAE M. HILTON
GEORGE H. HOCK, JR.
SCOTT A. HOFFMAN
PHILIP A. HOLMES
DEAN M. HOLTHAUS
SCOTT M. HOPPER
DOUGLAS W. HORNE
THOMAS E. HOSKINS
BRIAN C. HOYBACH
KEVIN D. HUEBERT
DARIN P. HUMISTON
WILLIAM H. HUNTER
JOHN S. HUTCHESON
ROBERT J. HUTT
TRAVIS L. INGBER
CHRISTOPHER P. INGLETON
DARRYL L. INSLEY
DOUGLAS D. JACKSON
MICHAEL A. JACKSON
TRAUNA L. JAMES
AMY K. JARDON
BRADLEY L. JOHNSON
KEVIN S. JOHNSON
MELISSA A. JOHNSON
MICHAEL J. JOHNSON
MICHELE ELAINE JOHNSON
SAM C. JOHNSON
OTIS C. JONES
STEPHEN R. JONES
SHANNON L. JUBY
JAMES R. KAFER
CHRISTIAN D. KANE
CHRISTOPHER P. KARNS
KIERAN F. KEELTY
BARTON D. KENERSON
JOHN A. KENT IV
HERBERT L. KEYSER
ROBERT A. KIELTY
JASON S. KING
ROBERT F. KING
GEORGE B. KINNEY III
JASON T. KIRBY
EILEEN M. W. KIRKLAND
NIKI J. KISSIAR
MICHAEL A. KLEPPE
STEVEN W. KLINGMAN
TIMOTHY A. KODAMA
KURT A. KOENIGSFELD
TERRY A. KOESTER
TIMOTHY P. KUEHNE
BRIAN S. LAIDLAW
CHRISTOPHER L. LAMBERT
BRIAN L. LAMIRANDE
CHRISTOPHER A. LANE
LEO LAWSON, JR.
EARL D. LAYNE
MATTHEW A. LEARD
CHRISTOPHER J. LEONARD
DAVID D. LEROY
SHERRI J. LEVAN
HARMON S. LEWIS, JR.
PAUL C. LIPS
TONY S. LOMBARDO
DAVID R. LOPEZ
GABRIEL N. LOPEZ
SHANE D. LOUIS
DANIEL L. LUCE
STEVEN E. MACEDA
ROBERT H. MAKROS
DANIEL R. MANNING
FRANK MARCONI
GAVIN P. MARKS
LISA MARIE MARTINEZ
ROBERT A. MASAITIS
DAVIS H. MAULDING
TIMOTHY P. MAXWELL
KENNETH C. MCADAMS
BRIAN A. MCCULLOUGH
DAVID M. MCILLECE
BRIDGET M. MCNAMARA
ANDREW B. MCVICKER
DAVID S. MENKE
ERIES L. G. MENTZER
ROGER R. MESSER
JOSEPH R. MEYER
WILLIAM B. MICKLEY
JACOB MIDDLETON, JR.
ANDREA C. MILLER
CAROL J. MILLER
CRAIG S. MILLER
DAVID S. MILLER
RAYMOND G. MILLERO, JR.
JOHN F. MOESNER IV
JEREMIAH R. MONK
SCOTT J. MONROE
MATTHEW A. MORAND
DAVID J. MORELAND
STEVEN W. MORITZ
TARA J. MUEHE
ANTHONY B. MULHARE
MARK J. MULLARKEY
DOUGLAS A. MUSSELMAN
SCOTT J. NAHRGANG
ROBERT L. NANCE
CRAIG T. NARASAKI
RICHARD J. NELSON
JACK L. NEMCEFF II
LISA A. NEMETH
BRETT D. NEVILLE
MICHAEL S. NEWSOM
QUY H. NGUYEN
JUSTIN H. NIEDERER
CRAIG M. NIEMAN
PHILLIP L. NOLTEMEYER, JR.
JOHN D. NORTON
DAVID M. NYIKOS
RANDY P. OAKLAND
BRADLEY R. OLIVER
DAVID R. OMALLEY
BRIAN P. ONEILL
BRYAN C. OPPERMAN
LOUIS E. ORNDORFF
STEVEN G. OWEN
NATHAN L. OWENDOFF
JODY M. OWENS
MARC L. PACKLER
DARIAN J. PADILLA
THOMAS S. PALMER
SUKIT T. PANANON
PHILLIP R. PARKER, JR.
BRIAN L. PATTERSON
TRACY W. PATTERSON
ERIC C. PAULSON
JOHN F. PEAK
ROBERT J. PEDERSEN
ROBERT K. PEKAREK
JAY E. PELKA
JEAN PHILIPPE N. PELTIER
DEVIN R. PEPPER
WILLIAM D. PERCIVAL
MANUEL P. PEREZ
KIRK W. PETERSON
MICHAEL J. PFINGSTEN
MICHAEL E. PHILLIPS
DOUGLAS E. PIERCE
JASON D. PIFER
MATTHEW G. POLLOCK
PAUL H. PORTER
CRAIG D. PRATHER
CHRISTOPHER I. PRICE
CAMERON S. PRINGLE
NORMAN W. PRUE, JR.
ANTHONY L. PUENTE
DAVID M. PUGH
ANDREW MICHAEL PURATH
VARUN PURI
CHRISTOPHER S. PUTMAN
EDUARDO A. QUERO
ERIK N. QUIGLEY
SEAN A. RAESEMANN
GERALD I. RAY, JR.
SAMANTHA D. RAY
WILLIAM F. RAY
NICHOLAS J. REED
GREGORY T. REICH
ADAM D. REIMAN
MATTHEW W. RENBARGER
LENDY G. RENEGAR
STEPHEN G. RENY
KEITH REPIK
KYLE A. REYBITZ
JON M. RHONE
GLYNN E. RICHARDS
ROBERT B. RIEGEL
ROBB N. RIGTRUP
MICHAEL S. RIMSKY
RAMIRO RIOJAS
MARK A. RISELLI
JOSE L. RIVERAHERNANDEZ
JASON I. ROBERSON
BRANDON J. ROBINSON
MARK S. ROBINSON
KEITH M. ROESSIG
DAVID P. RONDEAU
WILLIAM T. RONDEAU, JR.
LEONARD T. ROSE
MICHAEL S. ROWE
JON K. RUCKER
CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSELL
CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSELL
TIMOTHY H. RUSSELL
ANDREW P. RUTH
MATTHEW J. SANDELIER
STEPHEN T. SANDERS
GLENN V. SANTOS
BRIAN M. SCHAFER
GEORGE F. SCHEERS, JR.
JOCELYN J. SCHERMERHORN
THOMAS M. SCHRAMEL
FRANK B. SCHREIBER
JEFFREY T. SCHREINER
JOHN D. SCHULIGER
JOHN M. SCHUTTE
GEORGE H. SEBREN, JR.
KEVIN L. SELLERS
JASON E. SEYER
JEFFREY R. SGARLATA
BRIAN R. SHAFFER
DOUGLAS S. SHAHAN
GENE S. SHERER
THOMAS S. SHIELDS
BRIAN D. SIDARI
COREY A. SIMMONS
TRAVOLIS A. SIMMONS
COLIN J. SINDEL
PAUL M. SKIPWORTH
ERIC A. SMITH
MICHAEL S. SMITH
CHRISTOPHER J. SPINELLI
ERIN M. STAINEPYNE
MICHAEL R. STAPLES
SHANE D. STEINKE
KAYLE M. STEVENS
BRITTANY D. STEWART
TRACE B. STEYAERT
MARC A. STITZEL
ADAM J. STONE
DANIEL W. STONE
MELISSA A. STONE
KRISTOPHER W. STRUVE
JEFFREY A. STYERS
GERALD D. SULLIVAN, JR.
DAVID E. SUMERA
PATRICK J. SUTHERLAND
JAMES A. SWEENEY
RYAN S. SWEENEY
PAUL E. SWENSON
THOMAS K. SWOVELAND
RICHARD C. TANNER
BRYAN E. TASH
MARK E. TATE
BEVERLY L. H. TEMPLEMAN
TIMOTHY W. THURSTON II
MICHAEL D. TIEMANN
DOUGLAS F. TIPPET
STEVEN J. TITTEL
RICARDO L. TRIMILLOS
TIMOTHY W. TRIMMELL
SCOTT A. TRINRUD
KEITH R. TURNER
BRIAN V. UCCIARDI
WILLIAM K. UHRIG
MICHELLE VANCOURT
TRICIA A. VANDENTOP
SERGIO J. VEGA, JR.
DAVID G. VERNAL
SCOTT A. VICKERY
STEVEN E. VILPORS
MARK J. VITANTONIO
JASON D. VOORHEIS
ROBERT J. WAARVIK
SEAN C. WADE
EUGENE M. WALL
TREVOR A. WALL
DAVID C. WALLIN
DANIEL P. WALLS
TERRENCE L. WALTER
PATRICK A. WAMPLER
JASON T. WARD
TRACY T. WARD
JESSE F. WARREN
MAX C. WEEMS
THERESA E. WEEMS
CHRISTOPHER S. WELCH
SEAN T. WELSH
ROBERT D. WESTOVER
JON S. WHEELER, JR.
JEFFREY J. WHITE
NATHAN A. WHITE
STEPHEN D. WIER
DAVID E. WILLIAMS, JR.
KEVIN L. WILLIAMS
DAVID A. WILLIAMSON
ROCKIE K. WILSON
LORI L. WINN
PATRICK C. WINSTEAD
STEPHANE LAINE WOLFGEHER
PAUL J. YUSON

CHRISTOPHER J. ZUHLKE

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

GEOFFREY E. ANDERSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

FANY L. RIVERA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major

BRUCE H. ROBINSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C. SECTION 624:

To be major

MATTHEW B. BOOTH
DONALD W. MOYER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

ROBERT L. CRONYN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

DARRELL W. COLLINS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

DARREN J. DONLEY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

STEPHANIE M. SIMONI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

JENNIFER L. SHAFER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

JUSTIN K. CONROY
ANDREW G. MONTALVO
REBECCA L. YOUNG

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

BRICE A. GOODWIN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

BRIAN J. HAMER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

SCOTT F. GRUWELL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

SHANNON D. LORIMER

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AS MEMBERS OF THE COAST GUARD PERMANENT COMMISSIONED TEACHING STAFF UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 188:

To be lieutenant

JONATHAN P. TSCHUDY
MATTHEW B. WILLIAMS

PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD

JAMES XAVIER DEMPSEY, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 29, 2022. (REAPPOINTMENT)

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 17, 2016:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

JANINE ANNE DAVIDSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 50:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. KARL L. SCHULTZ

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TODD A. WEILER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

GEN. JOSEPH L. VOTEL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. RAYMOND A. THOMAS III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S. C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. PATRICK D. SARGENT
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT D. TENHET

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be brigadier general

COL. JEFFREY J. JOHNSON
COL. RONALD T. STEPHENS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S. C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be brigadier general

COL. DENNIS P. LEMASTER
COL. MICHAEL J. TALLEY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. MICHAEL K. NAGATA

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. BRADLEY S. JAMES
COL. KURT W. STEIN

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. AUSTIN S. MILLER

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JAMES B. ANDERSON AND ENDING WITH HYRAL B. WALKER, JR., WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JEREMY V. BASTIAN AND ENDING WITH CHRISTOPHER A. WATSON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHRISTOPHER F. ABBOTT AND ENDING WITH DEVIN LEE ZUFELT, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER T. STEIN, TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF GREGORY L. BOYLAN, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF DEREK G. BEAN, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ADRIAN R. ALGARRA AND ENDING WITH GREGORY B. WILLIAMS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH PHILIP O. ADAMS AND ENDING WITH BENJAMAN M. WUNDERLICH, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JULIA N. ALVAREZ AND ENDING WITH APRIL D. WILLIAMS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH WENDY M. ADAMIAN AND ENDING WITH D012433, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

ARMY NOMINATION OF VERNITA M. CORBETT, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MATTHEW H. ADAMS AND ENDING WITH D012453, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

ARMY NOMINATION OF WILLIAM D. ROSE, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF MARK W. MANOSO, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF ERIC F. SABETY, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ANDREW R. MCIVER AND ENDING WITH GERARD C. PHILIP, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MARCH 3, 2016.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH AARON R. CRAIG AND ENDING WITH CHRISTOPHER T. STEINHILBER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 28, 2016.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JIMMY W. DARSEY AND ENDING WITH GERALD E. PIRK, JR., WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 28, 2016.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MATTHEW T. ALLEN AND ENDING WITH JOSHUA F. ZIMMER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH RICHARD W. LANG AND ENDING WITH BRADLEY E. SHEMLUCK, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

NAVY NOMINATION OF MICHAEL L. HIPP, TO BE CAPTAIN.

NAVY NOMINATION OF RONALD H. NELLEN, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF ASHLEY A. HOCKYCKO, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

FOREIGN SERVICE

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ERIC DEL VALLE AND ENDING WITH RYAN TRUXTON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2015.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHERYL L. ANDERSON AND ENDING WITH MELISSA A. WILLIAMS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JENNIFER M. ADAMS AND ENDING WITH SUNIL SEBASTIAN XAVIER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DARYL ARTHUR BREHM AND ENDING WITH MELINDA D. SALLYARDS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 19, 2016 .

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SCOTT D. HOCKLANDER AND ENDING WITH CATHERINE MARY TRUJILLO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 19, 2016 .

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATION OF HOLLY S. HIGGINS.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATION OF JOHN MCCASLIN.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH LAURIE FARRIS AND ENDING WITH JAMES RIGASSIO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive message transmitted by the President to the Senate on March

17, 2016 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

BRAD R. CARSON, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS, VICE JESSICA GARFOLA WRIGHT, RESIGNED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JULY 8, 2015.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL CEREAL DAY

HON. ROD BLUM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Cereal Day, which occurred last week on March 7th. As several cereal producers have facilities in my district, I want to recognize the importance cereal has played in the everyday lives of Americans since the 19th century.

According to recent polling data, cereal is America's most popular breakfast food. Not only is cereal a part of a nutritious way to wake up, but it can be enjoyed at all times during the day alone or used to create delicious cuisine.

I am proud that the First District of Iowa is home to two prominent cereal facilities which have provided tasty cereal to Americans for generations. The largest cereal plant in the world, located right in Cedar Rapids, and owned by Quaker Oats employs around a thousand hardworking Iowans and produces many of the products in your bowl on a daily basis. Just across town, General Mills has a facility which makes Cheerios and other delicious staples of your morning breakfast. Both of these companies are important to the economy of Cedar Rapids and I celebrate their contributions to the community.

I raise a spoon and a glass of milk to all fellow cereal lovers and the hardworking Iowans in the First District which produce healthy, wholesome, and nutritious products for families around the world.

ST. JOSEPH-OGDEN BOY'S BASKETBALL TEAM STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the outstanding success of the St. Joseph-Ogden Boy's Basketball Team.

The St. Joseph-Ogden Spartans defeated Rockridge 61–43 on March 11 to give the school its first ever Class 2A boys' basketball state title. After struggling for much of the season, and their season on the brink, the Spartans put together an improbable ten-game winning streak which culminated in a state championship.

I would like to congratulate boys athletic director Dick Duval, head coach Brian Brooks, assistant coaches Kiel Duval, Mike Bialeschki, and Isaiah Olson, and athletic trainer Casey Hug, who worked hard to help St. Joseph-Ogden achieve this victory.

Members of the state championship team include: Ty Brown, Brandon Trimble, Brandon Dable, Drayke Lannert, Kolten Taylor, Garrett Grimsley, Aaron Schluter, Tegan Poole, Jake Pence, Kohlten Johnson, Jordan Brooks, Brody Trimble, Eli Oltean, and Ryan Ferriman.

I look forward to the continued success of the St. Joseph-Ogden Boy's basketball team and I extend my best wishes for another outstanding season next year.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, on March 15, 2016, I regret that I was otherwise detained and unable to cast a vote on roll call vote no. 118, on an amendment offered by Rep. PALLONE to H.R. 3797, the Satisfying Energy Needs and Saving the Environment Act. Had I been present, I would have voted yes.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO DESIGNATE THE NATIONAL NORDIC MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution to designate the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, Washington as the National Nordic Museum of the United States.

The museum celebrates a heritage with strong and proud ties to the region, with many Seattleites claiming ancestry from Nordic countries.

As the only museum in the United States that encompasses a broader focus on all Nordic countries—including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden—the museum's prominence as a source of exhibits on Nordic culture and history is unparalleled. The museum's collections include not only items brought by Nordic immigrants from 1840 to 1920, but also contemporary objects from their descendants.

The Nordic Heritage Museum has outgrown its current location, now undertaking the laudable albeit considerable effort to modernize its setting to suit its growing needs. The new location will include upgraded facilities and enable a broader series of exhibits in a more spacious setting. I am looking forward to seeing the museum expand its reach and thrive in its new location.

I am fortunate and proud to represent a district that is home to such a rich array of cultural and historical gems. The Nordic Heritage Museum adds to the city's—indeed the region's—wealth of museums, and I am pleased to support an effort to strengthen its national esteem and recognition. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution to designate it as the National Nordic Museum of the United States.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. HARRY D. JOHNSTON

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of the self-described ''Last of the country doctors,'' Dr. Harry D. Johnston, who passed away on March 15, 2016 at Pinnacle Health in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Johnston, a native of McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania, was a general practitioner in his hometown for nearly 46 years. In 2013, he was named the ''Outstanding Citizen'' of his community for his untiring dedication as a community leader and care-giver, healer, and one who makes every effort to ease a person's pain. In the community he was thought of as a trusted, extended family member. Over the years Dr. Johnston took an interest in all the individuals he came in contact with, paying special attention to their concerns, medical treatment, and everyday issues.

He also was a community leader serving on the Boards of the First National Bank of McConnellsburg, the Arthur Schmidt Charitable Trust, the Fulton County Medical Center, and the Fulton County Home Nursing Services Association. His vision led to the creation of the Tri-State Community Health Center, the county's 911 system, and the funding of a state-of-the-art hospital with modern equipment, staff and specialty physicians.

His interests included antique cars, farming, hunting and flying.

Dr. Johnston was born on September 19, 1936, was graduated from the Mercersburg Academy, attended the University of London, was graduated from Washington and Jefferson College, and the University of Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa.

He is survived by his wife Darlene Pierce Johnston, a son Harry Pierce Johnston (husband of Winter), two granddaughters Ella and Maggie, a sister Alice Walker and nephews William and Kenneth Walker.

HONORING ALEX JOSEPH NELSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Alex Joseph Nelson. Alex is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Alex has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Alex has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Alex has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Alex scraped and spray painted 28 fire hydrants in Liberty, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Alex Joseph Nelson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus, I'm proud to support Brain Awareness Week to highlight the importance of neuroscience research as one of the most promising and productive areas of science today. Understanding the brain is not only important for understanding speech, memory, pain, or decision-making, but could lead to treatments that have a transformational impact on millions of individuals who suffer from neurological and psychiatric disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. We must continue to make robust and sustained investments in agencies like the NIH to continue the tremendous progress we've already made, both to improve public health, and to maintain our leadership in the scientific enterprise.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, on March 14th & March 15th, 2016, I was unavoidably detained because I was attending to matters in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On roll call no. 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, I would have voted NO.

On roll call no. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 123, I would have voted YES.

HONORING MS. LINDA PARKS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Linda Parks, whom I have named Woman of the Year in Napa County, California. For more than four decades, Ms. Parks has worked to build Napa-based Lixit Animal Care Products into the major manufacturer and employer it is today.

Currently serving as President and CEO of the company, Ms. Parks joined Lixit in 1971 as a buyer, three years after the company's founding. At the time, it employed only ten people. In 1994, Ms. Parks and other employees purchased the company using an Employee Stock Ownership Plan, allowing employee stakeholders to participate in business's future and success.

Under Ms. Parks's leadership, Lixit maintains international markets in Canada and Mexico, and employs more than 100 people in its downtown Napa, California location. Lixit employs many people with developmental disabilities, helping them participate in the workforce and gain independence through the company's Adults with Disabilities program.

Ms. Parks has earned a distinguished reputation in the California business community. In 2015, the North Bay Business Journal named her one of the Women in Business award winners of the year. A graduate of the Building a Minority Business program at the Tuck School of Business, Ms. Parks has led Lixit to become a certified women-owned company.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Linda Parks for her dedication to building a successful business and diverse workforce that enlivens the Napa County business community. For this reason, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

RECOGNIZING BISHOP ALFRED A. OWENS, JR.

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Bishop Alfred A. Owens, Jr., who this week is celebrating 50 years of pastoral ministry in the District of Columbia at Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church, where he has provided outstanding service to not only residents of the District, but throughout the country.

As pastor of one the largest churches in the District, for five decades, Bishop Owens has been among the nation's most prominent pastors. His reputation for serving his community, humor, and messages of hope has allowed him to grow from a membership of only seven members in 1966 to more than 7,000 today.

Bishop Owens, a native Washingtonian, has a heart for the community, establishing, among other social service programs an alcohol and drug abuse program and free mental and emotional counseling through certified professionals, and becoming one of the first church HIV/AIDS healthcare programs in the nation. In addition, he is passionate about helping our returning citizens and making them productive community members. He lives by his mantra, ''It's just nice to be nice.'' But, he understands the responsibility he has as a pastor to ensure his ministry goes beyond the four walls of the church and serves those most in need.

Among Bishop Owen's many accomplishments are serving as the Dean of the Joint College of African American Pentecostal Bishops since 2000. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Howard University School of Divinity.

Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues know of the ministry of Bishop Owens and many congressional staff attend his church. Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Bishop Alfred A. Owens, Jr., for 50 years of extraordinary contributions to the national capital region and the nation and to wish him many more years of service.

RECOGNIZING THE WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL—WASHINGTON, DC

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of the World Affairs Council—Washington, DC (WAC–DC). WAC–DC is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to expanding awareness among the American public and international community of geopolitical, business, and civil society issues in our interconnected world.

Since its founding in 1980, the World Affairs Council—Washington, DC has positively impacted the professional development of hundreds of thousands of teachers, educators, and students (high school and college) in the DC metro area, across the United States, and internationally through its global education, international affairs, and global communications programs. In 2009, WAC–DC launched its own weekly one hour international affairs program, World Affairs TODAY, that is filmed in front of a live audience in the Horizon Ballroom of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center and broadcast nationally throughout the United States.

The Council provides a neutral, independent and non-partisan forum for speeches by presidents, prime ministers, cabinet officials, Members of Congress, and other prominent political leaders. Additionally, economists, diplomats, scholars, corporate leaders, authors, governors, researchers, journalists, and Nobel laureates are invited to participate. American and international speakers join Council members, VIP guests, online and television audiences, and the public for in-depth discussions on major foreign policy and education issues that have a global impact.

To prepare young people to compete in the 21st century, the Council educates students on international affairs and encourages a national dialogue on ''The Importance of Global Education.'' The Council's teacher development workshops and seminars, youth leadership forums, Academic World Quest competitions, internships, and international study abroad programs foster a balanced view of global issues. The programs facilitate worldwide knowledge transfer, multicultural understanding, and analytical insights for American and international educators, teachers, and high school and college students.

The March 29, 2016 World Affairs HONORS: Global Education Gala is an annual event that recognizes organizations that demonstrate their commitment to best practices in global education, international affairs, and global communications. The WAC–DC will present five distinguished honorees with awards that exemplify the global education mission of the Council, which is to empower educators, students and citizens to effectively compete, communicate, travel and lead in our diverse and interconnected world.

The Republic of South Africa will receive the Distinguished Diplomatic Service Award that will be accepted by H.E. Mninwa J. Mahlangu, Ambassador to the United States. The IBM Corporation will receive the Global Education Award that will be accepted by Daniel S. Pelino, General Manager—Global Public Sector. The George Mason University will receive the Educator of the Year Award that will be accepted by Dr. Angel Cabrera, President. The National Geographic Society will receive the Global Communications Award that will be accepted by Gary E. Knell, President and CEO. The Keynote Address will be delivered by the United States Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Ashton Carter, who will also receive an International Public Service Award.

The World Affairs Council—DC Board of Directors is composed of an outstanding and dedicated voluntary group of individuals, many of whom are nationally and internationally recognized civic, corporate, education, and former diplomatic and government leaders. Along with a dedicated professional staff, strategic partners, members, and volunteers, the WAC–DC is committed to helping make our nation and world a better place for this and future generations through its global education, international affairs and global communications programs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the outstanding programs that are being provided nationally and internationally by the World Affairs Council—Washington, DC.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, I missed Roll Call Votes 124 through 126 due to my necessary attendance in Massachusetts at a memorial service for Ms. Tiffany Johnson, who ably served the House of Representatives and the nation as my Democratic Counsel for the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations of the Committee on the Judiciary. Had I been present I would have voted as follows:

1. On Roll Call 124, I would have voted AYE—(Final Passage of H.R. 4596, Small Business Broadband Deployment Act).

2. On Roll Call 125, I would have voted AYE—(H.R. 4416, To extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project).

3. On Roll Call 126, I would have voted AYE—(H.R. 4434, To extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project).

HONORING KELLAN CAMPBELL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Kellan Campbell. Kellan is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 394, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Kellan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Kellan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Kellan contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Kellan remarked 131 curbs for Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Raytown, Missouri. Since the cemetery has no headstones, the curbs markers assist families in locating their deceased loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Kellan Campbell for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE LIBERTY COUNTY MEN'S HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Liberty County men's high school basketball team on their State Championship title.

On March 3rd, 2016, the Panthers defeated Jonesboro High School from north Georgia to win the Class AAAA State Championship and the school's first ever State Championship in any sport.

Davion Mitchell, an impressive player for the team all year, scored 14 points—all in the second half. The Macon Coliseum crowd erupted during the game when Mitchell, who has already committed to play basketball at Auburn University, scored his first points of the game in the second half.

The team's scoring was led by Richard LeCounte with 20 points and Will Richardson with 19 points. Jaalon Frazier helped the team tremendously on the defensive end by grabbing 15 rebounds.

I would like to congratulate each member of the Liberty County men's basketball program as well as their coach, Julian Stokes, on all of their hard work this year. I wish them the best of luck in future seasons and many more State Championships to come.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RICHARD G. LUGAR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE SERIES

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service Series in celebration of its 25th anniversary. The Lugar Series is a political leadership development program aimed at increasing the number and influence of Hoosier Republican women in local, state, and national elected and appointed offices. It is my privilege to honor this strong Hoosier organization as it celebrates 25 years of excellence.

The Lugar Series is named after former Indiana Senator Richard Lugar, but his involvement with the group goes far beyond his namesake. In 1989, Judy Singleton, an Indiana businesswoman and volunteer on Senator Lugar's campaign, shared her dream of seeing more women in key roles in our government and in the Republican Party with Senator Lugar. She told him about her idea to start a program to educate women on the ins-and-outs of getting involved with public service. He was immediately enthusiastic and from there the Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service Series was born. Senator Lugar, Judy, and fellow co-founders Teresa Lubbers, Melissa Martin, Barbara Mayes, and Sue Ann Gilroy put this idea into action and in 1990 the Lugar Series graduated their first class of 12 women.

Since its creation, 449 women have graduated from the Lugar Series. Women who are accepted in this program have demonstrated long-term success and leadership ability in their careers or in community service and have a keen interest in participating in public service. Hundreds of these women have gone on to serve in an elected or appointed office. They have served on and led numerous boards and commissions, served as staff members in various political and governmental offices, and/or been elected mayors, state legislators, county clerks and treasurers, school board members, city and town councilors, county commissioners, superior court judges, State Treasurer, State Auditor, and Lt. Governor of Indiana. Additionally, the success of the Lugar Series in Indiana led to the implementation of 19 similar programs across the country. To date, there are over 2,000 graduates nationwide.

As a long-time advocate for women in public service and a current Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, I am familiar with the history of women in politics and the barriers to entry women face. When the Lugar Series was founded in 1990, there were 29 women serving in Congress out 535 members, with only 13 being Republican. Today, there are 104 women serving in Congress, including 28 Republicans. State legislatures, local offices, and other elected and appointed positions see similar trends. We have made small strides, but there is still much work to be done.

As part of their program, the Lugar Series selects one outstanding Hoosier woman each year to receive the Nancy Maloley Outstanding Public Servant Award. Recipients have served in the public sector for a minimum of 5 years and display dedication to public service, a creative approach to problem solving, intellectual competency, and effective management and leadership. I was humbled and honored to receive this award in 2014. While there is still progress to be made, I am thrilled at the Lugar Series continued growth and success and look forward to seeing more women leaders emerge.

On behalf of all women, I would like to extend a huge thank you to Judy, Teresa, Melissa, Barbara, Sue Ann, and particularly Senator Lugar for recognizing the importance of educating and empowering women to enter public service and starting this exemplary organization. The Lugar Series has experienced

an exceedingly successful 25 years and I look forward to many more dreams being realized for years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF LOUDOUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES PLACIDO SANCHEZ AND ERICK AMBROISE

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Loudoun County Sheriff's Deputies Placido Sanchez and Erick Ambroise. On February 10, 2016, these deputies responded to a home in Western Loudoun County. At this location, they located an adult male who was unconscious and indications were the incident was drug-related.

The deputies observed the individual go in-and-out of consciousness before becoming completely unresponsive. Based on his training, Deputy Ambroise recognized the symptoms of a potential heroin overdose. Deputy Ambroise then utilized his agency issued naloxone to help revive the man. The individual was taken to the Cornwall Campus of Inova Loudoun Hospital where hospital personnel advised the actions taken by the deputies likely saved the man from a fatal overdose. This is the first-time naloxone was administered by a Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Deputy.

I would like to commend Deputies Placido Sanchez and Erick Ambroise in potentially saving the life of a man who was overdosing on heroin by putting their new training into action and using naloxone. The use of heroin is gripping our community; we will continue to fight this scourge on all fronts with law enforcement action and community involvement.

H.R. 3716, THE ENSURING REMOVAL OF TERMINATED PROVIDERS FROM MEDICAID AND CHIP ACT

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3716, the Ensuring Removal of Terminated Providers from Medicaid and CHIP Act, which would improve the integrity of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and expand access to patients.

Today's bipartisan bill would strengthen our federal and State healthcare systems by ensuring patients are protected from fraudulent health providers that have been terminated from participating in Medicaid or CHIP. If a bad actor is terminated from CHIP due to fraudulent practices in one state, this legislation guarantees that provider is prohibited from crossing state lines and opening a practice elsewhere. This fraud is unacceptable and jeopardizes not only patients but States' health programs to waste and abuse. Additionally, H.R. 3716 would create a patient friendly electronic provider database for Medicaid beneficiaries. The database would make it easier for patients to know and choose health care options that work best for them.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this commonsense legislation, which builds on our health care system, would reduce direct spending by $28 million over the next ten years. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING MS. EVELYN CHEATHAM

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Evelyn Cheatham whom I have named Woman of the Year in Sonoma County, California. Since Ms. Cheatham moved to Sonoma 27 years ago, she has served Sonoma residents in a variety of ways, including opening a culinary training program that focuses on empowering young people to pursue a successful future.

After establishing her reputation as a high-profile chef cooking for celebrities, Ms. Cheatham decided to start a new venture that would help the young people of Sonoma County. She started Worth Our Weight (W.O.W.), which provides free training to individuals 16 to 24 years old who have dealt with challenges such as foster care, homelessness, or legal trouble. In addition to enabling young people to pursue a skilled profession in culinary training, Ms. Cheatham offers a social circle to the young people at the restaurant, where they are less likely to be exposed to gangs or violence. Furthermore, she ensures the young people get at least one solid meal a day, a necessity many of her students lack.

Her work has not been limited to teaching cooking. Ms. Cheatham serves on the Community and Local Law Enforcement Task Force, where she facilitates communication between law officers and citizens of Sonoma County.

Mr. Speaker, Evelyn Cheatham has selflessly invested her time and energy into bettering the futures of many of Sonoma County's most vulnerable young people. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we thank and honor her dedication here today.

CONGRATULATING TIM HAWKINS

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate a longtime member of my staff, Tim Hawkins, on his new position as Government Relations Administrator with the State of Indiana's Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning.

Tim is a dedicated public servant who has worked diligently on behalf of the people of the 6th District. Tim has been on our team from the very beginning and helped set up our district operations when I was first elected to Congress. During his time as a Congressional staffer, Tim has helped countless individuals navigate the complex federal bureaucracy and receive the help they need. He was instrumental in developing the Lawrenceburg job fair and continuing the long tradition of the Muncie job fair. These events have connected hundreds of people to employers and have helped many of our constituents find jobs.

Tim has always been a fun member of our team—from his affinity for bow ties and all things IU to his legendary hair styles. He is a pleasure to work with and was always ready to lend a helping hand. Although I will miss having Tim on my staff, I know the State of Indiana has gained an excellent public servant.

I ask the entire 6th Congressional District to join me in congratulating Tim Hawkins as he begins the next chapter in his career of public service. I know he will bring the same devotion and enthusiasm that he has shown as part of my staff to his new position with the State of Indiana.

IN HONOR OF BERT STEPHEN CRANE

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the life of a beloved leader in the Merced Community, Bert Stephen Crane. Bert passed away at the age of 84 on Sunday, March 13, 2016 surrounded by his loving family.

On November 29, 1931, Bert was born to fourth generation California farmers and ranchers. Raised on a cattle ranch, he was up before the sun and out until it came down. During his youth, Bert achieved the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of Boy Scout troop Number 101.

At Merced High School, Bert was the drum major in band and played basketball. After high school Bert studied at Stanford University and obtained his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics from U.C. Davis.

During his college years Bert met Nancy Magnuson who he fell in love with and later married in 1957. They remained married for over 58 years and raised three children who would follow the family tradition of ranching and farming. Bert spent most of his life farming walnuts which he ventured into in the early 1970's after his early career in the beef industry. Bert went on to own and operate a successful walnut processing plant.

Bert lived an impressive and inspirational life. He was known to have ridden horses with Ronald Reagan, was extremely involved in the community, and had a passion for healthcare. He led fundraising events for Mercy Hospital and was instrumental in the development of the Mercy Cancer Center. Bert served on the Merced County Planning Commission for 28 years. His service to his community, agriculture and research is one of great respect and integrity.

Bert valued and treasured the time he was able to spend with his family above all else. He is survived by his loving wife Nancy, and their three children, Bert A. Crane, Jr., Mary Crane Couchman, and Karen Crane-McNab and seven grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life of Bert Stephen Crane for his unwavering leadership, and recognizing his accomplishments and outstanding contributions to the community. God bless him always.

IN RECOGNITION OF DAVID PRINGLE

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my personal congratulations and best wishes to an exceptional business leader and outstanding citizen, Mr. David Pringle, on the occasion of his retirement as Aflac's Senior Vice President of Federal Relations.

David earned a bachelor's degree in insurance and risk management from Mississippi State University and then built an impressive career in this industry. As a representative of Aflac and the insurance industry, David's ability to work with everyone, regardless of political leanings, made him a familiar face on Capitol Hill and a source of counsel for Members of Congress and their staffs.

David has worked for Aflac for a remarkable 36 years. For nine of those years, he worked with Aflac's sales forces in the states of Mississippi, North Carolina and West Virginia, where he was a state sales coordinator. As Senior Vice President of Federal Relations, David is primarily responsible for coordinating Aflac's government relations and lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C.

As one of Georgia's most renowned and respected companies, Aflac, which is based in my district, exemplifies the meaning of corporate citizenship. Aflac has consistently found its name on prestigious lists such as Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For and Ethisphere's list of World's Most Ethical Companies. I am proud to acknowledge the accomplishments of Aflac and its people on behalf of the citizens of my district.

Dr. Benjamin E. Mays often said: ''You make your living by what you get; you make your life by what you give.'' David never hesitated to offer his guidance, knowledge, or advice on the nuanced aspects of the complex insurance industry. A man of great integrity, his efforts, his dedication, and his expertise in his field are unparalleled, but his heart for helping others is what makes these qualities truly worthy.

David has accomplished much in his life, but none of it would be possible without the love and support of his wife, Linell, their children, and their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our sincerest appreciation and best wishes to David Pringle upon the occasion of his retirement from an outstanding career spanning 36 years at Aflac.

TRIBUTE TO LILLIE ALMA PATTON DEVLIN

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Lillie Alma Patton Devlin, a lifetime resident of Greenwood County, South Carolina, on the occasion of her upcoming 100th birthday.

Born April 13, 1916 into the Jim Crow South, Mrs. Devlin overcame obstacles that often seemed insurmountable to lead a remarkable life. She and her late husband, John C. Devlin, raised their family with strong determination that their children would have a better life than they had experience and enjoy a greater slice of the American dream. It is very clear that they were successful. Six of their surviving children, earned college degrees, three of them have earned Masters' Degrees and one has earned a doctorate. These accomplishments were made possible by the selfless sacrifices and perseverance of Lillie and John.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Devlin has maintained an unwavering faith, which has emboldened her through good times and sustained her through difficult periods. She has combined her faith with works, serving her beloved Mount Sinai African Methodist Episcopal Church with unwavering dedication, and boundless energy. She continues to serve as a Sunday school teacher, steward, and trustee.

Mrs. Devlin has been equally committed to serving her community. During her tenure as the delegate to the State Education Association from the former Promised Land Elementary School, her reports to the PTA were meticulous, informative, and engaging. When Lillie Devlin embarks upon any task, she completes it enthusiastically and with excellence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in wishing Mrs. Devlin a very happy 100th birthday. It is a remarkable milestone and she is a remarkable woman. I wish her continued good health and Godspeed.

HONORING CAMERON PRATER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Cameron Prater. Cameron is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Cameron has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Cameron has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Cameron has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Cameron scraped and spray painted fire hydrants in Liberty, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Cameron Prater for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF THOMAS S. KAHN

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Thomas S. Kahn, a long-tenured staffer who is retiring from federal service after 32 years of dedicated, trusted work for the House of Representatives. He has spent the last 19 of those years as the Staff Director for the House Budget Committee Democratic staff, and Democrats here in the House have come to rely on Tom's work on the ins and outs of federal budgeting. We will miss his experience and insight, along with his good humor and friendship.

Tom is a loyal Boston Red Sox fan from Massachusetts but started and ended his career on Capitol Hill with Members from the Maryland delegation. Tom came to Capitol Hill as legislative assistant to then-Representative BARBARA MIKULSKI. After time out to earn his law degree from Georgetown University and a brief foray into the private sector, Tom returned to Congress to begin his long service to Representative John Spratt as legislative counsel. Tom served Mr. Spratt throughout the remainder of Mr. Spratt's tenure in Congress, working on both the Government Operations Committee and then later becoming Staff Director and Chief Counsel for the House Budget Committee in 1997. I was pleased when he agreed to stay on as Staff Director when I joined the Budget Committee as Ranking Member.

This year marks Tom's 19th year of service to the Committee as Staff Director, and during that time he has been instrumental in advancing major legislation, including the 1997 budget agreement with President Clinton that led to the first budget surplus in 30 years. He also played a pivotal role in crafting the 2010 budget resolution which paved the way for passage of the Affordable Care Act.

Those of us who have had the pleasure of knowing Tom inevitably also know about the lights of his life: his sons, Benjamin and Daniel—regularly displayed in photos on Tom's tie—and his accomplished wife, Susana Sanchez. If Tom isn't talking about the budget, he's likely conversing about his family.

While Tom is retiring from federal service, he will maintain his dedication to public service in his new role leading government affairs for the American Federation of Government Employees. I thank Tom for his service to our nation and the difference he will continue to make in fighting for federal employees.

HONORING MS. JOSEPHINE OROZCO

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Josephine Orozco, whom I have named Woman of the Year in Contra Costa County, California. During her more than two decades living in Rodeo, California, Ms. Orozco has freely offered her talents to improve her community through numerous community endeavors, all while managing a successful restaurant.

A California native and graduate of The University of California at Berkeley, Ms. Orozco and her husband run El Sol Restaurant in Rodeo, California. As a business owner herself, she has worked to revitalize the downtown community and local small businesses. During her tenure as President of the Rodeo Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Orozco drew on

her expertise as a planning and landscape designer to launch an improvement project enhancing small business connectivity and providing recreational space.

Her community work and events engage many Rodeo residents and offer city residents opportunities both to contribute to worthy causes and connect with their neighbors. Ms. Orozco chairs committees for occasions such as the Community Holiday Tree Lighting, and she plans events such as the Rodeo Crab Feed and Chili Cook-Off and Car Show to raise funds to provide local young people with scholarships. In the past, she has also served on the Rodeo Municipal Advisory Council and the R10 Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Mr. Speaker, Josephine Orozco has spent more than two decades generously offering her talent, time, and resources to improve the lives of her neighbors in Rodeo and Contra Costa County. For this reason, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF DOWNRIVER FAMILY YMCA

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Downriver Family YMCA on their 75th anniversary.

The Downriver Family YMCA was established in Wyandotte, Michigan on January 7, 1941. It was the very first "family" YMCA branch including both boys and girls, and men and women in its mission to build healthy spirits, minds, and bodies for all. Committed to these principles of unity and togetherness, in 2003 the Downriver Y expanded its facilities and currently resides in the Southgate Fun and Fitness Centre. Over the past 75 years, the Downriver Y has served as the place where the community gathers and its newest facility continues to extend the reach of its impact.

The Downriver Family YMCA serves as an inclusive organization committed to nurturing potential in our children and fostering a sense of social responsibility. The organization models the belief that providing an environment in which citizens can grow and thrive is the best way to promote lasting personal and social change. From athletics to education to health services to safe spaces, the programs offered by the Downriver Family YMCA help people from all walks of life improve their well-being and, through this, builds a stronger community.

The celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Downriver Family YMCA is a testament to the YMCA's service to over 16,000 members of the Downriver community and daily support of over 175 children. Through its longstanding partnerships with organizations and business in our neighborhoods, the Downriver Y commits to mentoring our youth and instilling in them the values of citizenship. The Y's investment in our children is vital to ensure a healthy future. All our lives are enriched by the Downriver Family YMCA.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in gratitude to honor the Downriver Family YMCA and congratulate them on their 75th anniversary and wish them many more years of success.

RECOGNIZING W. BRUCE BEATON

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, W. Bruce Beaton has been honored as "Person of the Year" by the Feasterville Business Association, which is celebrating its 67th year. As president of his family-owned insurance business for many years, Bruce Beaton established a respected reputation as a local business owner, while being involved in the activities of the Feasterville Business Association. He also was honored this year for his participation in other regional Chambers of Commerce, the local Police Advisory Board, Centennial Education Foundation and Community Care of the Northeast. In addition, Bruce Beaton has been an elder and treasurer of Bridesburg Presbyterian Church for the past 15 years. His combined work for the betterment of the community, coupled with his business activities demonstrates his dual sense of citizenship and service and so we join in congratulating this year's FBA honoree and thank him for setting an example for others to follow.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JUSTICE BRENT DICKSON FOR HIS 30 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE ON THE INDIANA SUPREME COURT

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Indiana Supreme Court Justice Brent E. Dickson on the occasion of his retirement. Justice Dickson was appointed to the Indiana Supreme Court in 1986, served as Chief Justice for two years, and is the second longest-serving justice in the history of the Indiana Supreme Court. The people of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District are forever grateful for Justice Dickson's contributions to the Hoosier community and it is my privilege to honor him today.

A lifelong Hoosier, Justice Dickson was born in Gary, Indiana, attended the public schools of Hobart, Indiana, and received his Bachelor's degree from Purdue University in 1964. He later attended Indiana University's Robert H. McKinney School of Law, of which I am also a proud alumna. Justice Dickson worked full-time as an insurance claims adjuster during law school and took classes at night. He received his Juris Doctorate in 1968.

Prior to his time on the Indiana Supreme Court, he worked as a general practice lawyer in Lafayette, Indiana for seventeen years. In addition to private practice, Justice Dickson dedicated himself to serving others as an educator and a mediator. Upon graduating from law school, Justice Dickson worked as an adjunct professor at both of Indiana University's law schools—the Maurer School of Law in Bloomington and the Robert H. McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis. He taught evening classes specializing in Indiana Constitutional Law.

Justice Dickson became the Indiana Supreme Court's 100th justice when he was appointed to the court in January of 1986 by then-Governor Robert Orr. During his tenure on the Indiana Supreme Court, Justice Dickson has served with 12 other justices. He served as chairman of multiple committees throughout the years and served as Chief Justice to the Indiana Supreme Court from May 15, 2012 to August 18, 2014.

In total, Justice Dickson wrote 884 opinions in civil and criminal cases, many of them precedent-setting opinions. He authored opinions that led to major reforms of Indiana's property tax system and upheld the state's school voucher program. Among the significant contributions he is most known for was the court's adoption of a rule that kept police interrogations of suspects from being presented in court unless they were recorded. He also is known for his efforts to encourage civility among attorneys and increase legal services for Hoosiers who can't afford them.

During his time on the bench he also cofounded the Sagamore Chapter of the American Inns of Court, was elected to be a member of the American Law Institute, and continues to be an active participant in a host of local, state, and national judicial and legal organizations.

Throughout his career, Justice Dickson served Indiana with commitment and honor. His decades of hard work and public service did not go unnoticed; he received the Indiana State Bar Association's Litigation Section Civility Award in 2015 and the Indianapolis Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award in 2014. He's also an accomplished legal writer, having published several articles during his judicial career on constitutional law, capital punishment, and a variety of other issues in the justice system.

Anyone who knows Justice Dickson knows that his partner in life, his wife Jan, has been an integral part of his success. As founder of the Judicial Family Institute, Jan is a nationally recognized leader in the judicial world. The two of them are passionate about their work with the Institute, which is a national organization dedicated to providing information on topics of concern and importance to the families of judges. They work as a team and Jan is an equal partner in her husband's long and illustrious career.

Justice Dickson is a truly wonderful example of public service and has left a profound and lasting impact on the court. Though I am sad to see Justice Dickson retire from the court, I am happy to know he will continue his work as a mediator and have more time to focus on one of his favorite hobbies, playing the piano. On behalf of all Hoosiers, I'd like to congratulate Justice Dickson on his success and wish him, his wife Jan, and his entire family the best as he enjoys a well-deserved retirement.

HONORING LIAM ANDREW HUNTSUCKER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Liam Andrew

Huntsucker. Liam is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Liam has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Liam has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Liam has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Liam scraped and spray painted fire hydrants in Liberty, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Liam Andrew Huntsucker for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE KING

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on March 15, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: NO on Roll Call Number 118.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RECREATION NOT RED-TAPE ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, along with my colleague in the Senate and fellow Oregonian Senator RON WYDEN, I am pleased to introduce the Recreation Not Red-Tape (RNR) Act. This bill helps to support and promote sustainable outdoor recreation on public lands by removing barriers to access and making recreation more of a priority for federal land managers.

In Oregon and across the country, an increasing number of Americans enjoy recreating outdoors. In fact, at least two thirds of Oregonians participate in outdoor recreation each year. Recently, I joined Senator WYDEN for a portion of his tour of Oregon's Seven Wonders—some of our state's most treasured outdoor recreation destinations—and we heard from dozens of Oregonians about how important open spaces, trails, and recreation areas are to individuals, families, businesses, and communities. From the magnificent Columbia River Gorge to lesser known trails and creeks throughout our forests, canyons, and deserts, having access to these places for hiking, nature-watching, biking, and other activities is good for our souls and for our economy.

Outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands in Oregon and nationwide support healthy communities, create jobs, generate tax revenue, and support a high quality of life. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, Americans spend $646 billion per year on outdoor recreation gear, vehicles, trips, and more. In Oregon, outdoor recreation generates over $12 billion in consumer spending, tens of thousands of jobs, and $4 billion in wages and salaries. Not only that, but supporting sustainable outdoor recreation on public lands can also help protect important ecological, watershed, and fish and wildlife values that underpin high quality recreation experiences.

While public lands are open to all Americans, unfortunately sometimes it's not as easy as it should be to enjoy the great outdoors. Recreation permitting can involve confusing, complicated, and lengthy processes, and federal land managers need support in maintaining trails to facilitate use. We need to prioritize sustainable outdoor recreation for the important, powerful role that it plays in our economy, in our communities, and in our environment.

This bill helps to promote and support sustainable outdoor recreation on public lands by simplifying recreation special use permitting, facilitating access for our youth, seniors, and veterans, prioritizing maintenance of trails through collaborative partnerships, making environmentally responsible outdoor recreation a priority for land management agencies, and more. These changes will help get more people outside to enjoy our environment, nurturing our important bond with the natural world. The next step will be to complement these efforts by continuing to conserve and protect the special places that provide us with recreation opportunities, so that those opportunities can be available for generations to come.

GOVERNMENT OF KAZAKHSTAN'S COMMITMENT TO NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

HON. DANA ROHRABACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Kazakhstan has been tireless in its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. The steadfastness their government has shown in this area is a key part of our bilateral relationship and a clear example of Kazakhstan's leadership to the global community. This issue is particularly timely as the President of Kazakhstan; Nursultan Nazarbayev will be participating in the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC on March 31st and April 1st.

President Nazarbayev's efforts to lead Kazakhstan to unilaterally surrender its nuclear stockpile under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program were historic and helped to create today's non-proliferation framework. More recently, Kazakhstan together with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other outside partners established the world's first Low-Enriched Uranium (LEU) Fuel Bank. This Fuel Bank, which Kazakhstan has committed to support through facilities and resources as the host nation, provides a secondary market for LEU to guarantee that all nations have an energy source for peaceful civilian nuclear power—and as importantly—have no reason to develop nuclear enrichment technologies of their own.

Additionally, Kazakhstan is preparing to host an international exposition in the city of Astana next year titled, Expo 2017. The theme will be ''future energy'' and include contributions from national governments, non-governmental organizations and private companies on how mankind can provide the power to support ever increasing levels of human development.

Lastly, this year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence after the Soviet Union and the start of bilateral relations with the United States. We mark this occasion in celebration of what has been achieved and note the areas where will can seek progress. The U.S. commitment to Kazakhstan and the region will continue to endure and taking steps such as repealing the outdated Jackson-Vanik restrictions will help to maintain the strong relationship. As we mark this occasion I look forward to a bright future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call 124, I would like to be recorded as voting Yea. On Roll Call 118, I would like to be recorded as voting No.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, March 16, I missed a series of Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted ''YEA'' on Numbers 124, 125, and 126.

TRIBUTE TO EAGLE SCOUT CONNER CHAPPELL

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Conner Chappell of Van Meter, Iowa for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well-maintained for more than a century.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. For his project, Conner cleaned the hiking trails and painted the shelter ceiling at Trindle Park in Van Meter. The work ethic Conner displayed all throughout his Eagle Project and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank speaks volumes of his commitment to serving a cause greater than himself and assisting his community.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. I am honored to represent Conner

and his family in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating him on reaching the rank of Eagle Scout and in wishing him nothing but continued success in his future education and career.

HONORING MS. MONICA ROSENTHAL

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Monica Rosenthal, whom I have named Woman of the Year in Lake County, California. In her two decades living in Middletown, California, Ms. Rosenthal has dedicated countless hours to community service, even while running a successful business.

Born in Hawaii and raised in towns across the country, Ms. Rosenthal settled in California after meeting her husband Dave. Together, Monica and Dave manage their 40 acre vineyard in Lake County. Beyond her business experience, Ms. Rosenthal invests her time and resources to improve the lives of her neighbors.

No stranger to organizing her neighbors in support of a cause, Ms. Rosenthal has served on two Save the Lake campaigns and assisted her community with recovery efforts after the Valley Fire devastated the southern portion of Lake County. Ms. Rosenthal drew on her experience as a small business owner and a community servant to plan a successful Economic Outlook and Forecast event in December 2015, which brought together government, business, education, and healthcare leaders to stimulate the economic recovery process.

Ms. Rosenthal has supported a wide range of both local environmental and social programs. She represented District 1 on the Lake County Planning Commission from 2007 to 2009, and, for the past five years, has represented District 1 on the Lake County Farm Bureau, lending her practical expertise to County leadership. Additionally, she supports foster youth and senior programs such as Redwood Children's Services and the Middletown Senior Center.

Mr. Speaker, Monica Rosenthal is a key part of the Lake County community and we thank her for her dedication to community service and her active participation in social programs. For this reason, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

CONGRATULATING COLUMBUS NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Columbus North High School on its 2016 IHSAA state championship in girls' gymnastics.

The Bull Dogs faced off against two-time defending champion Valparaiso High School on March 12th at Ball State University's Worthen Arena. During their tenth straight appearance at the state meet, the team made their mark by breaking the state record for total points and beating the runner-up Valparaiso Vikings 114.850 to 113.250. In fact, three of Columbus North's female gymnasts placed in the top five performances in Saturday's meet and Senior Katrina May was notably awarded the Mildred M. Ball Mental Attitude Award.

I am proud of these young women for not only their remarkable win, but also for the Hoosier sportsmanship that they displayed throughout their undefeated season. I want to commend Coaches Sandy Freshour and Bob Arthur as well as all of the assistant coaches who led these young women through this historic victory.

Congrats, Bull Dogs, on a perfect season.

HONORING JACOB MATTHEW PEARSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jacob Matthew Pearson. Jacob is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jacob has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Jacob has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Jacob has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Jacob constructed a brick patio under an existing bench and pavilion in the playground at First Presbyterian Church of Liberty, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jacob Matthew Pearson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR VS. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I speak today in defense of the Little Sisters of the Poor in their stand for religious liberty in America. Next week, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the case between the Little Sisters of the Poor and the federal government. The Little Sisters' ministry is to care for the elderly poor all over the world. The Little Sisters here in the United States run a nonprofit to take care of America's elderly poor. They are now fighting the federal government in order to be able to preserve their ministry.

The federal government's argument is this: The Little Sisters of the Poor must violate the tenets of their Catholic faith and authorize their third-party health care administrators to provide contraception, sterilization, and abortifacients to recipients of their health insurance. Never mind that the government has granted complete exemptions of this mandate to massive, secular companies such as Exxon and Pepsi. The government would rather force the Little Sisters of the Poor to reject their sincere and righteous religious beliefs than grant them a full exemption like larger, secular companies have received. The government would rather force the Little Sisters out into the streets when they can't pay the oppressive fines if they don't comply with this unjust mandate. It's morally disgusting, and it's insulting to any lover of freedom.

I urge my colleagues to pray with me that the Supreme Court upholds religious freedom in America and sides with the Little Sisters of the Poor.

CONGRATULATING GARY GRINNELL

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gary Grinnell on his recent appointment to the Board of Directors at the National Association of Federal Credit Unions.

Mr. Grinnell currently serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of Corning Credit Union, located in my hometown of Corning, New York. Prior to this appointment, he served as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. Mr. Grinnell has nearly 25 years of experience in the financial services industry and has held numerous positions involving internal audit, consumer and real estate lending operations, risk management, and member services.

Mr. Grinnell serves on NAFCU's Legislative Committee and has testified before Congress on behalf of the Association. He has a deep understanding of legislative and regulatory issues facing credit unions across the county. I am confident that his expertise and years of experience will benefit the NAFCU Board and local credit unions for years to come.

Mr. Grinnell has lived in the Corning community for 18 years, where he and his wife Melissa have raised their three children. Mr. Grinnell's commitment to our community is evident by his leadership on the Southern Tier Economic Growth Board of Directors and the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Gary Grinnell and wishing him the best of luck in his new role on the NAFCU Board of Directors.

CONGRATULATING THE CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SWIM TEAM ON THEIR NATIONAL RECORD BREAKING 30TH STATE CHAMPIONSHIP WIN

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Carmel High School Girls Swim team for winning the 2015–2016 Girls Swimming State Championship title. Last year, I was proud to honor this team for their 29th consecutive state championship title, which tied the national record for the most consecutive state championship wins in any sport. This year's win is even more momentous, as it marks their 30th consecutive state title and broke the national record for most consecutive state championship wins in any high school sport.

This tremendous national record breaking win has been 30 years in the making. This state championship concluded the Greyhounds' already impressive season, and marked the teams' place in history as the best sports program in our nation's history. The Lady Greyhounds won 9 out of 11 events at the State Championship for a total of 438 points, far overshadowing the second-place team, which finished with 193.5 points. In accomplishing their 30th state title, there were other notable individual achievements. Senior Veronica Burchill broke her own state record in the 100-yard butterfly event, which she set at last year's state championship. Senior Claire Adams won the 100-yard backstroke, making her the first woman to win the 100-yard backstroke all four years of her high school career and the first swimmer in Indiana history to win 16 state titles (4 team championships and 12 individual). Claire also took home the Mental Attitude Award.

Throughout the years, the Lady Greyhounds have demonstrated incredible dedication to their sport—training year-round and putting in countless hours in the pool and the weight room. They have been supported by their committed parents, coaches, and trainers, and led by head coach Chris Plumb. Coach Plumb has been coaching the Lady Greyhounds since 2006, leading them to 10 of their last 30 consecutive titles. He works tirelessly to inspire, teach, and motivate his swimmers to dream big and reach their goals. High school sports are a special experience. They teach discipline, build character, and allow young men and women to have experiences they will remember for a lifetime. This team exemplifies the wonderful attributes that high school sports teach, and I am proud to represent such a hardworking and highly regarded group of young women and coaches.

The Greyhounds' 30th state championship title is momentous for each and every member of the Carmel High School swim team, both past and present. This team has been building a legacy for decades and I am thrilled that the current coaches and swimmers and all those that came before them are able to see this legacy come to fruition. I look forward to cheering the team on through another great season next year.

INTRODUCTION OF WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN STEM BOOSTER ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the Women and Minorities in STEM Booster Act—important legislation to address the troubling underrepresentation of these groups in growing career fields.

Companies that harness America's advantages in science and technology continue to grow and create high-paying jobs, yet the pipelines for these careers often leave out women and under-represented minorities. Indeed, according to the American Community Survey, women make up half of the workforce but hold only 26 percent of STEM-related jobs.

The STEM Booster Act tackles this disparity head-on through efforts to include women and minorities in the STEM workforce. The bill authorizes a competitive grant program so that professional organizations, universities, nonprofits, and others can develop innovative programs to foster interest and participation in these subjects among young women and minorities.

Studies have shown that women and minorities have just as much interest in science and math as other students, but are much less likely to declare a STEM major or complete a degree in one of these subjects. Mentoring programs, internships, and outreach efforts can help to ensure that these students can translate an interest in STEM into a degree and a career.

I want to thank Sen. HIRONO for her partnership on this issue, and urge my colleagues to support this important effort.

HONORING JEFFREY ALAN MACKEY, JR.

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jeffrey Alan Mackey, Jr. Jeffrey is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1309, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jeffrey has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Jeffrey has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Jeffrey has earned the rank of Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say and become a Brotherhood Member of the Order of the Arrow. Jeffrey has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Jeffrey coordinated the reconstruction of a large retaining wall in the resident's courtyard at the Excelsior Springs Convalescent Center in Excelsior Springs, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jeffrey Alan Mackey, Jr., for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING DR. QUENTIN YOUNG'S LIFE AND LEGACY

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember my mentor and precious friend Dr. Quentin Young, who passed away last week.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle called him, ''a relentless advocate of fairness and justice for all citizens.'' In his book, County, Dr. David Ansell describes Dr. Young as a ''legend,'' a role model who attracted residents from all over the country to train with him at Chicago's Cook County Hospital. I am proud to have known Quentin Young as an advocate and as my personal physician.

Throughout his life, Quentin Young fought to eliminate discrimination and to create a society rooted firmly in justice. As a young doctor, he was deeply troubled by the segregation he saw in Chicago hospitals, and he founded the Committee to End Discrimination to end it. He founded the Medical Committee for Human Rights to provide medical care to civil rights and anti-war advocates. He served as president of the American Public Health Association. And he helped lead other physicians in the push for universal health care, creating the Physicians for a National Health Program, which continues his legacy for medical care where ''everyone is in, and nobody is left out.''

Quentin Young inspired many of us to agitate for social and economic change, to literally go the extra mile. In 2001, he walked 167 miles across Illinois to champion the call for universal health care.

Where Quentin Young saw problems, he also saw solutions. When patients came to him after suffering serious medical problems from back-alley abortions, he joined the battle to win legal abortion. Today, at a time when abortion rights continue to be attacked, it is important to remember his words to us, ''It's not a choice of abortion or no abortion, but safe abortion or unsafe abortion.''

Quentin Young also understood that the fight for universal health care is part of a larger fight: to eliminate poverty, to make sure that every child receives quality education and to guarantee democracy throughout our society. As a young man, he registered African American voters during Mississippi Freedom Summer and participated in one of the 1965 marches from Selma to Montgomery. Throughout his life, he pushed for voting rights and to make our electoral system responsive to the needs of voters, not the demands of the wealthiest campaign contributors.

In Chicago and across the country, there are countless individuals like me whose lives have been made better because of Quentin Young and who are committed to paying-forward the lessons he taught us. He has inspired us not just to fight for economic and social justice but to build the movements that will bring results. While he will be greatly missed, we will continue that fight.

HONORING MS. MARIA GUEVARA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Maria Guevara, whom I have named Woman of the Year in Solano County. Ms. Guevara is a tireless advocate for the rights and needs of homeless individuals in Vallejo, California.

Ms. Guevara has spent much of her life in California, and attended Solano Community College, Napa Valley College, and St. Mary's College of California. From volunteering with Filipino American Social Services to serving as a board member for Vallejo Community Access Television, Ms. Guevara has dedicated her time to causes close to her heart. She also enjoys volunteering in her faith community as a religious education teacher at St. Basil the Great.

In 2010, Ms. Guevara founded Vallejo Together, a group of dedicated volunteers, to address the unmet needs of homeless people in her community. Vallejo Together provides many services, including serving meals, connecting individuals to resources, and sponsoring events such as a ''Youth and Parent Expo'' and ''Unity Day'' to celebrate Vallejo's diversity and families. The volunteer group aims to empower those in need to become self-sufficient so they can enjoy an independent and fulfilling life.

Mr. Speaker, Maria Guevara selflessly spends her time and energy caring for others in our community. Everyone Ms. Guevara works with enjoys her warm and compassionate nature, and Vallejo continues to benefit from her inspiring dedication to service. For this reason, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

CELEBRATING THE PLANTING OF A TREE ON THE U.S. CAPITOL GROUNDS HONORING CONGRESSMAN EDWARD R. ROYBAL

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I led the planting of a tree on the U.S. Capitol Grounds in honor of my father, the late Congressman Edward R. Roybal. The tree, a red oak (Quercus rubra), was planted on the south side of the House of Representatives along Southwest Drive, near the intersection of Independence Avenue SW and South Capitol Street.

For helping to make this planting a reality, I extend my most sincere thanks to Speaker PAUL RYAN, Senate Rules Committee Chairman ROY BLUNT, Architect of the Capitol Stephen R. Ayers, and all my congressional colleagues who signed the letter in support of the tree planting ceremony.

On behalf of my family, I also extend my deep gratitude and appreciation to three congressional leaders who spoke at yesterday's ceremony: Senator HARRY REID, whom my father admired and considered a very dear friend; Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI, whom my father often referred to as the gentlelady from California and predicted would one day become a great leader; and Minority Whip STENY HOYER, whom my father respected and proudly served with as a member of the Appropriations Committee. I also want to offer my heartfelt thanks to House Chaplain Fr. Patrick J. Conroy, S.J., who blessed the tree during the ceremony.

In celebration of the centennial of my father's birth, I can think of no greater tribute than the planting of this red oak tree on the U.S. Capitol Grounds.

Adding to this occasion is that it is also the 40th anniversary of my father's founding of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, better known as NALEO.

If my father were alive today, of all the tributes he has received, including the Medal of Freedom from President Obama, the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Clinton, the naming of the CDC Campus in his honor, and many others, this would be among his most cherished, because this tree is being planted between the House of Representatives, which my father truly believed is the people's house, and the Rayburn Building, where he spent much of his 30 years in Congress doing the people's work.

The magic of this tree is that it will be a living testimony of my father's work to ignite beacons of hope and opportunity for all Americans.

As a poet once wrote, ''A tree is the greatest human service provider. It provides shade while standing, comfort when converted, and fire when burned.''

To all who made yesterday possible, and to those who honored us with your presence and made this occasion even more special, my family and I are extremely grateful, and we thank you.

CELEBRATING RICHARD A. LEYENDECKER

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Richard A. Leyendecker, a decorated war hero and successful business owner.

Mr. Leyendecker was born to Peter P. Leyendecker Jr. and Emma Jordan Leyendecker. A lifelong resident of Laredo, Texas, he attended St. Peter's Memorial School and Martin High School. He enrolled in Texas A&M University until, at the age of 19, he enlisted into the Army Air Corps to serve his country during World War II.

Mr. Leyendecker was a heavy bomber in the European Theater during World War II. In August of 1944, while he was flying a mission in support of the Normandy invasion, he was shot down and declared missing in action. He endured prisoner of war camps for nearly a year before American troops were able to liberate him. In recognition of his service and sacrifice, Mr. Leyendecker received the Prisoner of War Medal, the European-African Middle Eastern Ribbon with 4 bronze stars, and the WWII Victory Ribbon, among other honors.

After returning home, Mr. Leyendecker resumed his studies at Texas A&M University, earning a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. Upon graduation he began working with his father at their family construction business in Laredo. He and two of his four sons, Gary and Mark, founded Leyendecker Construction, Inc. in 1980. Another son, Paul, also joined the company in the 1990's. Mr. Leyendecker worked tirelessly to build a successful family business and valued the work of his employees.

In addition to his many accomplishments, Mr. Leyendecker was a proud husband and father. He is survived by his wife, Blanche Flores, and their four sons Richard, Gary, Paul and Mark.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have the opportunity to remember the legacy of Richard A. Leyendecker: a hero to his country, a successful business leader, and a loving family man.

RECOGNIZING MARTIN E. HELLMAN AND WHITFIELD DIFFIE, RECIPIENTS OF THE TURING AWARD

HON. JERRY McNERNEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Martin E. Hellman and Whitfield Diffie for receiving the 2015 Association of Computing Machinery's A.M. Turing Award for their major contributions to modern cryptography.

Mr. Hellman is Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering at Stanford University and Mr. Diffie is former Vice President and Chief Privacy Security Officer of Sun Microsystems. Named in honor of Alan M. Turing, the influential British mathematician who articulated the mathematical foundation and limitations of computing, this annual award is often described as the Nobel Prize of computing.

Forty years ago, Mr. Hellman and Mr. Diffie's groundbreaking paper, ''New Directions in Cryptography,'' introduced the idea of public-key cryptography, which has proven critical for safely transmitting information across the Internet. Public-key cryptography ensures that a message can be securely transmitted online such that only the intended recipient is able to view the message. This is achieved through a pair of mathematically related keys, one that is public and one that is private. Although anyone wishing to send a message to a certain recipient can use that recipient's readily available public key to encrypt the message, the message can only be decrypted with the recipient's securely held private key. Today, thanks to Mr. Hellman and Mr. Diffie's crucial work, we are able to send emails, submit payments on e-commerce websites, and use online tools to check our bank statements and health records, while ensuring that the information transmitted remains private.

Mr. Hellman and Mr. Diffie have also received the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Hamming Medal, the Marconi International Fellowship Award, the Franklin Institute's Levy Medal, and the IEEE Donald G. Fink Award for their work on public-key cryptography. Additionally, they have each been recipients of other prominent awards and honors for their significant contributions to the important area of digital security.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Hellman and Mr. Diffie and thanking them for their outstanding work.

HONORING KYLE ANTHONY DOWNES

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Kyle Anthony Downes. Kyle is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 261, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Kyle has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Kyle has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Kyle contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Kyle refurbished several terrace steps on the White Tail Trail in the Parkville Nature Sanctuary, making the trail safer for hikers.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Kyle Anthony Downes for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1553–S1611

Measures Introduced: Forty bills and eight resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2700–2739, S. Res. 403–409, and S. Con. Res. 34. **Pages S1591–92**

Measures Reported: Report to accompany S. 1177, to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to ensure that every child achieves. (S. Rept. No. 114–231) **Page S1590**

Measures Passed:

Airport and Airway Extension Act: Senate passed H.R. 4721, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S1560–61**

McConnell (for Thune) Amendment No. 3457, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S1560–61**

Directing Senate Legal Counsel: By a unanimous vote of 96 yeas (Vote No. 38), Senate agreed to S. Res. 377, directing the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. **Pages S1561–68**

Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act: Senate passed S. 483, to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S1605–06**

South Texas Bridge: Senate passed S. 2143, to provide for the authority for the successors and assigns of the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company to maintain and operate a toll bridge across the Rio Grande near Rio Grande City, Texas. **Page S1606**

Adding Zika Virus to the FDA Priority Review Voucher Program Act: Senate passed S. 2512, to expand the tropical disease product priority review voucher program to encourage treatments for Zika virus, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S1606–07**

Authorizing Use of Emancipation Hall: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 111, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust. **Page S1607**

Congratulating the University of Wyoming Men's Nordic Ski Team: Senate agreed to S. Res. 407, congratulating the University of Wyoming men's Nordic ski team for winning the 38th annual United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association national championship. **Page S1607**

CDH Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 408, designating April 2016 as ''National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month''. **Page S1607**

National Women's History Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 409, recognizing March 2016 as ''National Women's History Month''. **Page S1607**

Adjournment Resolution: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 34, providing for an adjournment of the House of Representatives. **Page S1607**

Authority for Committees—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that, notwithstanding the Senate's adjournment, committees be authorized to report legislative and executive matters on Monday, March 28, 2016, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. **Page S1608**

Authorizing Leadership to Make Appointments—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that, notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the Majority and Minority Leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate. **Page S1608**

Pro Forma Sessions—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that Senate adjourn, to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma

session, Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Monday, March 21, 2016, at 10 a.m.; Thursday, March 24, 2016, at 11 a.m.; Monday, March 28, 2016, at 11:30 a.m.; and Thursday, March 31, 2016, at 6:30 p.m.; and that when Senate adjourns on Thursday, March 31, 2016, it next convene at 3 p.m., on Monday, April 4, 2016. **Page S1608**

Removal of Injunction of Secrecy: The injunction of secrecy was removed from the following treaty:

Treaty with Kazakhstan on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (Treaty Doc. No. 114–11).

The treaty was transmitted to the Senate today, considered as having been read for the first time, and referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed. **Pages S1607–08**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Janine Anne Davidson, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Navy.

Todd A. Weiler, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. **Page S1610**

10 Army nominations in the rank of general.

1 Coast Guard nomination in the rank of admiral.

2 Marine Corps nominations in the rank of general.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Foreign Service, Marine Corps, and Navy. **Page S1610**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Douglas Barry Wilson, of Delaware, to be a Member of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2017.

Heidi Neel Biggs, of Oregon, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2017.

Westley Watende Omari Moore, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2016.

Westley Watende Omari Moore, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2021.

Anne Hall, of Maine, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania.

Jeffrey A. Rosen, of Virginia, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2021.

Almo J. Carter, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the United States Parole Commission for a term of six years.

Larry T. Glenn, of the Virgin Islands, to be a Commissioner of the United States Parole Commission for a term of six years.

Lisabeth Tabor Hughes, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

James Xavier Dempsey, of California, to be a Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board for a term expiring January 29, 2022.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, and Navy. **Pages S1608–10**

Nomination Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nomination:

Brad R. Carson, of Oklahoma, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, which was sent to the Senate on July 8, 2015. **Pages S1610–11**

Messages from the House: **Page S1590**

Measures Referred: **Page S1590**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S1590**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S1590–91**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1592–94**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1594–S1603**

Additional Statements: **Page S1687**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1603–04**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1604**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1604**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—38) **Page S1568**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:33 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Monday, March 21, 2016. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1608.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Labor, after receiving testimony from Thomas E. Perez, Secretary of Labor.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Department of Defense budget posture in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Ashton B. Carter, Secretary, Michael J. McCord, Under Secretary (Comptroller) and Chief Financial Officer, and General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all of the Department of Defense.

NATIONAL PARKS LEGISLATION

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks concluded a hearing to examine S. 2177 and H.R. 959, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Medgar Evers House, located in Jackson, Mississippi, S. 651 and H.R. 1289, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain land in Martinez, California, for inclusion in the John Muir National Historic Site, H.R. 1949, to provide for the consideration and submission of site and design proposals for the National Liberty Memorial approved for establishment in the District of Columbia, S. 1329 and H.R. 2288, bills to remove the use restrictions on certain land transferred to Rockingham County, Virginia, H.R. 2880, to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, S. 1930 and H.R. 3371, bills to adjust the boundary of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to include the Wallis House and Harriston Hill, S. 119, to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a lifetime National Recreational Pass for any veteran with a service-connected disability, S. 718, to modify the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield in the Commonwealth of Virginia, S. 770, to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance, S. 1577, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of East Rosebud Creek in Carbon County, Montana, as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 1943, to modify the boundary of the Shiloh National Military Park located in the State of Tennessee and Mississippi, to establish Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the National Park System, S. 1975, to establish the Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System, S. 1982, to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance, S. 1993, to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in the United States in national service positions to protect, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States, S. 2039, to designate the mountain at the Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming, as Devils Tower, S. 2061, to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas, S. 2309, to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. Civil Rights Network, S. 2608, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to place signage on Federal land along the trail known as the "American Discovery Trail", S. 2620, to facilitate the addition of park administration at the Coltsville National Historical Park, and S. 2628, to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, after receiving testimony from Peggy O'Dell, Deputy Director for Operations, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

HEALTHCARE.GOV

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine HealthCare.gov, focusing on a review of operations and enrollment, after receiving testimony from Erin Bliss, Assistant Inspector General, Office of Evaluation and Inspections, Office of Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services; and Seto J. Bagdoyan, Director of Audits, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service, Government Accountability Office.

ADMINISTRATION'S NUCLEAR AGENDA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Administration's nuclear agenda, after receiving testimony from former Representative Ellen Tauscher; Rose E. Gottemoeller, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, and Thomas M. Countryman, Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, both of the Department of State; and William Tobey, Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

AGENCY USE OF DEFERENCE

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management concluded a hearing to examine agency use of deference, after receiving testimony from Charles J. Cooper, Cooper and Kirk, PLLC, Washington, D.C.; Neomi Rao, George Mason School of Law Center for the Study of the Administrative State, Arlington, Virginia; and Michael Herz,

Yeshiva University Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, New York, New York.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

PRICE SPIKES IN PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine sudden price spikes in decades-old prescription drugs, after receiving testimony from Adaora Adimora, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, on behalf of the HIV Medicine Association; Ron Tilles, and Michael Smith, both of Turing Pharmaceuticals LLC, Dan Wichman, Broadfin Capital, LLC, and Howard L. Dorfman, all of New York, New York; and Shannon Weston, Whispering Pines, North Carolina.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 44 public bills, H.R. 4771–4814; and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 650–652, were introduced. **Pages H1460–62**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1463–64**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Page H1421**

Authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674: The House agreed to H. Res. 639, authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674, by a yea-and-nay vote of 234 yeas to 186 nays, Roll No. 129. **Pages H1434–46**

H. Res. 649, the rule providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 639) was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 234 yeas to 180 nays, Roll No. 128, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 234 yeas to 181 nays, Roll No. 127. **Pages H1422–34**

Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1831, to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking. **Pages H1446–47**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12 noon on Monday, March 21st for Morning Hour debate. **Pages H1450–51**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H1434.

Senate Referral: S. 719 was referred to the Committee on Armed Services. **Page H1460**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1433, H1433–34, H1445–46. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

Committee Meetings

EXAMINING USDA ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION—PART I

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Examining USDA Organization and Program Administration—Part I". Testimony was heard from the following Department of Agriculture officials: Kevin Concannon, Under Secretary, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services; Alfred Almanza, Deputy Under Secretary, Food Safety; and Lisa Mensah, Under Secretary, Rural Development.

AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PUBLIC AND OUTSIDE WITNESSES DAY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a hearing for American Indian and Alaska Native public and outside witnesses. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held an oversight hearing on U.S. Central Command. Testimony was heard from General Lloyd J. Austin III, U.S. Central Command. This hearing was closed.

APPROPRIATIONS—U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a budget hearing on U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Testimony was heard from Sarah Saldana, Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Department of Agriculture, Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service. Testimony was heard from Alexis Taylor, Deputy Under Secretary, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services; Brandon Willis, Administrator, Risk Management Agency; Val Dolcini, Administrator, Farm Service Agency; Suzanne Palmieri, Associate Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service; and Michael Young, Budget Officer, Department of Agriculture.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY 2017 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET REQUEST AND READINESS POSTURE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness held a hearing entitled ''The Department of the Navy 2017 Operation and Maintenance Budget Request and Readiness Posture''. Testimony was heard from Admiral Michelle J. Howard, USN, Vice Chief of Naval Operations; Vice Admiral John C. Aquilino, USN, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5); and Vice Admiral Philip H. Cullom, USN, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics.

MEDICARE ACCESS AND CHIP REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015: EXAMINING IMPLEMENTATION OF MEDICARE PAYMENT REFORMS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015: Examining Implementation of Medicare Payment Reforms''. Testimony was heard from Patrick Conway, Deputy Administrator for Innovation and Quality, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

PRIVATIZING THE INTERNET ASSIGNED NUMBER AUTHORITY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Privatizing the Internet Assigned Number Authority''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR'S LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS SYSTEM

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Implementation of the Department of the Interior's Law Enforcement Records System''. Testimony was heard from Harry Humbert, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services, Department of the Interior.

EXAMINING FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT IN FLINT, MICHIGAN—PART III

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Examining Federal Administration of the Safe Drinking Water Act in Flint, Michigan—Part III''. Testimony was heard from Gina McCarthy, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; and Rick Snyder, Governor, State of Michigan.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Space held a hearing entitled ''An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for Fiscal Year 2017''. Testimony was heard from Charles F. Bolden, Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

RISKY BUSINESS: EFFECTS OF NEW JOINT EMPLOYER STANDARDS FOR SMALL FIRMS

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Regulations held a hearing entitled ''Risky Business: Effects of New Joint Employer Standards for Small Firms''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

NSA FY 2017 BUDGET

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Subcommittee on NSA and Cybersecurity held a hearing on NSA FY 2017 Budget. This hearing was closed.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2016

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Examining USDA Organization and Program Administration—Part II'', 9 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing for American Indian and Alaska Native public and outside witnesses, 9 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing for American Indian and Alaska Native public and outside witnesses, 1 p.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Monday, March 21

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: Senate will meet in a pro forma session.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

12 noon, Monday, March 21

House Chamber

Program for Monday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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