

qualifications, and we reported him out to the full Senate immediately.

I am hopeful that under Mr. Missal's leadership, the VA Office of Inspector General will restore veterans' trust in the inspector general's office, protect VA whistleblowers, and forge a new relationship with Congress, but above all else, I hope Mr. Missal will use his position to help ensure the finest among us receives the high-quality care they deserve.

I am confident Mr. Missal is up to the task, and I thank him for agreeing to serve in this supporting role.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 448 only, with no other executive business in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael Joseph Missal, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Missal nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, 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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ACT OF 2016

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after months of debate and piecemeal short-term reauthorizations, the Senate has finally approved a comprehensive reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration, FAA, that will improve the safety and efficiency of our Nation's airline transportation system. The Federal Aviation Administration Act of 2016 will not only make airline travel safer and more efficient, it will also strengthen our economy by creating jobs and supporting those who rely on the benefits of airline transpor-

tation, day to day. From protecting the rights and safety of airline employees, to ensuring the needs of passengers with disabilities are recognized and upheld, this legislation takes necessary steps to improve travel experiences for all Americans.

I am especially pleased that the Federal Aviation Administration Act includes a number of policies that will benefit Vermont's airports, including the preservation of the Essential Air Service program, an important source of support for the Rutland-Southern Vermont Regional Airport. The bill also increases Airport Improvement Program funding, which is essential to the expansion and improvements of airports in Vermont and across the country. Also importantly, the bill will not privatize the Air Traffic Control System.

As the opportunities and challenges associated with new technology continue to evolve—both in NextGen implementation and use of drones—it is important that safety remains a top priority. This FAA reauthorization bill takes steps to address the safety and privacy concerns related to the widespread proliferation of unmanned aircraft within our domestic airspace. The legislation adds several provisions to increase safety by adding new technical and operational standards. For example, the bill requires the FAA and government agencies to collaborate with industry stakeholders to develop guidelines and procedures to ensure the safe integration of drones into the national airspace. I was also pleased that the bill addresses certain privacy concerns about the use of drones by requiring the FAA to establish a publicly accessible website containing information about commercial and government drone operations, the type of information those drones will collect, and how that information will be used. While the drone-related provisions in the bill are an improvement from the status quo, I believe that we must do more to ensure that safety and privacy safeguards are improved.

In Vermont, our airports are essential to a strong economy. They facilitate both tourism and commerce, and they are a source of economic growth for our communities. I am disappointed that, despite support from 99 other Senators, the objections of just one Senator prevented the passage of an amendment that would further facilitate travel and commerce between the United States and Canada, our largest trading partner. Expanding U.S. preclearance operations in Canada not only improves the travel experience for Americans traveling back and forth between Canada, but encourages neighbors to the north to visit the United States and infuses our economies through tourism and commerce. Importantly, it also furthers our national security. I will be looking for opportunities to advance this legislation moving forward.

The Federal Aviation Administration Act represents a strong step forward in

keeping the U.S. airspace as the safest and most efficient in the world. I hope that, as the House takes up this important legislation, they will maintain the carefully balanced proposals included in the Senate bill.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I voted no on final passage of the FAA reauthorization bill because I was unable to offer my amendment to ensure that cargo pilots have the same rest and duty rules as passenger pilots.

Not only was I unable to secure a vote on my amendment, my offer to modify my amendment into a study by the National Transportation Safety Board was objected to by the other side. We should ensure that all pilots, whether they fly people or goods, have the same opportunities for rest. As this bill has many safety implications for our aviation system, I am very disappointed that my amendment did not receive consideration in the Senate.

However, I would like to thank the Senate Commerce Committee for their hard work on this bill, which includes many safety improvements, helpful consumer protections, and enhancements to airport security. I am particularly pleased that the bill includes a provision to ban the use of electronic cigarettes on board aircraft that I had asked to be included in this bill.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today the Senate approved legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration—FAA—for 18 months. I applaud the work of my colleagues, Senators THUNE and NELSON, and their staff who worked tirelessly to get this important legislation over the finish line. I hope leaders in the House of Representatives see what we passed here in the Senate and ensure smooth passage of the bill. This legislation truly represents bipartisan compromise. While it takes important steps forward, more work remains to be done to ensure the United States remains a global leader in aviation, safety, and innovation.

This legislation advanced many key priorities that I was proud to fight for. Aviation is a critical means of travel for people in my State and across the country, and I am confident that this legislation takes strides to improve the status quo for travelers.

I worked to advance provisions that help improve accessibility for persons with disabilities traveling through our Nation's commercial air system. The increased and improved data collected as a result of this legislation and the new advisory committee put in place will help fuel effective policies that enhance the traveling experience for persons with disabilities and remove barriers to accessibility.

The legislation will help improve the use of disadvantaged business enterprises in aviation infrastructure. I authored an amendment to align the size standard used by the Department of Transportation—DOT—to identify small businesses, with the metric used

by the Small Business Administration—SBA. This small update will enable more minority and women-owned businesses to compete for infrastructure work. This amendment had widespread support in the aviation construction industry including from the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, the Airport Minority Advisory Council, the National Association of Minority Contractors, and I was pleased to see it unanimously supported in this legislation.

I also joined colleagues on the floor and through my role on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to move the legislation forward on policies that embrace innovation and help the United States maintain global leadership when it comes to embracing new technology and integrating UAS into the national airspace.

From a floor amendment with Senator INHOFE that will improve the safe use of UAS to examine and maintain our critical infrastructure to amendments I championed in committee that will move the United States forward on new applications of micro-UAS, we took important strides forward. This technology has the power to enhance search and rescue, deliver humanitarian aid, improve agriculture practices, and news-gathering. I introduced the Commercial UAS Modernization Act to help advance this technology and was pleased to see many of our ideas incorporated in this reauthorization.

This legislation also includes provisions to bolster the use of test sites and further important research initiatives that will benefit safety, infrastructure, and aviation technology. New Jersey is home to the FAA's William J. Hughes Technical Center in Atlantic City and a UAS test site in Cape May. These sites play a key role in advancing aviation research and technology, and this legislation includes important provisions that ensure New Jersey will remain a leader in advancing aviation safety and R&D.

Lastly, I would like to discuss an area that is ripe for further congressional action: the Transportation Security Administration—TSA. The FAA reauthorization takes some steps towards stronger security, but more work needs to be done to advance our Nation's security, and TSA plays a critical role to these endeavors. I will continue to fight for accountability and further resources to this important entity that plays such an important role in keeping travelers safe and secure. We must ensure there are adequate resources and top-notch technologies deployed to our airports and our surface transportation systems.

Again, I thank my esteemed colleagues in Senate leadership and Senators THUNE and NELSON for their efforts on this important legislation. I know this will make a difference to my constituents in New Jersey and to people across the country.

Thank you.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2016

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, recently the Senate marked a significant achievement—the final passage of the bipartisan reauthorization of the Older Americans Act—and now the President has signed it into law.

This act provides seniors access to home-delivered meals, like Meals on Wheels; seniors centers; transportation, like rides to the senior center and the grocery store; and meals served at senior centers and churches. Other services include caregiver support, preventive health services, job training and support, elder abuse prevention, and the long-term care ombudsman.

In 2012, Tennessee served 2.4 million meals to seniors through Older Americans Act programs.

This reauthorization also will make a few important improvements.

One, it will provide States, area agencies on aging, and service providers with information and technical assistance in collaboration with relevant Federal agencies, on providing efficient, person-centered transportation services, including across geographic boundaries.

That means that when a senior who lives Kentucky and wants to come see her doctor just over the border in Tennessee, it is easier for her to get that ride.

Two, this bill addresses the tragic issue of elder abuse with provisions for the prevention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It bolsters services that address elder justice and exploitation of older individuals, including financial exploitation, which can be devastating to a senior's ability to stay independent and in his own home.

Three, this bill ensures States receive funding based on their senior population. Senator RICHARD BURR worked hard with me on this, and we have him to thank for this update.

This bill is the product of several years of bipartisan collaboration and compromise. This legislation protects and strengthens the underlying law's many vital programs. I look forward to seeing S. 192 signed into law, and now I would like to yield to my colleague, Senator BURR.

Mr. BURR. I would also like to thank my colleagues, particularly Chairman ALEXANDER, Ranking Member MURRAY, and Senator SANDERS, for their partnership in working with me to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. I am pleased that our efforts have resulted in sending a strong reauthorization of the Older Americans Act to the President's desk. The reauthorization of these critical support programs for seniors has been a process that each of us has been actively involved in over the last few years, and I am proud to see this bipartisan piece of legislation on its way to becoming law.

I want to focus on a key aspect of this reauthorization for my constitu-

ents—the change in the funding formula. In 2010, the Government Accountability Office, GAO, determined that the formula responsible for the allocation of State funding in the OAA was broken. It took us 6 years to act, and I am pleased to see this important change included in the OAA reauthorization, allowing funds to be directed where they are most needed. This is a commonsense, but critical change for better ensuring that the dollars are following the needs.

This change is especially important for North Carolina's seniors. The change in the formula calculation will increase resources for these programs in North Carolina and other States where seniors have moved since the last reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, a decade ago. As more and more seniors make North Carolina their home, this will help ensure that resources are being more fairly allocated based on the needs of seniors today and in the future, which is a key aspect of helping some of our most vulnerable seniors age with the dignity and respect they deserve.

I often hear from my constituents—area agencies on aging, PACE program directors, and North Carolinians themselves—about the benefits that come from the programs authorized by the Older Americans Act. The continuation of these programs, which provide meals, caregiver supports, and help seniors stay in the comfort of their homes and local communities longer positively impacts the lives of millions of seniors every day. With the passage of this legislation, almost 2 million North Carolina seniors may be able to benefit from State and local programs that provide needed support for them and their families. I am proud to have fought on behalf of North Carolina's seniors for the improvements reflected in this reauthorization bill, and I look forward to continuing to work to improve the quality of life for my constituents.

Mr. ALEXANDER. In addition to providing grants to States for senior social and nutrition services, this reauthorization also aims to continue protecting vulnerable elders from abuse by ensuring access to abuse screening and prevention through efforts like the Senior Medicare Patrol, SMP, program, which helps train seniors to recognize and protect themselves from Medicare and Medicaid fraud. The most recent inspector general report noted that the program had educated over 3.5 million beneficiaries, reached 27 million people, and saved about \$106 million.

The programs authorized by this law provide critical services to help Americans live with dignity well into their later years, but these services also provide a significant return on investment for taxpayers.

They help decrease the increasing cost pressures on Medicare and Medicaid. These programs that help seniors stay healthy, independent, and living