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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 18, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER, to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

VETERANS EQUAL ACCESS AMENDMENT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the great tragedies of our time is our failure to adequately deal with the needs of our veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan. We sent over 2 million brave men and women to fight under very difficult circumstances, to say the very least. While I was convinced from the beginning that the war was a tremendous mistake, that is all the more reason that we should work to protect those veterans as they return home with wounds that are both visible and, in some cases, unseen.

It is no secret that these returning veterans have placed quite a strain on our VA facilities, which coincides with a national opioid epidemic. Prescription painkillers steal the lives of 78 Americans every day. Over 20,000 were killed last year, and it often leads to heroin addiction if their supply of opioid pills is interrupted.

As veterans with PTSD, chronic pain, and any number of ailments are looking for relief, lethal opioid overdoses among VA patients are almost twice the national average. We are doing something wrong. This is at a time when the overwhelming number of veterans say to me that marijuana has reduced PTSD symptoms and their dependency on addictive opioids. Yet the VA official policy prevents their doctors who know them best from talking to our veterans about this, even in States where it is legal.

In 24 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam, medical marijuana at the recommendation of a physician is legal. In those States, it is often used as an alternative to the addictive opioids to treat chronic pain. Fourteen States allow for medical marijuana to treat PTSD. Yet, veterans who are seeking relief from something that has proven to make a difference for many of their peers cannot get help from their VA doctor, even in States where medical marijuana is legal.

This is outrageous. It is time for us to acknowledge our debt to those veterans and allow their personal VA physician, the doctor who knows them best, to be able to consult with them about medical marijuana in accordance with State law.

My amendment doesn't authorize the possession or use of marijuana at VA facilities, but it would allow physicians to treat the whole patient and to give them their best advice. We should not force our veterans to go to another doctor and pay for the service out of their own pocket with somebody who doesn't know them as well as their own doctor.

I would strongly hope that my colleagues would vote in favor of the Veterans Equal Access amendment in the MILCON–VA bill coming forward today. These men and women who have done so much for us and come home seeking help in dealing with health and coping with their return deserve our best. Forcing the VA to turn a blind eye to a potential useful therapy—something that is perfectly legal in their State—is not just shortsighted; I think it is cruel and unfair.

I have listened to the many stories of veterans who have found that medical marijuana has made a huge difference in their return, recovery, and readjustment. Importantly, it doesn't subject them to the danger of being part of the opioid epidemic that has been visited upon our veterans.

We can help stop the tragedy of VA veterans dying of opioid overdoses at nearly twice the rate of the rest of the population by at least allowing their doctors to work with them, considering medical marijuana as an alternative therapy.

COMMENDING THE SERVICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the service of law enforcement officers not only in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, but across Pennsylvania and the entire United States. As this week is National Police Week, it is especially important that we recognize

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the sacrifices of these men and women, especially those who have given their lives in the line of duty.

Over the weekend, as part of National Police Week, communities across the country observed Peace Officers Memorial Day. This observation was created in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy to pay special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives while providing for the safety and the protection of others.

Last year, five police officers lost their lives in Pennsylvania: Officer Lloyd Reed in Westmoreland County, Patrolman John Wilding of Scranton, Lieutenant Eric Eslary of Westmoreland County, Detective Paul Koropal of Allegheny County, and Sergeant Robert Wilson III of Philadelphia. I know that I join my fellow members of the Pennsylvania House delegation in saying that their service to our Commonwealth will not be forgotten.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF VENANGO COUNTY CHIEF CLERK/COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DENISE JONES

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Denise Jones, who is the chief clerk and county administrator for Venango County, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District. After nearly 39 years of work for the county, Denise plans to retire next month.

She started in the 1970s with Venango County, and Denise has served in a number of different capacities. Those include as a human services planner, as an administrative assistant, as an employee relations manager, and then finally moving into the role of chief clerk and county administrator in 1993.

In addition to her service with the county, Denise serves on a number of boards dedicated to her community, including as board chair of the Northwest Hospital Foundation, which is dedicated to providing high-quality health care for the residents of the Venango County area.

Mr. Speaker, I am always proud to talk about the local officials who are making a difference in their communities, dedicating their service to improving the lives of people in their communities. I know that Denise Jones is one of those people, and I wish her the best of luck in her retirement.

THE DUI REPORTING ACT

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the DUI Reporting Act, a bill which I filed yesterday with my Judiciary Committee colleague, STEVE CHABOT of Ohio. If enacted, this bill would plug a glaring hole in our Nation's drunk driving laws that enables repeat offenders to be tried as first-time offenders, and repeat offenders are the ones most likely to cause serious accidents and death.

Currently, when police make a driving-under-the-influence arrest, they don't always have access to information about all of the driver's previous DUI convictions or arrests. The reason is because not all agencies report DUI arrests and/or convictions to the National Crime Information Center, known as the NCIC. That is the national crime database that is made instantly available to police and law enforcement right in their patrol cars.

The consequences of this lack of reporting can prove tragic. Last year, there was an awful, awful accident, a crash in northern Mississippi just outside of my district. Two teenage girls, Maddie Kruse and Rachel Lynch, were headed out of Memphis on the way to a vacation. Their grandmother was driving the car. At about 6:30 in the morning, a man who had registered .17 at 6:30 in the morning hit their vehicle and killed Maddie and Rachel. This man had accrued seven DUI charges since 2008 but had been allowed to plead guilty five times to DUI first. He represented himself and had five first-offense DUI convictions. Mississippi didn't have a system and still doesn't have a system to require those reportages.

This story broke my heart and, I believe, the hearts of everybody in the Midsouth who read about it.

This was a drunk driver who should have been in jail serving time off the road or have received treatment. The reason he wasn't, according to local investigations, is because none of his DUI history had been reported to the NCIC and was not available to the highway patrolman. When that patrolman ran his driving record in the national database, his past DUI convictions never showed up because they weren't reported.

This is shameful in this day and age. This information should be reported so that law enforcement can get access to it and get drunk drivers off the road and save lives like Maddie's and Rachel's. Our bill would make that happen by creating a financial incentive for States to require DUI arrests and convictions to be reported to the NCIC and, therefore, available to law enforcement.

The bill is bipartisan. It has the support of people throughout the country; but in Memphis, Billy Bond, at the Prosecutor's Office, worked on this for a while and tried to get laws like this passed. We have had a good response from MADD.

This bill will save lives. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass it quickly.

NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a matter of national security. Over the last several months, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, or NGA, has been considering locations for its new Western headquarters. The agency, which collects and analyzes satellite maps in support of warfighters, has outgrown its current location in St. Louis.

With construction of the new NGA-West facility scheduled to begin next year, the question is: Where? There are two sites under consideration. One is in north St. Louis. The other is in St. Clair County, Illinois, next to Scott Air Force Base.

This site, which I have a chart of, is shovel ready. It is 182 acres of undeveloped land with room to expand. It is free of cost to the American taxpayers, with the county ready to hand over the deed to the NGA.

To help make their decision, the NGA enlisted the help of the Army Corps of Engineers to study the environmental impact. Unfortunately, we have found that the Army Corps of Engineers' Environmental Impact Statement is deeply flawed. The report is filled with errors, omissions, and underestimated risks. It is clear that the Army Corps did not provide an accurate accounting of the facts. The result is that the NGA announced plans last month to relocate to north St. Louis. Before that decision becomes final on June 2, I am here to set the record straight.

To the right of this chart, you will see St. Clair County, Illinois. This is the site under consideration by the NGA. However, the Army Corps of Engineers' report included data related to St. Clair County, Missouri, and St. Clair County, Michigan. One is 263 miles away from the actual site, and the other is 580 miles away from the actual site. The report also highlighted a river that isn't even in southern Illinois.

When alerted to these embarrassing errors, the Army Corps of Engineers failed to correct them. Considering that the NGA is a mapping agency, maybe they could teach the Army Corps of Engineers how to read one.

Now, let's look at the impact on mission security and public safety. Clearly, a DOD mapping agency would be a prime target for those who wish to do harm against this agency. This chart shows evacuation zones if either location were attacked by a car bomb.

□ 1015

You can see that St. Clair County has ample setback to protect local residents and the site itself. The north St. Louis site, obviously, does not.

We now know that security was a top criteria for placement of the new NGA. We know that force protection standards have traditionally led to co-locating with existing military installations. So why are the standards being ignored for this facility?

Let's look at the facts. We have already talked about the NGA belongs in St. Clair County. We have already talked about mission security. We talked about public safety, and we saw the difference in the blast zones.

St. Clair County is the right choice for taxpayers. The Army Corps claims

the St. Clair County site would be 20 percent more expensive, but they haven't even completed studies of the north St. Louis site. St. Clair County is shovel-ready now. North St. Louis is not.

Every year that we delay this, it adds $40 million to the cost to this budget. St. Clair County has been proactive and transparent with the environmental studies. North St. Louis hasn't even conducted its full analysis. The north St. Louis site has significant unknowns, including reports of hazardous waste and potential contamination from cold war era testing. How can this decision be made without answers to these very serious and health-related questions?

In terms of recruiting the next generation, Scott Air Force Base attracts the best of the best. Thousands of millennials work at Scott Air Force Base, and many already have their security clearance. Finally, St. Clair County has the roadways, railways, and infrastructure to make NGA a success. North St. Louis will need to seize land through eminent domain and then create a network we already have in place.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the NGA is making a terrible mistake that could have serious consequences. They didn't have the correct data. Before this decision is made final, the people deserve the truth. Not just the people of St. Clair County, not just the people of north St. Louis, but we, the United States citizens.

That is why I have called for a full investigation by the Inspector General's Office.

WATER AND DROUGHT IN CALIFORNIA

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, this week, we recognize infrastructure week, where we highlight infrastructure development in our country and its importance to our districts.

Now, we might think that infrastructure isn't very important, but we depend on it in all aspects of our daily lives. Developed roads and bridges help to take our children to school or to take our kids to our national parks. Our bridges, dams, and water are the infrastructure that help to produce energy and provide us with clean drinking water. Broadband infrastructure ensures that everyone has access to learning and to information.

But, unfortunately, our infrastructure is deteriorating at an alarming rate. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that our crumbling infrastructure is costing each of us, each family, $3,400 a year of our disposable income. When we take into consideration the increasingly high cost of living, for example, in Orange County, California, where I live, then we see that our families are, once again, footing a bill, and yet we are not making the investment that we need. In fact, the United States spends significantly less of its GDP than most developing countries for our national infrastructure.

Unfortunately, this lack of investment is apparent throughout our country. We saw it in Flint, Michigan. When infrastructure fails to provide clean water, our communities suffer. In my home State of California, Porter Ranch, California, a massive gas leak released 100,000 tons of methane gas into the air. These failed pipelines reach back to the 1950s.

With respect to our roads, the Department of Transportation found that nearly 68 percent of California's roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and almost 30 percent of California's bridges have been recognized as structurally deficient.

As California enters its fourth year of a drought, we are seeing just how crucial water infrastructure dollars can be during times of turmoil.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to look no further than my home district to see the positive effects of investing in infrastructure to help our communities. Since I was elected to the Congress almost 20 years ago, the very first project that I championed was building a large factory, the largest in the world, to reclaim our water, to recycle our water, and it is the world's largest advanced reclamation project. Today, that project has recycled nearly 188 billion gallons of water, and it really continues to be the flagship of water recycling.

I have also fought to bring high-speed rail to California and led sending a letter to President Obama urging investment in the project, which will bring increased commercial and leisure travel.

With respect to transit, I recently led a letter from the California delegation asking for $3.2 billion to fund the Capital Investment Grant Program, a program which funds projects all the way from northern to southern California. The Capital Investment Grants will help fund projects in my district, like the Orange County Streetcar, which increases transportation transit through my area so people get out of their cars, we protect the environment, and we move people more efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress needs to get its act together and invest in infrastructure.

WE NEED A PRO-GROWTH AGENDA TO RAISE WAGES

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, Wendy's, one of the world's largest fast-food chains, plans to replace human employees with automated self-service kiosks in many of its 6,500 restaurants around the country and around the world in an effort to counteract minimum wage hikes throughout the United States. I don't blame Wendy's at all. They can either react or they can close up their doors, and then no one will be working.

The economics on the issue are pretty clear. Wendy's is doing what they have to do to survive, and others will certainly follow suit. They will adapt, or they will be gone.

When the government unnecessarily and unilaterally increases the cost of labor and imposes it on the job creators, the jobs are probably going to be replaced through automation and technological advancement. This is nothing new. This technology is not new. Wendy's could have done this a long time ago if they just wanted to maximize their profits, as every single corporation in America seems to be accused of doing these days. But these are the job creators. These are the job makers. They have chosen now because they have no other choice.

Many people say that this is an artificial wage and that it actually discourages employment and distorts the market. Well, here is the proof. This is exactly what is happening. And don't blame Wendy's. They are trying to survive in a 2 percent economy.

Mr. Speaker, let's not lock out millions of people from their entry-level employment. I am a person who worked for less than minimum wage. One time I asked my boss at the time, I said: ''Do I make minimum wage?'' And he said: ''No, you are not worth it.'' I was just barely in high school. I didn't have much to offer, except a strong back and showing up on time with a good attitude, and he paid me for that, and I worked my way up.

The squeeze on the middle class is real. It is painful for tens of millions of anxiety-ridden Americans who don't know whether they are going to have a job, even though it might be their entry-level job. It might be the job that they could get in a 2 percent economy.

Some people say that we are just transferring the jobs to those who will build kiosks or robots. Well, I have got to tell you, folks, I suspect that those jobs are not minimum wage jobs, so that is not going to be of much help. And, oh, by the way, I suspect they won't be in your hometown where your Wendy's is. So if you have got a job there and it is going to be displaced or replaced with one building a kiosk, unless you are planning to move to where they are building that, that is not going to be of much solace or help to your family.

What this country needs is a pro-growth agenda to help raise everyone's wages to provide the opportunity for everyone to get started somewhere and then move up, just like I did, without hurting the people already struggling to get by. What we don't need is more liberal, wrong-headed, unilateral, ideological-driven government regulation that destroys our jobs and livelihoods.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, since 1970, more Americans have died from domestic gun violence than in every war since the American Revolution. If all of the victims of gun violence since 1970 were put on a wall, like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it would contain 1.5 million names and stretch 2½ miles. That is 25 times as long as the actual Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Congress is quick to offer moments of silence for some mass shootings, ignore most of them, and then proceed to do nothing else, except remain silent.

Each month that we are in session, I will read the names of every person killed in a mass shooting during the previous month. I have also created my own memorial wall in the hallway outside of my office.

Here are the stories of the victims killed in the 41 mass shootings in April of this year. There have been so many people this month affected by mass shootings that I don't have time to list the injured, just those who were killed. Here are those who were killed:

Anpha Nguyen, 31, and Jerry Nguyen, 24, were killed inside a restaurant owned by their uncle on April 1 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Jaime Wilson, 24, and Keiwuan Murray, 18, were killed on April 5 in St. Augustine, Florida. Jamie was holding her 2-month-old baby at the time.

Davon Jones, 17, was killed on April 14 in Orange, New Jersey.

Gino Nicolas, 24, and Tanya Monique Skeen, 46, were killed outside a house on April 16 in Orlando, Florida. Gino was the leader of the Orlando chapter of My Brother's Keeper, where he mentored at-risk youth.

An unidentified 27-year-old man was killed on a sidewalk on April 16 in Detroit, Michigan.

Edwin Laboy, 46, an unidentified man, and an unidentified woman, were killed on April 17 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Jaxmany Jazan Montes, 29, was killed inside a nightclub on April 17 in Edinburg, Texas. He is survived by his wife and two children.

Delhaun Jackson, 19, was killed in broad daylight on April 18 in Long Beach, California. Delhaun had a 1-year-old child, shown in this picture, and he was looking forward to his very first Father's Day.

Damond Dawson, 23, was killed while filming a music video in a park on April 19 in Chicago, Illinois.

Natalie Srinivasan, 35, and her children, Siena, 5, and MJ, 2, were killed by their husband and father on April 19 in Katy, Texas.

Jason Napoles, 18, was killed in a parked car with his friends on April 19 in Chicago, Illinois.

Eight family members were killed on April 22 in Piketon, Ohio. They were Christopher Rhoden, 40; his ex-wife Dana Rhoden, 37; their three children, Clarence Rhoden, 20; Hanna Rhoden, 19; and Chris Rhoden, Jr., 16. Also killed were Chris Sr.'s brother, Kenneth Rhoden, 44; their cousin, Gary Rhoden, 38; and Clarence's fiance, Hannah Gilley, 20.

Rheba Mae Dent, 85; Roosevelt Burns, 75; Keila Clark, 31; Shelly Williams, 62; and Lizzy Williams, 59, were killed on April 22 in Appling, Georgia. They were killed after the shooter's wife asked for a divorce.

Recco Cobb, 43; Jadarrion Spinks, 25; and Roderick Nelms, 32, were killed at a home on April 23 in Auburn, Alabama.

Angelo Barboza, 15, was killed on April 23 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Moments before, he had texted his mother saying he loved her and would see her soon.

□ 1030

Davon Barrett, 38, and Devin Hamb, 27, were killed on April 24, in Chicago. They were at a memorial service for Davon's brother, who died from gun violence in 2009.

Carolyn Ann Sanders, 59, her daughter, Marquita Hill, 32, and Kenneth Cornelious Loggins, 32, were killed by Marquita's ex on April 27 in Montgomery County, Mississippi.

Joanne Woods, 49, was killed on April 27 in Forestville, Maryland.

Leco Cole, 38, was killed in a house on April 27 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Members, these were lives taken unnecessarily. May the dead rest in peace, the wounded recover quickly and completely, and the bereaved find comfort.

I urge my colleagues to stop being silent, and let's do something to stop the rampage.

THE FALSE PROMISES OF SOCIALISM

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, people all over the country are moving from the high tax States to the low tax States. This is great for my home State of Tennessee. Almost half the people I represent have moved from someplace else; but it is not great for the country as a whole, and we will face many problems in the future if the high tax States do not start lowering their taxes and start trying to keep more of their people at home.

New York in the 1970s had 43 Members of the House. Now it has 27 Members. After the 2010 Census, each Member was supposed to represent between 705,000 and 710,000 people. While, in the 1970s, congressional districts had much lower populations than now, if New York had had the average growth of most States, it would have had about 11 million more people than it now has.

Cities and States throughout the Northeast and the Midwest have been losing populations or have been having growth lower than in most other States for many years. Last year, a man from New Jersey told me his property taxes on a 2,800-square-foot house were $13,000. Plus, they had State income tax on top of that. I told him the taxes on a similar-sized house in east Tennessee would probably be between $2,000 and $2,500, and there would be no State income tax on top.

Almost every week, when I am home in Tennessee, someone tells me a story about how high the taxes are in the States they have moved from. Of course, it will be good for the young people of Tennessee if our legislators keep taxes low and if people would keep moving there, because many new jobs will be created.

An example of the problems, though, that high taxes have created in the States can be seen in Michigan's Flint water crisis. When taxes become too high, first, upper-income residents move out, then upper-middle, then, finally, middle-income. Then cities are left with a very low tax base. The pressures are greatest to pay the teachers, the policemen, and the firefighters first. The water infrastructure underground is out of sight, out of mind, and is often neglected. Flint has lost almost half of its population since the 1970s, as have many cities, large and small, throughout the high tax States of the Northeast and the Midwest. We are going to send a boatload of money to Flint because of all the publicity it has received, but we cannot do that for every city and county in all of the high tax States.

I read a few days ago that Galesburg, Illinois, leaders are telling citizens to drink only bottled water. It is not fair to my taxpayers in Tennessee, where we have acted in fiscally responsible ways and have kept our taxes low, to have to now bail out all of the cities and counties and even States that have acted in fiscally irresponsible ways. Of course, the problems these wasteful, irresponsible, high tax areas that keep driving people out will be seen not just with infrastructure, but all across the board—in education, in law enforcement, and in other areas. Puerto Rico is in big trouble now. Many people say Illinois is next.

I urge the high tax States all over the country to start drastically lowering their taxes. While this exodus of people from these States has been very good for States like Tennessee, it will not be good for the Nation as a whole in the long run if it continues. It should also serve as a lesson or as a warning that almost every city or State in this Nation and almost every country around the world that has had liberal, leftwing, big spending, high tax leadership is in serious financial trouble.

Every young person who seems to be attracted to the false promises of socialism should look at Cuba, where despite hundreds of miles of beautiful oceanfront property and a wealth of interior natural resources, the average salary is $24 a month. They should also

look at Venezuela, which has more oil than Saudi Arabia has. Their economy is in shambles, and children are dying because they can't get food and medical treatment.

That is what socialism gives the people, Mr. Speaker.

THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise because I am deeply concerned about the homelessness crisis that is plaguing our country.

Homelessness affects the very fabric of our communities, and it degrades the values upon which our country was built. Every American has the right to safe, decent, and affordable housing; but according to the latest estimates, nearly 600,000 Americans are currently homeless, over 83,000 of whom are chronically homeless and nearly 130,000 of whom are children who are under the age of 18, and these numbers are increasing in some of our major cities. Sadly, in my own hometown, in Los Angeles, homelessness increased by a staggering 20 percent between 2014 and 2015, and it continues to rise.

But this is not just about the numbers. When I visit our homeless neighbors on Skid Row in Los Angeles, I see how these Americans are facing chronic mental and physical problems that make it even harder to rehabilitate their lives. When I speak to families that are dealing with homelessness, I see the toll this housing insecurity is taking on their children, who can't concentrate in school because they are sleeping in cars at night.

There is a solution to this problem, Mr. Speaker. We just need the political will and resources. That is why earlier this year I introduced comprehensive legislation to provide the resources we need to truly end homelessness in America.

My bill, H.R. 4888, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2016, would provide over $13 billion over 5 years to strengthen programs and initiatives that will help us end homelessness in this country. The money will help to create approximately 410,000 units of housing to end homelessness for the estimated 407,000 homeless households in the country. This includes permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher units, and deeply affordable units through the National Housing Trust Fund.

My bill would also provide the resources to increase the number of outreach workers on the streets, working with homeless populations. Furthermore, my bill would provide technical assistance to help States and localities align their health and housing systems.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has reported that major progress toward ending homelessness in this country has virtually stalled without new funding. So there is a real need to invest in our Federal housing programs and to support our local service providers who are on the streets helping the homeless every day.

Passing H.R. 4888 would be an investment that would pay dividends in the long run. Research has shown that when we provide housing to chronically homeless individuals, the cost to the taxpayer is significantly less than if we allowed them to remain homeless. For example, Los Angeles County's Project 50 found that providing permanent supportive housing to 50 chronically homeless individuals saved the county close to $250,000 over 2 years. Similar results have been found in other major cities as well as in small cities and in rural areas alike.

But this isn't just about the cost or the savings, Mr. Speaker. It is about recognizing the crisis that we face as a Nation and having an honest conversation about what we really need to do to put an end to homelessness.

We are the richest country in the world, and every person should have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. This should be a bipartisan issue. We must, all of us, Democrats and Republicans, work together to finally end homelessness in this country once and for all.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I will be on this floor every chance I get to force the real debate and the real conversation about this crisis that we are confronted with in America. We cannot continue to walk past homeless, helpless, mentally ill, physically ill homeless people on the streets and pretend we don't see them. They are there. It is unconscionable that we allow this homelessness to continue to grow and to be on our streets.

In Los Angeles, when you go to so-called Skid Row, we have people on the streets who are lined all the way up to the steps of City Hall.

Elected officials, ministers, community organizations, let's get together with our legislators, let's pass H.R. 4888, and stop the homelessness in America.

ECONOMIC, RETIREMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I want to discuss the issue of security with my colleagues—economic security, retirement security, and national security—three issues that probably right now in my conversations with constituents is what we hear the most about.

Let's look at the picture of economic security, or the lack thereof, that exists in our country and in our communities.

What I hear from my constituents is that the 5 percent unemployment rate is indeed misleading because over 90 million Americans have dropped out of the workforce. They are losing hope and are unemployed. The Obama malaise, as I have constituents who like to term it, has created a workforce participation rate of 62.8 percent. Now, I want you to think about that. Of the eligible adults who are ready for the workforce, 62.8 percent have a job and are able to work. That is the worst level since the Carter administration.

Our GDP is declining. Our economy grew at only half of a percent—half of a percent in the first quarter of 2016. That is lower than a 1.4 percent expansion in the previous period, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. President Obama had a chance to create 40,000 jobs, and he took a pass on it. He vetoed the Keystone pipeline so that he could cement his legacy and stature as a liberal icon.

The American people are tired of being broke; they are tired of work permits that go to illegal aliens; and they are tired of $19.2 trillion in Federal debt. We need to get the government off the backs and out of the pocketbooks of the American people. It is time to loosen regulations and lower taxes.

The issue of retirement security comes up so often in the conversations I have, especially with women, and it is important to note what is happening with Social Security and Medicare. The Social Security retirement trust fund is set to run out of money by the year 2034. That is not that far away. According to the Tax Foundation, under the current wage indexing formula, benefits are projected to climb by more than 150 percent, in real terms, over the next 75 years.

I have introduced H.R. 603, the Savings for Seniors Act, which establishes within the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund a Social Security Surplus Protection Account to hold the Social Security surplus and prohibit it from being spent. Medicare has to be addressed as well. It is supposed to run out of money and be insolvent by 2030. We must make sure that seniors are secure, and we have to make certain that the money they have already paid into the system, they are able to receive.

On the national security front, President Obama's very, very timid foreign policy has emboldened our enemies from the rise of ISIS, to Russian aggression in Ukraine and in the Middle East, to the Chinese military expansion in the South China Sea. It has also left our allies asking: Where are you? You are not present as we try to address these issues.

What we have seen with President Obama, I think, is inexcusable. For example, when the evil blade of ISIS decapitated Steven Sotloff in 2014, President Obama was on the golf course minutes after telling the American people: We will be relentless, and we

will be vigilant to see that justice is done. Or, as he also calls it, leading from behind.

□ 1045

Two other glaring issues we face are the Syrian refugee program and our southern border.

There is currently no way to vet Syrian refugees, and I think this President is delusional if he thinks there is. I have introduced H.R. 4218 to suspend refugee admissions until Congress passes a joint resolution approving the President's plan.

Meanwhile, our southern border is overrun again. Through the first 6 months of fiscal year 2016, which ended on March 31, border officials apprehended 27,754 unaccompanied children. That is just shy of the 28,579 number apprehended for all of 2014. Think about that comparison.

Mr. Speaker, we must provide economic, retirement, and national security for all Americans. We must rise to the occasion and make certain our Nation is secure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to engage in personalities toward the President.

CALIFORNIA WATER LEGISLATION

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to work together on behalf of the people of California to get water legislation passed that will help fix California's broken water system.

Yes, Californians have been divided historically for decades for a number of reasons on how to fix our broken water system, but that must change because we are living on borrowed time, and nothing has explained that more clearly than the last 4 years of drought conditions.

Yesterday, the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing on Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN's water legislation, the California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act. This week, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI introduced the House companion bill, legislation that I support as well.

The California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act would provide $1.3 billion in funding and support for desalinization, recycling efforts, and water storage projects like Temperance Flat and the expansion of San Luis Reservoir.

The bill would also direct State and Federal agencies to maximize water supplies during the short term, while not violating existing environmental laws that protect threatened and endangered species.

Additionally, the legislation includes language that would generate and provide for scientifically managed reservoir operations which would allow us to, for example, raise the spillway gates at New Exchequer Dam in Merced County, providing an additional 50,000 acre-feet of water storage for the Merced Irrigation District.

Finally, the bill would complement the ongoing efforts made by the recent passage of a State water bond that I supported—$2.7 billion for additional water storage in California.

In order to get California's water bill passed and signed into law, our Nation's Senators must understand that there is support for Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN's legislation among California Representatives in the House. That is why I am a cosponsor of the House companion legislation, H.R. 5247.

Now, there is room for modifications and changes in Senator FEINSTEIN's legislation as well as the House bill, especially provisions that deal with short-term fixes that would provide more accountability on how California's water system is operated year to year. But if Congress is going to be able to provide some relief to the people of California, which is a template for Western States—and, I would say, the world—we must continue to move forward, and the passage of S. 2533 would undoubtedly be an important step in the right direction.

Once S. 2533 is passed out of the Senate, the House and the Senate will have the opportunity to go to conference to resolve the differences that exist in these water bills by each of the Chambers. That is the normal process under which we usually conduct business.

I have consistently fought to bring more water to our San Joaquin Valley, and that includes supporting the California water bill that the House passed last year, but we need to use all the water tools in our water toolbox to fix the entire State's water needs.

It is my hope that my colleagues will put aside their political differences which, for too long, have been a part of the problem and join me in supporting the California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act, because fixing California's water system is dependent upon it. If we don't pass this legislation and we don't work with Governor Brown in California, we cannot fix this broken water system.

So, finally, what is this about? It is about investing in our infrastructure. We are living off the investments our parents and our grandparents made a generation ago. This is Infrastructure Week. We ought to be talking about investing in our infrastructure, not only in California, but around the country.

What else is this about? It is about helping the environment because, notwithstanding the opposition to this legislation, the status quo is only resulting in further deterioration of the environment.

Finally, what else is this about? It is about the reliability of our water supply to maintain our farms. Maintaining our farms, after all, is a part of America's national security. We don't think about it that way, but having reliable, cost-effective food on America's dinner table every night is about our national security. So it is about the sustainability, therefore, of our food supply and our way of life.

If we are going to fix this, we have to come together. We have to work together. We have to get beyond our differences and beyond our talking points.

If Congress is going to get anything done, we, in California, on our water fixes, must come together.

BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark Building Safety Month, to recognize the importance of building safety, and to congratulate the leadership of the International Code Council that develops and publishes the model building safety and energy efficiency model codes used in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and across the country. Increasingly, these codes, developed in the United States, are being adopted in other nations as a model of safe construction.

Every year, there are sobering reminders about the key role that building codes can have. Foreign nations still experience catastrophic losses of life and property due to natural events and poor construction practices. These losses have been greatly reduced in this country thanks to the adoption of sound building practices.

Deadly fires, tornados, windstorms, floods, earthquakes, and other events remind us of the critical need for strong buildings. As Congress discusses the need for resilience and greater energy efficiency in our communities, we are reminded in May that key elements of resilience and energy efficiency are sound building and energy codes.

I want to congratulate the leaders of the ICC, which has sponsored Building Safety Month in May every year for over 30 years. The theme of this year's Building Safety Month, appropriately, is ''Driving Growth Through Innovation, Resilience, and Safety.''

The leadership board of the ICC, including my constituent, President Alex Olszowy, building inspection supervisor for the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government in Kentucky, will join ICC's chief executive officer, Dominic Sims, in Washington next week to discuss the critical need to support the adoption and enforcement of current building codes to make sure Americans are safe at home, at work, at school, and at play.

On this occasion, I also want to highlight the good work of the Code Administrators Association of Kentucky, including president Jeff Camp and the other leaders of the Commonwealth's ICC chapter, and to thank the thousands of men and women who work

every day to make sure our buildings comply with building and fire codes. Their work, largely unseen and often unnoticed, is critical to keeping the American people safe.

The model building codes adopted by ICC members from all 50 States allow every community to share the advantage of adopting building codes that are adaptable to local conditions but, at the same time, incorporate the very latest research, materials, and building practices.

This is achieved through a public-private partnership, saving local jurisdictions from bearing the large expense of code revision, updating, and coordination. These model codes are produced through the cooperation of thousands of local U.S. code officials working with the building industry to produce codes that represent the consensus on what the minimum safety requirements are and should be for various building types, all without a dime of Federal taxpayer money.

I should mention that the Architect of the Capitol maintains the safety of this building and all House and Senate office buildings by following the requirements in the current International Building Code.

So congratulations and a heartfelt thanks to the hardworking members and leadership of the International Code Council during this Building Safety Month.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, FLOODING

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is a continuation of my mission of mercy, a mission that I gladly accept because a great American city has been declared a disaster area: a great American city with 2-plus million people, a great American city where we speak more than 100 different languages, a great American city where we appreciate diversity and we celebrate it. In fact, we have developed a symbiotic relationship, a symbiosis such that we can do together what we could never do apart. A great American city, Houston, Texas, within Harris County, has been declared a disaster area; and it has been declared a disaster area, Mr. Speaker, because of the flooding that takes place in Houston, Texas.

I asked that my staff prepare some intelligence for me to share so as to paint a picture of what this flooding is like in Houston, Texas.

In Houston, Texas, on the tax day flood—so-called because it was the last day to file for taxes this year—we had this tax day flood, and it has caused damages that will approximate $2 billion. The good news is that that is revised down because the estimate initially was that it would be more.

In Houston, Texas, over 100 neighborhoods experienced some flooding.

In Houston, Texas, a great American city, we had 240 billion—billion with a B—240 billion gallons of water. A billion is still 1,000 million. So we have had 2,000-million-plus gallons of water in Houston, Texas. And that was on one day. This is enough water to fill the Astrodome 750 times over.

In Houston, Texas, we had more than 1,200 high water rescues, people stranded, lives at risk in Houston, Texas, a major American city, a great American city declared a disaster area.

In Houston, Texas, there was 8.85 inches of rainfall—that broke the previous record from 1976—and, I might add, in some areas, 17 inches of water. That was all a part of the tax day floods. There were 121,000 people without power.

Mr. Speaker, this is significant, but it is also significant to note that this is not the first time. Within the last year, 12 months, we had the Memorial Day flood, with similar circumstances and $2 billion in damages.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 20 years, we have had at least one day of flooding in Houston, Texas, that has been called to the attention of the people in Washington, D.C., and I'm doing so now.

□ 1100

Mr. Speaker, as bad as these things are, all of these damages that I have called to our attention, there is something more significant, something more meaningful that is happening in Houston, Texas, and that is lives are being lost. In the tax day flood, we lost nine lives, Mr. Speaker—nine lives—people who left home going to work, assuming that they would drive their cars and return home.

Mr. Speaker, we have, in Houston, what are called flash floods. Even people who are judicious and prudent can sometimes find themselves in circumstances from which they cannot extricate themselves because of the way the water comes in so quickly—flash floods, nine lives lost, a great American city declared a disaster area.

Houston needs a lifeline. When you are drowning in water, you need a lifeline. Well, there is a lifeline. The lifeline is H.R. 5025, the 2016 Tax Day Floods Supplemental Funding Act. This is a supplemental funding bill, which means it is not an earmark. It is the kind of thing we do when we have emergencies to contend with. We have done this before when we have had the storms on the East Coast. We have done this before, when we had New Orleans, Louisiana, and Katrina. We have done it when we have had fires. We have done it when we have had the tornadic activities. This is reasonable. It is prudent. It is judicious. It is something we ought to do to rescue, to throw a lifeline to a great American city that has been declared a disaster area.

Well, the good news is, Mr. Speaker, we are recovering; but I hate to say, and I regret to say, I am reluctant to say, we are not out of the woods yet. We are not out of the woods yet, Mr. Speaker, because today there is an 80 percent chance of precipitation. Tomorrow, there is an 80 percent chance.

I beg that we support H.R. 5025 and extend a lifeline to Houston, Texas, a great American city.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Patricia Venegas, Without Spot or Wrinkle Ministries International, La Verne, California, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come before Your throne room of grace today by unmerited favor. We thank You for this great Nation.

Our forefathers faced many trials and tribulations in their days. They relied on You as they sought Your guidance for America, knowing they could not do it without You.

Today, in this room, we humble ourselves before You and pause, asking You once again for Your guidance and perfect will for our Nation, as we pray Your kingdom come and Your will be done in America.

I also pray for every Representative in this room today, who shoulders the immense responsibility to make decisions for the people they represent, give each one wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and discernment on every decision they make. I pray You will bless them and their families for the sacrifice they make for the American people.

In Your holy name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. BERA led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. PATRICIA VENEGAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to welcome Dr. Patricia Venegas of Without Spot Or Wrinkle Ministries International. I thank her and her husband for coming from La Verne, one of my cities.

She started the church in 1998 with her husband, Reverend Benjamin Venegas, who is up in the gallery somewhere. From 1977 to the present, she serves as a chaplain to the Covina Police Department. She was ordained as a minister of the Gospel in December 2006.

She published one book, ''The Bride of Christ Without Spot Or Wrinkle.'' She develops and writes curricula for conferences and seminars.

Thanks for the work that you do, Reverend, to spread the Gospel throughout the San Gabriel Valley and beyond. May God bless you and God bless our country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the incredibly brave men and women in blue who serve and protect our communities.

For example, Sergeant P.J. Wilson of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department is a third shift supervisor. He and his team work the wee hours of the morning to make sure that we can sleep in peace.

Officer K.S. Kodad works every weekend and most holidays because he knows that criminals don't always work business hours.

Officer Tim Purdy recently sat down in a school parking lot to calm and reassure a potentially suicidal autistic student.

Detective McKee recently helped solve a homicide from last summer, with all five suspects now in custody.

Mr. Speaker, these are just four of the thousands of police officers who should be recognized for their important work. Today and every day, we should take time to say thank you to the police officers we encounter in our communities.

RECOGNIZING DR. EPHRAIM WILLIAMS

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Ephraim Williams, Pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Sacramento. Pastor Williams has epitomized the importance of community and faith for the past 45 years.

This past Sunday, my wife and I had a chance to worship with Pastor Williams and his congregation.

He will be retiring this coming Sunday, but his legacy of service and leadership will live on through his congregation, which has grown from 100 worshippers to over 2,500.

Pastor Williams led the efforts to finance and build an edifice and family life center, which now serves the surrounding community. His church offers employment fairs, home buyer workshops, financial literacy courses, and much more to the community.

Pastor Williams also serves as a mentor and adviser to younger pastors and has helped develop the next generation of leaders in the faith community.

On behalf of the Sacramento community and the region, I thank him for his 45 years of work and service, which has made our community a much better place to live in.

Thank you, Pastor Williams.

CONGRATULATING 2016 GRADUATING CLASS OF ELITE YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM

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

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 2016 graduating class of the ELITE Youth Outreach program.

ELITE is a wonderful program that teaches at-risk youth in our local communities in central Illinois on how to gain employment, communicate effectively, behave responsibly, and dress appropriately. The program was founded by Carl Cannon, a Peoria-born native who served his country as a military officer and drill instructor. Now he is dedicated to training and inspiring youth to overcome barriers to success, as he did himself.

In 2013, Carl Cannon received the FBI's Director's Community Leadership Award. This week, FBI Director James Comey will travel from Washington, D.C., to Peoria to address this year's ELITE graduating class.

I would like to commend Carl Cannon and his staff for their dedication to these students and recognize the transformative effect his program has had on youth in our Peoria area.

I would also like to thank FBI Director Comey for supporting this worthy program with his presence this week in Peoria.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the students who have completed this program. You should feel proud of your accomplishments. You have a community and national and local leaders who believe in you, and we support you.

INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of infrastructure week, which is a joint effort by business and labor to highlight the dangerous conditions of America's roads and bridges.

There are currently 69,000 structurally deficient bridges in America. Every second of every day, seven cars drive on a bridge that is structurally deficient.

Congress said that we couldn't afford to rebuild the roads and bridges of America, so we only spent $50 billion a year in the last decade to rebuild America's roads and bridges—pathetically weak. We were told we couldn't afford it.

But American taxpayers spent $87 billion rebuilding the roads and bridges of Afghanistan. We spent $73 billion rebuilding the roads and bridges of Iraq—off budget and unpaid for.

Congress needs to get its priorities straight. We need to put American workers back to work and invest in our infrastructure to unleash the great potential of American businesses to grow the American economy.

CONGRATULATING PRAIRIE GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT 46

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Prairie Grove School District 46 in Crystal Lake, Illinois, for being selected as a finalist for the 2016 Secretary of Defense Freedom Award, the first ever from Illinois.

This is the Department of Defense's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of their National Guard and Reserve employees.

This year, more than 2,400 nominations were submitted by National Guard and Reserve servicemembers. Prairie Grove is one of only nine public sector employer finalists.

Among servicemembers at the school district who support the nomination is Lieutenant Colonel Patty Klop, a Marine reservist, a physical education teacher, and a part-time teacher for students who have disabilities.

In her nomination, she speaks highly of District 46 when she says: ''It's been a real source of stability and comfort for me over the years. I've been on several deployments, and District 46 has always been there.''

Prairie Grove is invited to the Freedom Award ceremony this August at the Pentagon. I look forward to the school district representing Illinois

well as an exceptional employer of servicemembers.

Congratulations, Prairie Grove.

HEAD START

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 51st anniversary of the creation of Head Start.

In my home State of Rhode Island, Head Start serves 2,500 children, including 100 homeless children and 500 children with special needs.

Head Start is proven and effective. Young people who participate in Head Start have increased graduation rates, are less likely to become pregnant as teens, have improved economic opportunities, and are less likely to be involved in crime.

Every dollar invested in Head Start saves up to $7 in future costs.

In the 20th century, the United States set the standard in education and had the highest graduation rates around the world. Today, we rank 12th in college graduation and 26th in access to preschool for 4-year-olds.

If we are serious about providing the next generation with the skills they need to be successful and to compete in a global economy, it is critical that we significantly increase our investments in Head Start.

Congratulations to Head Start on your 51st anniversary. Thank you for all that you do.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF OF POLICE CHARLES R. JONES

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Beaver Falls Chief of Police Charles R. Jones on his retirement after decades of outstanding service to his community and to our Nation.

After serving his country in the Air Force, which included time at the 911th Airlift Wing in Pittsburgh, Chief Jones embarked upon a career in law enforcement.

He is a graduate of both Municipal Police Officers' Training Academy and the Pennsylvania Deputy Sheriff's Training Program in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

He started with the city of Beaver Falls Police Department in 1994, and by 2008, he was chief of police. In October of 2011, the Pittsburgh FBI field office chose Chief Jones to join with other U.S. and international law enforcement leaders at the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, for professional studies.

A recipient of numerous awards, a man of faith, and a true leader, I thank Chief Jones for his service. In thanking the chief, I would be remiss in not also recognizing his wife Regina, who has also been a great advocate for her community.

Although the chief is retiring, I fully expect he will continue his service to his community in multiple endeavors in the years to come.

HOUSE LEADERS NEED TO LEAD

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

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor with a simple message for the leaders of this House: Do your job.

The majority has refused to even vote on a budget—our most basic duty—and has failed to address over $3 trillion of needed infrastructure across the country.

This is National Infrastructure Week. Forty-one percent of the roads in my home State of Connecticut are rated in poor condition. Bad roads cost the average Connecticut driver over $660 per year in unnecessary repairs and expenses.

A great nation does not respond to crises with duct tape. A great nation does not tell 110 pregnant citizens with the Zika virus that they should make do with one-third of the necessary funding.

For our infrastructure, for Flint, for the Supreme Court, for Zika patients, and for gun violence victims, the call to the leaders of this body is clear: It is time to lead. Do your job.

□ 1215

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVAGE TO FORESTRY

(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, the Ninth Circuit Court is on a roll this week. First, they upheld gun rights in northern California. Now they have tossed out yet another frivolous lawsuit on salvage operations for forestry after a fire.

Operations in western Siskiyou County on what is known as the west side fire—a fire that occurred in the summer and fall of 2014—are now finally proceeding where the value of that wood can be still, perhaps, hopefully, salvaged almost a year and a half later. Though it is only a scant 4 percent that they are going after in this harvest project here, you would think with the number of frivolous lawsuits and wailing over the project that we were causing an environmental disaster; yet the disaster has already occurred with the devastating fire.

I am glad to see that the court ruled that some of the salvage operation can occur, because now the forest can actually recover. It can have an economic base to do so instead of merely coming out of the U.S. Treasury, and the people in the area can be employed in doing it in this forest fire recovery.

It will be a positive for the habitat, a positive for the spotted owl. This is what we need to do in the long term. Salvage is an important part of forestry after a fire and not reinventing the wheel every single time we need to do the salvage and have lawsuits over it.

IN MEMORY OF ERIC BRADLEY

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, like everyone who knew him, I was shocked and am still very saddened by the sudden passing of Eric Bradley.

Eric was so many things to so many people. He was a colleague, a friend, a mentor, a son, a husband, a father. For me, Eric was a dear friend who helped me in so many ways over the years, just as he helped so many others, but that was Eric. He gave of himself to everyone whom he met whether that be insight, advice, knowledge, or simple kindness. Behind all of his hard work, behind all of his efforts, there was a genuine passion for making life better for others.

Just like anyone who crossed his all too brief time with us, I am better for having known him. I will miss my friend.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EASTER RISING

(Mr. KING of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, this year is the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising in Dublin, Ireland, which was the seminal moment in the fight for Irish independence.

Since that time, the United States and Ireland have had an extremely close relationship in trade, business, and on so many other issues on which we work together, probably none more important than the Good Friday Agreement, which was achieved 18 years ago this year. It is working today, for, after centuries of fighting and strife, there is now a peace process in Northern Ireland which has succeeded, is succeeding, and is going forward.

I acknowledge this today, the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising, and the Prime Minister of Ireland, Enda Kenny, is in Washington today to help us commemorate this.

GALESBURG FORGIVABLE LOANS

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great news about the city of Galesburg, Illinois.

About a month ago, I spoke on this floor, and I urged the city to apply for low-interest, federally funded loans

through the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund. Many officials expressed legitimate concerns about the impact that might have on their budgets, so I worked with the city as well as with the U.S. and the Illinois EPA to see if those loans could be forgiven.

Today I am so proud to announce that I have received assurances that up to $4 million in Federal funding will be forgiven. That will happen as soon as the city completes its application and receives formal approval.

Mr. Speaker, all communities face challenges. What separates the great ones from the rest is whether communities can come together and solve these challenges. We still have work to do to protect children from lead exposure, but Galesburg is a great city, and I am proud that we are taking this important step together.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, Cedar Bluff, Alabama, November 16, 2015:

Sylvia Duffy, 71 years old.
Clara Edwards, 68.
Pamela O'Shel, 48.

Tennessee Colony, Texas, November 15, 2015:

Carl Johnson, 77 years old.
Thomas Kamp, 46.
Nathan Kamp, 23.
Austin Kamp, 21.
Kade Johnson, 6.

Clarksburg, West Virginia, July 26, 2013:

Freddy Donald Swiger, 70 years old.
Fred Swiger, 47.
Todd Russell Amos, 29.
Christopher A. Hart, 26.

Springfield, Missouri, November 15, 2014:

Lewis Green, 44 years old.
Trevor Fantroy, 43.
Danielle Keyes, 29.
Christopher Freeman, 24.

Shreveport, Louisiana, May 5, 2016:

Tyrone Coley, 37 years old.
Randy Brown, 36.
Robert Baulkman, 30.
Joey Caldwell, 29.
Richard Baker, 29.

Platte, South Dakota, September 17, 2015:

Nicole Westerhuis, 41 years old.

RESTORE FUNDING TO THE OVERSEAS WAR ACCOUNT

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, the annual defense bill before the House today removes $18 billion from the overseas war account to fund activities that are not related to war. It is unfortunate that the Republican majority, which claims to be fiscally responsible, is raiding OCO in order to blow past bipartisan spending agreements. This budget gimmick would require an $18 billion supplemental next April—only halfway through the fiscal year—to restore overseas funding for America's troops.

This is no way to govern the Pentagon, and it is doing a disservice to our men and women in uniform by pushing for this. Defense Secretary Ash Carter has said that removing overseas funding during wartime is ''objectionable on the face of it.''

It is my hope and the hope of many others on the committee that funding for the overseas account will be restored on the House floor before the bill is voted on.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the defense bill until these funds are restored.

HEAD START'S 51ST ANNIVERSARY

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, today is the 51st anniversary of Head Start.

Fifty-one years ago, in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson announced the groundbreaking program. In that year, a shy little girl and the daughter of Mexican immigrants enrolled in Head Start, and it changed her life. That little girl was me.

In this Chamber, when we fiercely debate funding education, we are sometimes too removed from the reality of the everyday struggles that are facing America's children and just how wide that opportunity gap is.

Even though I stand before you here as a Congresswoman, I also stand before you as a child of Head Start. Universal, early childhood education is the best investment we can make to close that education gap. I know this because I am living proof of it. Head Start was not merely something that helped me; it has helped 32 million children and their parents to prepare for school. It has prepared them for life.

PROTECTING AND DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF LGBT EMPLOYEES IN THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, today and this week we will debate the national defense authorization. This is part of our most fundamental obligation as Members of Congress, to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America.

However, there is a provision that is inserted into this bill that doesn't protect and defend—it discriminates. It is a provision in this bill that would effectively stop an executive order that says that Federal contractors cannot discriminate against employees because they happen to be LGBT. I want to say this again. In the defense authorization, House Republicans have inserted a provision to empower and enable the discrimination of LGBT employees. That is not protecting and defending. That is discrimination. That is divisive. It is disgusting.

Our job is to protect and defend the American people and not inject the defense budget with ideologies that are based on protecting a political base, Mr. Speaker. It is a disservice to our troops, and it is a disservice to our national security to inject such poisonous language into a defense budget that is meant to protect and defend the constitutional rights of the American people.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, which is the largest caucus in the Congress, I rise in advance of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the National Volunteer Fire Council on May 20 so as to recognize its hard work and dedication to protecting our communities. The brave men and women who volunteer their time are professionals who put their lives on the line every day.

Founded in 1976, the NVFC came together in Chicago to provide a unified voice for volunteer firefighters across our Nation. With this guiding vision, the NVFC has grown its ranks to a board comprised of 49 State fire service associations and with a membership of nearly 20,000 individual and department members. Today, volunteers have a strong voice at the table when it comes to critical fire and emergency service issues thanks to the NVFC.

The organization has been there to meet the challenges that volunteers face and to address critical issues every day. From groundbreaking programs and innovative resources to legislative and regulatory advocacy, the NVFC continues to serve the volunteer in meaningful and significant ways. I look forward to continuing to work with them to advocate for our volunteers.

COMMEMORATING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1916 EASTER RISING

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Affairs be discharged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 716) commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, a seminal moment in Ireland's journey to independence, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 716

Whereas the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising has a particular resonance in the United States;

Whereas, from the foundation of the United States, Irish people and the millions of United States citizens of Irish descent have helped to shape its history;

Whereas, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, ''No people ever believed more deeply in the cause of Irish freedom than the people of the United States'';

Whereas 5 of the 7 signatories of the 1916 Proclamation of Independence spent periods of time in the United States that significantly influenced their thinking and actions;

Whereas the United States is the only foreign country specifically mentioned in the Proclamation;

Whereas the contemporary ties between the United States and Ireland are of extraordinary depth and breadth;

Whereas continued United States engagement in the Northern Ireland peace process is vital to safeguarding the gains made since the Good Friday Agreement;

Whereas the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising offers an opportunity for remembrance, reconciliation, and reimagining of the future;

Whereas, on the 17th and 18th of May 2016, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister of Ireland) will visit Washington, DC, for events commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising; and

Whereas more than 200 other commemorative events will take place across the United States to mark the anniversary: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recalls the special ties between Ireland and the United States, continually sustained and strengthened throughout the intertwined history of both countries;

(2) welcomes the program of commemorations in the United States marking the 100th anniversary of Ireland's 1916 Rising, including the events taking place in Washington DC; and

(3) recognizes the importance of nurturing and renewing the unique relationship between the United States and Ireland and their peoples into the future.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KING OF NEW YORK

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment to the text at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

That the House of Representatives—

(1) recalls the deep and abiding friendship between Ireland and the United States, sustained and strengthened by the ties between our peoples and our shared values;

(2) calls for the enhanced cooperation between the United States and Ireland in undertaking multi-lateral humanitarian missions and international peacekeeping operations; and

(3) supports efforts to continue to increase political, economic, scientific, educational, and cultural ties between the United States and Ireland, including ongoing work to consolidate peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Mr. KING of New York (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 New York?

There was no objection.

The amendment was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT TO THE PREAMBLE OFFERED BY MR. KING OF NEW YORK

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment to the preamble at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the more than 35 million Americans of Irish descent strengthen the friendly relations between the United States and Ireland;

Whereas throughout our history Americans of Irish descent have made significant contributions to the United States and have helped to shape its history;

Whereas in April 1916, through the Easter Rising, an attempt was launched to secure Irish independence;

Whereas signatories to the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic were influenced by the experience of the United States and therefore included the United States as the only foreign country specifically mentioned in the Proclamation;

Whereas the United States recognized and established diplomatic relations with the Irish Free State in 1923;

Whereas Ireland is a valued partner in international fora, including the United Nations, the NATO Partnership for Peace Program, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the World Trade Organization;

Whereas the United States and Ireland continue to share deep and abiding ties across a host of areas, including economic, scientific, and educational cooperative efforts, and international development cooperation;

Whereas the United States and Ireland enjoy a thriving and mutually beneficial trade and investment relationship, with the United States being the largest exporter to Ireland of services, and the second largest exporter of goods;

Whereas the United States and Ireland enjoy broad scientific cooperative programs, to the benefit of the United States, Ireland, and Northern Ireland, facilitated by the United States-Ireland Research and Development Partnership, which prioritizes joint research in the areas of nanoscale science and engineering, sensor networks, telecommunications, energy and sustainability, and health;

Whereas the United States and Ireland support thriving bilateral educational exchange programs, which Ireland has promoted in recent years with the establishment of Student Ambassador programs, increasing scholarships, and being a contributor and Lead Signature Partner in the U.S. Generation Study Abroad Program;

Whereas the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom have worked closely, with the ongoing support of the United States, in promoting peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland; and

Whereas the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising offers an opportunity for recommitment to strengthening the relationship between the United States and Ireland for the benefit of future generations in both countries: Now, therefore, be it

Mr. KING of New York (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 New York?

There was no objection.

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: ''Recognizing the deep and abiding friendship between the United States and Ireland and recommending actions to further strengthen those ties.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4974, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5243, ZIKA RESPONSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 736 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 736

Resolved, That (a) at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. Clause 2(e) of rule XXI shall not apply during consideration of the bill. (b) During consideration of the bill for amendment—

(1) each amendment, other than amendments provided for in paragraph (2), shall be debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent;

(2) no pro forma amendment shall be in order except that the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate; and

(3) the chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule

XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read.

(c) When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. (a) (a)

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5243) making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, to strengthen public health activities in response to the Zika virus, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. Clause 2(e) of rule XXI shall not apply during consideration of the bill. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. Section 514 of H.R. 4974 shall be considered to be a spending reduction account for purposes of section 3(d) of House Resolution 5.

SEC. 4. During consideration of H.R. 4974 in the Committee of the Whole pursuant to this resolution, it shall not be in order to consider an amendment proposing both a decrease in an appropriation designated pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 and an increase in an appropriation not so designated, or vice versa.

SEC. 5. During consideration of H.R. 4974 pursuant to this resolution—

(a) section 310 of House Concurrent Resolution 125, as reported in the House, shall have force and effect in the Committee of the Whole; and

(b) section 3304 of Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 shall not apply.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), 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.

□ 1230

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE. 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 Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule for consideration of both H.R. 5243, the Zika Response Appropriations Act of 2016, and H.R. 4974, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017.

The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 5243 under a closed rule with an hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations, along with a motion to recommit.

In addition, the rule provides for an open rule for consideration of the MILCON-VA appropriations bill for FY 2017. It also provides for a motion to recommit on the MILCON-VA bill.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the rule includes three budget provisions, which allow for the enforcement of the OCO firewall, allow for Members to deposit savings from their amendments in a spending reduction account, and provides limitations on advance appropriations consistent with the budget resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present H.R. 5243 to the House for its consideration. As I said in the Rules Committee yesterday, the debate over this legislation isn't about whether or not we provide resources for Zika, it is about whether or not we pay for it through our existing resources or just add it to the national debt. I am pleased that we have chosen the former course.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5243 provides an additional $622.1 million, for a total of over $1.2 billion to fight the Zika outbreak. H.R. 5243 provides additional money to the Centers for Disease Control for mosquito control and programs for prenatal care, delivery, and postpartum care. In addition, we provide the NIH with the resources needed to develop vaccines and diagnostic tests.

In addition, as opposed to the President's request, this legislation maintains important oversight restrictions on the use of these funds. Understandably, they must be used solely for Zika. The President's supplemental request, in addition to not being paid for, would allow the so-called emergency funds to be used for almost anything.

Importantly, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is fully offset by using leftover, unobligated Ebola funds and the unused Health and Human Services administrative funding. In addition, Mr. Speaker, this legislation reflects the emergency of this situation by making these funds available through the end of this fiscal year.

Yesterday, Chairman ROGERS told the Rules Committee that a standalone piece of legislation stands the best chance of becoming law. If we were to attach this measure as part of one of the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bills, as the Senate has done, there is no guarantee that it would be enacted swiftly. In my opinion, the best way to ensure its quick enactment is through standalone legislation, like H.R. 5243.

In addition to the Zika response appropriations bill, this rule allows for the consideration of the first appropriations bill considered by the House for FY 2017, the MILCON-VA appropriations bill.

I am pleased that the House is, once again, going through regular order and considering appropriations bills under an open process. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I am always proud that we can bring these bills up under an open process where all Members have the opportunity to bring their ideas for an up-or-down vote by the entire House.

H.R. 4974 provides $73.5 billion in discretionary funding for the Veterans Administration, a 3-percent increase over FY16. In addition, it includes important oversight and good government provisions, like preventing the closure of Guantanamo Bay, prohibiting bonuses for all VA Senior Executive Service personnel, and increased oversight, like requiring large-scale construction projects to be managed by an outside entity so that mistakes like the Denver VA health facility, now $1 billion over budget, will never be repeated.

I am encouraged by the hard work of Chairman ROGERS and Ranking Member LOWEY for their commitment to regular order and ensuring that the power of the purse is one that this House can continue to exercise. Both the Zika Response Appropriations Act and the FY 2017 MILCON-VA bill demonstrate our commitment to that end.

I urge support for the rule and the underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes for debate.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate the rule for H.R. 4974, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, and H.R. 5243, the Zika Response Appropriations Act.

There are many things to praise in the military construction and VA appropriations bill. This is the first of the FY17 appropriations bills to reach the floor, and I hope that we soon have the opportunity to vote on other important appropriations packages.

The legislation, as pointed out by my good friend, provides $81.6 billion in total discretionary funding for fiscal year 2017 to fund military construction projects and programs within the Department of Veterans Affairs. It provides funding to hire 242 new VA staff to help reduce the VA's backlog in processing claims, as well as important funding for mental health programs and suicide prevention outreach. Certain VA medical services, including long-term care for veterans and support services for caregivers, are also included in this bill, which increase health program funding by approximately 5 percent as compared to the last fiscal year.

As co-chair of the Congressional Homelessness Caucus, I also welcome the inclusion of the President's full fiscal year '17 request for veterans homelessness outreach programs in this legislation. We have made great progress in our work to end veteran homelessness, and these programs play a critical role in getting our veterans off the streets.

However, despite these points, the bill is not without criticism. The additional language that indiscriminately denies performance awards as well as the inclusion of other ideologically divisive provisions that are outside the scope of this legislation, to me, are problematic. Because of these provisions, the President has indicated that he will veto this legislation in its current form. So it is my hope that we can work together to present a final package that will be able to become law, providing the important funding that our military servicemen and -women, their spouses, and our veterans need and rightly deserve.

I now turn to debate the Republican majority's so-called response to Zika. Despite any hope I had that the generally bipartisan effort crafting the military construction and VA appropriations bill may perhaps signal that my friends in the majority are suddenly able to govern responsibly, I am beyond disappointed in the inadequate measure presented here today.

Nearly 3 months ago, the President requested Congress to provide $1.9 million to combat the spread of the Zika virus. This number was based on what our Nation's top experts and scientists at the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and elsewhere believe is needed to meet the challenges of this impending public health emergency.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health, our national top expert on infectious diseases, has warned that if we don't provide funding at this level, and I quote him, ''that is going to have a very serious negative impact on our ability to get the job done.''

So, naturally, after these warnings and nearly 3 months after the administration's request, what have my friends in the Republican majority presented today? A bill with a funding level less than one-third of the amount our Nation's top doctors tell us is needed to win the fight against the Zika virus.

I fear that in trying to address the Zika virus, my Republican colleagues are many days late and many dollars short. This decision risks worsening an already severe crisis. As of May 11, the Centers for Disease Control reports the following: In the continental United States, there have been 503 reported travel-associated cases of Zika. In the United States territories, including Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the United States Virgin Islands, there are 698 locally acquired vector-borne cases reported.

□ 1245

While these numbers may seem small, we must take into account that we are not even in the summer months, and mosquito season has not even started. Despite these troubling figures, if you want to learn what is most important to the majority and their response to this emergency, one need look no further than the summary of this bill prepared by the Committee on Appropriations Republicans. At the top of that summary, they noted for their Members that the funding was ''entirely offset.'' This statement was underlined, bolded, and italicized.

Mr. Speaker, we are facing a public health emergency, and apparently the most important thing to my friends on the other side isn't that we address this emergency head-on with adequate and robust emergency funding but, rather, that we make sure what little funding they are allocated doesn't cost new money to do so. I guess my Republican friends will be at ease in the face of this looming public health emergency knowing that their response to pay for it is ''offset.''

One would think that the duty to provide an appropriate level of funding to respond to a national health crisis would be enough to garner a ''yes'' vote from the Republican majority. Apparently not.

I represent one of the States that everyone agrees will be hardest hit by the Zika virus. Indeed, Florida already reported 106 travel-related cases. Twenty-two of the cases in Florida are from Palm Beach and Broward County, areas that I represent. When the summer months come and this emergency worsens, I don't think my constituents will be at ease knowing that at least the money Republicans approved of was an offset.

Later, Mrs. NITA LOWEY, the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations, the subject matter for today, is going to make statements. I haven't had an opportunity to talk with her this morning, but yesterday in the Committee on Rules I asked her whether or not, when other emergencies have come up, it has been required that they be offset, and her response was that it was not.

She, like myself, has been here during a lot of emergencies that we must and, rightly, should address for the American citizenry. This happens to be one more, and here we are haggling about offset rather than addressing the seriousness of this public national health emergency.

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

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

I want to begin by agreeing with my friend in terms of the appropriations process itself. He is right to celebrate the appearance of one of the bills down here under an open rule, just as I am sure my friend is aware, the Committee on Appropriations, under Mr. ROGERS' and Mrs. LOWEY's able leadership, has actually produced a series of bills ready and lined up. So I have no doubt this is the first of many bills—I would hope all bills—that we eventually see on the floor that every Member has an opportunity to come down here and amend as they see fit.

I also want to appreciate what my friend had to say about the VA and military construction bill. I think he is absolutely correct. That is one of our very best subcommittees. Chairman DENT and Congressman BISHOP are chair and ranking member. They work together extremely well. While I know my friend has some concerns with specific provisions of that, again, this is a process. As he knows, this is our opening process. We will see what happens. I think at the end of the day, that particular legislation will garner a great deal of bipartisan support, in part because of the very points my good friend made in talking about the bill.

Now let's move to Zika. Here, we obviously have a different point of view. Let me posit some things, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps those watching this debate and discussion aren't aware of.

First, $600 million has already been deployed for Zika. That was out of money set aside for both Ebola and other infectious diseases. That money, by the way, totaled over $5 billion originally. There is still close to $3 billion of it left. It was to be spent over several years.

So when the President made his request, the initial response from Chairman ROGERS was, spend this money now. Don't wait on Congress to act. You have got available resources. The administration eventually agreed with that point of view.

So to this point, nothing has been left undone because of money. Everything the Federal Government has wanted to do has been fully funded. And, indeed, in that fund, there is still well over $2 billion, so literally everything it plans to do in the timeframe it plans to do it can be done. So that is $600 million of the $1.9 billion immediately available.

This bill would provide another $622 million, which is actually more money than the administration plans to spend in this fiscal year. So they will have more than enough resources. In the bill, there is actually money included for the National Institutes of Health that will not be spent until next year as they work through the process of developing vaccines and diagnostics. So there is more than adequate funding here.

Finally, in the remainder of the year, when we get to the Labor-HHS bill and the foreign operations bill, we will put in literally hundreds of millions more money for fiscal year 2017. That $1.9 billion isn't to be used right now. It is to be used over a 2-year period, so you don't need all of it right now.

The key difference is not the amount of money. The key difference is, number one, this is offset. My friend is correct about that. It is paid for. Rather than saying we are going to just immediately add an additional $1.9 billion to the national debt, say: Look, we have money set aside; we have got money here we can offset through other unused funds, and we have got money in the regular appropriations process for next year.

All of this can and should be paid for. Frankly, it is not like a Hurricane

Sandy or a Hurricane Katrina with massive damage, immediate response required. This is actually smaller, more manageable, and these are moneys spent over not a short period of time, but over a couple of years. So this is actually the prudent way to actually move forward on this money.

But again, the important thing to know is everything that has needed to be done has been done. There hasn't been anything delayed. Nothing has been set back. Frankly, what Mr. ROGERS offers us will actually speed money to the process.

The debate, here again, as I said in my opening remarks, isn't about Zika; it is about whether or not you want to pay for the response, and that requires some tough choices to be made. That means other things that aren't emergency might not get as much funding.

The administration, like anybody else, if they can have their cake and eat it too, is delighted to do so. The more prudent path is to actually pay for the emergency that you have if you can. If you can't, then you move to something bigger. But in this case, we have the ability to do that, and I think we ought to do it.

I would hope our friends work with us on this. We see that this is an emergency. We have provided money immediately. We are moving now, prudently, to provide additional money, more than is needed in the short term and, frankly, as the bills roll out, you will see that there will be additional money yet to come—money that, by the way, was not intended to be spent until next year anyway. So there is no reason to spend it all right now.

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

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up the Democratic alternative Zika bill that provides the administration with the $1.9 billion its top scientific and medical experts say is needed to mount a robust response to the Zika crisis without jeopardizing its ability to address other public health threats, like Ebola.

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 (Mr. POE of Texas). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations and my good friend, to discuss our proposal.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republican Zika bill provides $622 million, about one-third of the $1.9 billion requested. The bill also steals more Ebola funding as an offset instead of replenishing what was already redirected to Zika. We don't offset spending to respond to emergencies, and we certainly don't steal from prior emergency response efforts still underway when a new emergency arises.

Let's just consider, my friends, recent history.

Emergency funding was provided to respond to both Ebola and H1N1. In last year's omnibus, Congress used emergency funding without offsets to pay for wildland fire suppression, mostly in the West. Congress also provided emergency funding to respond to two hurricanes and flooding in the Carolinas and Texas, again without offsets.

When those disasters struck, we didn't steal money from prior disaster response, like the emergency funding provided for hurricane damage in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida; or storms in West Virginia; or tornadoes in Oklahoma and Kentucky. In fact, after the 2013 Oklahoma tornadoes, my friend, Chairman ROGERS, said: ''I don't think disasters of this type should be offset. We have an obligation to help these people.''

Now that the Zika public health emergency has ravaged Brazil, spread to Puerto Rico, and threatens an outbreak in the continental United States, suddenly Republicans insist on shortchanging efforts to ensure the deadly Ebola virus doesn't reemerge to pay for Zika response. The money they would take from Ebola isn't nearly enough to prevent the spread of the deadly Zika virus that especially endangers pregnant women and children who could be born with very severe disabilities.

If the previous question is defeated, Mr. HASTINGS will amend the rule to offer my bill, H.R. 5044, as a substitute, providing the full $1.9 billion the administration requested without offsets to ensure an adequate response to Zika that doesn't rob our Ebola response. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the previous question.

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

Let me begin by thanking my good friend for her wonderful work on that committee. She has had the opportunity to serve on her subcommittee when she was a subcommittee chairman and now to work with her ranking member. There is no better person than NITA LOWEY on that committee.

However, we are going to disagree a little bit here. First of all, when you say the bill only provides a third, of course, you have already got a third. The first $600 million is the first third. That has already been deployed. It is being spent. This is the next third. The remaining third is money that will be spent—by the way, not this year, but next year—and it will be presented in the normal appropriations bills.

I happen to chair one of those committees, the so-called Labor-HHS Subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. We will have hundreds of millions of dollars in that bill for next year's Zika response. So to suggest that somebody is being shortchanged, the money is just being prudently laid out at an appropriate pace and paid for along the way. That is point number one.

Point number two, again, this isn't a debate about the disease. It was this committee and our chairman who immediately responded and said: You have extra money left.

Now, by the way, the Ebola money, if you go back and look at the legislation, is Ebola and other infectious diseases.

□ 1300

In other words, when Congress appropriated that, they knew they might be appropriating more than was needed for Ebola and there might be other crises to come up. So that money is being used exactly the way it is supposed to be used.

The Appropriations Committee has assured that both the CDC and the NIH and the administration that, should additional money be required—and there is still almost $2 million of Ebola money—and if you need more and you are going to spend it over the next several years, come back and we will sit down and we will work with you and get you the money.

So this suggestion that somehow the fight against Ebola has been sidelined or cut short or shortchanged, again, is simply not true.

My friends use a lot of rhetoric here, largely to hide the fact that while we have got plenty of available money both set aside in the normal appropriations process and certainly in this bill of Chairman ROGERS to pay for things, they just simply want to add it to the national debt. They don't want to use available resources. They don't want to operate within the normal Appropriations Committee, I guess because they want to spend that money someplace else.

To suggest that anybody is disingenuous or shortchanging either Zika or Ebola simply doesn't square with reality. It was Congress, after all—a Republican majority in the House and a Democratic majority in the Senate, but, frankly, a genuinely bipartisan effort—that voted the $5 billion-plus for Ebola in the first place.

Last year, the President asked for a billion-dollar increase at the National Institutes of Health. We gave him a $2 billion increase. I can't remember the precise number last year, but I do remember we appropriated more for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention than the President requested.

So it is not as if these things are not a priority. I think they are a priority on both sides of the aisle. We have proven that by bringing appropriations bills to the floor beyond what the President requested. But we think the prudent thing to do is not just willy-nilly add $1.9 billion worth of debt on the American taxpayer, particularly when the money is at hand to pay for what we need right now and we have an appropriations bill coming up in June

where the rest of it can be taken care of and we can actually monitor this thing.

On the Ebola crisis, we may well have appropriated more than we needed to. That is why we have the other infectious diseases. In fact, if you look at the administration's budget proposal, they actually were taking $40 million out of this same pot of money to spend on unrelated malaria suppression abroad.

I am not quarreling with that—that is fine—but it suggests, again, even the administration thought, ''Well, maybe there is more money than we need in here for Ebola, or we can count on Congress to come back,'' which, by the way, is true if they need more money.

This is all about trying to circumvent the appropriations process and trying to add debt when there are sufficient resources available. If there were not, then that would be another matter. I agree with my friends: the response is important. But in this case, because the response is spread out over 2 years, you have plenty of time. And this is a relatively modest amount of money. This isn't like an $80 billion expenditure that we had for Hurricane Sandy. We can do this in a thoughtful and prudent way and avoid the debt that is associated with emergency spending.

We want to continue to work with the administration. We have demonstrated in the past that we are willing to fund NIH and CDC above administration-recommended levels. We responded quickly during the Ebola emergency. We think this is the appropriate way to go.

The Senate is moving a vehicle, as we all know. At some point, if we pass this—and I think we will—we will sit down with our friends, and we will hammer out a common response. But, again, do remember that nothing is not being done for lack of money. Everything the administration has wanted to do to date, it has had the resources to do. And we will continue to make sure that it does.

At the end of the day, we think they ought to be paid for, since we have the ability to do that. And that is what we are trying to accomplish: keep debt off the back of the American taxpayer, if we possibly can. In this case, we can and we should.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, before yielding to my good friend from Texas, I include in the RECORD a letter from the White House over the signature of Shaun Donovan, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Susan Rice, National Security Adviser, directed to the Speaker of the House, PAUL D. RYAN, on April 26, 2016.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, DC, April 26, 2016.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: As you are aware, on February 22, the Administration transmitted to Congress its formal request for $1.9 billion in emergency supplemental funding to address the public health threat posed by the Zika virus. Sixty-four days have passed since this initial request; yet still Congress has not acted.

Since the time the Administration transmitted its request, the public health threat posed by the Zika virus has increased. After careful review of existing evidence, scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concluded that the Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects. The Zika virus has spread in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands and abroad. As of April 20, there were 891 confirmed Zika cases in the continental United States and U.S. territories, including 81 pregnant women with confirmed cases of Zika. Based on similar experiences with other diseases transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito—believed to be the primary carrier of the Zika virus—scientists at the CDC expect there could be local transmission within the continental U.S. in the summer months. Updated estimate range maps show that these mosquitoes have been found in cities as far north as San Francisco, Kansas City and New York City.

In the absence of action from Congress to address the Zika virus, the Administration has taken concrete and aggressive steps to help keep America safe from this growing public health threat. The Administration is working closely with State and local governments to prepare for outbreaks in the continental United States and to respond to the current outbreak in Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories. We are expanding mosquito control surveillance and laboratory capacity; developing improved diagnostics as well as vaccines; supporting affected expectant mothers, and supporting other Zika response efforts in Puerto Rico, the U.S. territories, the continental United States, and abroad. These efforts are crucial, but they are costly and they fall well outside of current agency appropriations. To meet these immediate needs, the Administration conducted a careful examination of existing Ebola balances and identified $510 million to redirect towards Zika response activities. We have also redirected an additional $79 million from other activities. This reprogramming, while necessary, is not without cost. It is particularly painful at a time when state and local public health departments are already strained.

While this immediate infusion of resources is necessary to enable the Administration to take critical first steps in our response to the public health threat posed by Zika, it is insufficient. Without significant additional appropriations this summer, the Nation's efforts to comprehensively respond to the disease will be severely undermined. In particular, the Administration may need to suspend crucial activities, such as mosquito control and surveillance in the absence of emergency supplemental funding. State and local governments that manage mosquito control and response operations will not be able to hire needed responders to engage in mosquito mitigation efforts. Additionally, the Administration's ability to move to the next phase of vaccine development, which requires multi-year commitments from the Government to encourage the private sector to prioritize Zika research and development, could be jeopardized. Without emergency supplemental funding, the development of faster and more accurate diagnostic tests also will be impeded. The Administration may not be able to conduct follow up of children born to pregnant women with Zika to better understand the range of Zika impacts, particularly those health effects that are not evident at birth. The supplemental request is also needed to replenish the amounts that we are now spending from our Ebola accounts to fund Zika-related activities. This will ensure we have sufficient contingency funds to address unanticipated needs related to both Zika and Ebola. As we have seen with both Ebola and Zika, there are still many unknowns about the science and scale of the outbreak and how it will impact mothers, babies, and health systems domestically and abroad.

The Administration is pleased to learn that there is bipartisan support for providing emergency funding to address the Zika crisis, but we remain concerned about the adequacy and speed of this response. To properly protect the American public, and in particular pregnant women and their newborns, Congress must fund the Administration's request of $1.9 billion and find a path forward to address this public health emergency immediately. The American people deserve action now. With the summer months fast approaching, we continue to believe that the Zika supplemental should not be considered as part of the regular appropriations process, as it relates to funding we must receive this year in order to most effectively prepare for and mitigate the impact of the virus.

We urge you to pass free-standing emergency supplemental funding legislation at the level requested by the Administration before Congress leaves town for the Memorial Day recess. We look forward to working with you to protect the safety and health of all Americans.

Sincerely,

SHAUN DONOVAN,
Director, The Office of Management and Budget.

SUSAN RICE,
National Security Advisor.

Mr. HASTINGS. Excerpting from that letter a portion of the first paragraph on the second page, let me read what is said, in partial response to my good friend from Oklahoma:

''Without significant additional appropriations this summer, the Nation's efforts to comprehensively respond to the disease will be severely undermined. In particular, the administration may need to suspend crucial activities, such as mosquito control and surveillance, in the absence of emergency supplemental funding.

''State and local governments that manage mosquito control and response operations will not be able to hire needed responders to engage in mosquito mitigation efforts. Additionally, the administration's ability to move to the next phase of vaccine development, which requires multiyear commitments from the government to encourage the private sector to prioritize Zika research and development, could be jeopardized.

''Without emergency supplemental funding, the development of faster and more accurate diagnostic tests also will be impeded. The administration may not be able to conduct followup of children born to pregnant women with

Zika to better understand the range of Zika impacts, particularly those health effects that are not evident at birth.

''The supplemental request is also needed to replenish the amounts that we are now spending from our Ebola accounts to fund Zika-related activities. This will ensure we have sufficient contingency funds to address unanticipated needs related to both Zika and Ebola. As we have seen with both Ebola and Zika, there are still many unknowns about the science and scale of the outbreak and how it will impact mothers, babies, and health systems domestically and abroad.''

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), my good friend.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned. I am concerned because, while the mosquito is not the unbeatable foe, it is the deadliest living organism on the Earth. The deadliest life form is the mosquito.

Annually, the mosquito kills 1 million humans, mostly from malaria, I must tell you, but I must tell you that they also kill by way of the West Nile virus. In Houston, Texas, we have had people contract the West Nile virus. We have people die. I would also mention that they are the greatest survivors. They survived the dinosaurs.

We are dealing with a deadly foe. Make no mistake, the size should not in any way cause us to believe that this is something we can take as less than a deadly enemy that we have to confront.

The World Health Organization has indicated that there may be as many as 4 million cases of the Zika virus from Zika-carrying mosquitoes in the Americas. As of February 1, we had seven confirmed cases in Houston, Texas.

It appears, from what I have read, that standing water activates them. It appears that rain can activate these mosquitos. If this is true, in Houston, Texas, given that we have just had the so-called tax day flood and because we are still being inundated with rain quite regularly—an 80 percent chance of rain today in Houston, an 80 percent chance tomorrow—it appears that we have the makings of a special problem in Houston, Texas.

So, I am gravely concerned. I hope that we do all that we can to make sure that we get the necessary equipment and the necessary funding so that this enemy can be confronted properly.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by actually agreeing with my friends and, certainly, my good friend from Texas. He is right about the danger that we are dealing with. My friend from Florida is certainly right about the severity of this. I think where they are wrong is the suggestion that nothing has been done; $600 million has been deployed.

This bill is actually a response to the very letter that my good friend from Florida read. This does provide the next third of the requested money by the administration. And, frankly, the bill extends this into next year to address the concerns my friend expressed about having a multiyear commitment.

The money in here for the National Institutes of Health, which is the lead agency in developing vaccine and diagnostics, is fully funded for what they have asked to be funded for next year. So this actually does that.

Now, we will have an additional bill through committee in June where we will provide additional resources for the CDC for next year and whatever other things needed.

The total spending here on both sides is about the same. It is being deployed right now. This is a response to some of the concerns. What concerns my friends, I think, is they would just prefer not to pay for it. They would just prefer to add it to the national debt. Well, gosh, that is a great thing to do, but that is probably how we ended up with a deficit of over half a billion dollars for FY 2017 and a national debt of over $19 trillion.

If this were something that we couldn't handle any other way—that we only had an emergency—I would agree with my friends. I did that when we had the Sandy relief. There was no other way for something that large. That is not the case here. This is $1.9 billion. Most of that money is coming out of the Labor-HHS bill, which, by the way, spends $163 billion a year.

If you can't fund $1.9 billion spaced over 2 years in a bill that provides in that period of time around $320 billion, you are just not trying.

This is all about being able to spend someplace else. And, again, not one thing has not been done. Everything that anybody in the Federal Government has wanted to do, they have been able to do. In addition, the Ebola money is not just the Ebola money; it is Ebola and other infectious diseases. That is what it was there for. It was not just meant to be spent only on Ebola.

Even after the $600 million, even after the money that is offset in this bill, which is roughly at $350 million, that fund still will have almost $2 billion in it that can deploy any way against infectious diseases that the administration says it needs, and it has the commitment of Appropriations, which has demonstrated again and again that it will do this: If you run short in this area, we will backfill. That is why we have appropriations bills moving now. We can take care of you. But we can do it within the budget limits negotiated with the administration. That is prudent management of the money.

So, given the track record here, both in responding on Ebola and putting more money in the NIH and the Centers for Disease Control than the administration expected and now moving quickly to be helpful here, I think we have either a misunderstanding or a manufactured crisis.

There is no crisis. There is a real challenge, and money needs to move toward it now. That is exactly what we have done. That is exactly what we are doing in this bill. That is exactly what we will do in the appropriations bills that will be presented in Congress as the appropriations season progresses.

With that, I want to reassure my friend that the resources will be there. They have been there thus far. They will continue to be there.

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

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), my good friend.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the indifference by some in this Congress to a looming public health crisis is truly stunning.

This Republican bill cuts the emergency funding request for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by 80 percent. That is $4 out of every $5 it asks for that will be eliminated.

The Zika virus is a terrible virus. It eats away at the brain of a fetus and results in a family tragedy of a child who is born with very severe birth defects. It will require costly lifetime care.

□ 1315

Zika can be sexually transmitted, and it has spread to many parts of Texas. We have Texas-tough mosquitoes, and the season is just beginning there. We are on the cusp of an epidemic spreading across our region; meanwhile, the Republicans are refusing to provide the resources to prevent it.

Now, I appreciate the very reassuring words that we have been hearing here, but just this morning I sat down and met with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. Tom Frieden, and I asked him: What difference does it make that $4 out of every $5 you have asked for are being cut?

He said in our discussion: If this Republican bill is approved to deny this vital CDC and NIH funding, we will not be able to develop the tools to diagnose the virus, combat the mosquitoes, and develop a safe and effective vaccine against it.

He said: We cannot monitor all of those who are being infected, have already been infected, and the neighbors around them that another mosquito bite might transmit the virus to them.

He said: We cannot get back to Texas and other States' general emergency preparedness funds that we have taken away in order to try to fight the Zika virus.

To do the job effectively, this Administration needs more than four months of temporary funding. It needs long-term contracting authority to get at this crisis and to prevent it.

I think that disease control and prevention represents some of our best and most effective investments in health. We can save a lifetime of suffering to so many families, and we can save millions of dollars of public and private monies that these children

born with severe birth defects will have.

The gentleman is correct that the Republican Senate is considering this matter. In fact, it not only considered it, but, finally, yesterday it approved legislation that offers almost twice as much in the way of resources to address this crisis as the bill the gentleman is promoting today includes.

I say let's join together and reject this rule—reject it, and demand that the Republican leadership respond with the funding necessary to protect families across America from an emerging Zika tragedy.

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

I want to always recognize my good friend from Texas, who is really one of my good friends in this body.

But I am not surprised that the Senate bill is twice as much money because it runs for twice the time. This bill runs to September 30th. The Senate bill runs until September 30, 2017, so they are not materially that different.

What we have said is we would deal with next year's problem in the appropriations process for this year.

Now, again, I know my friend's concern is legitimate. I do. I don't have any doubt about it. But I point out one more time, $600 million has been appropriated or has been made available. This is an additional $600 million. This $1.2 billion for the time of this fiscal year is actually more than the administration had planned to spend in this period. It reaches into next year, but they will have it available for this year if they need it.

They have another nearly $2 billion in Ebola/other infectious diseases money, and they have the assurance that additional things are coming.

The only difference here is, are you going to pay for it? Or are you just going to add it to the national credit card, another $2 billion, roughly, on the national debt, when you have the resources and the time available to operate within the appropriation system?

So this debate, as I have said repeatedly, isn't about Zika. It is about whether you pay to deal with Zika, or whether you would just like to do whatever you want to do and forget about paying for it.

Unfortunately, we don't have that luxury indefinitely. So this is a responsible, well-thought-through measure. It is fully paid for.

Nobody is short of resources, nobody will be short of resources. The money is available to do whatever the administration wants to do. It is well aware of that fact. And these are additional resources deployed here, with the assurance of other resources that will be deployed during the course of the normal appropriations process.

So I fail to see, when the amount of money is essentially the same on both sides over essentially the same period, why we keep going back and acting as if this $600 million is all there is. There is another 600 that has already been spent. There is more coming. It is coming in a regular way.

The only thing that upsets my friends on the other side is it is being paid for. I mean, how outrageous: we are actually going to pay for a government activity that is important for us to accomplish, with the assurance that if more is needed, more will be made available.

Mr. Speaker, that is the simple difference here, despite all the discussion about the disease, about readiness, is who is willing to pay for what needs to be done and who, frankly, would just prefer to put on it the national credit card.

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

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN), my very good friend.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Members, I thank my colleague from the Committee on Rules and my classmate for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule and to H.R. 5243.

The last three Democratic speakers are from Texas. The Southeastern States are ground zero for Zika and other diseases. It is the first known vector-borne disease to cause microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects.

Our knowledge of the disease and how it is transmitted and its complications have evolved rapidly since the epidemic began, but there is still a lot unknown. We do not have rapid diagnostic tests or an effective vaccine against this virus.

The mosquito vector is actively present in several parts of the United States, including Houston and the Southern States. Current vector control efforts are uncoordinated and inadequate.

Cases of Zika are being introduced frequently by returning travelers, and mosquito season is rapidly approaching our community.

As of May 11, there were more than 1,200 confirmed Zika cases in the continental U.S. and U.S. territories. Robust action is required to protect Americans, and this bill falls dramatically short of the response this epidemic demands.

H.R. 5243 only provides a third of the funds necessary to respond to a Zika outbreak and, even worse, a large portion of the funding is taken from money Congress has appropriated to respond to the Ebola crisis. We are taking money away from researching Ebola cures to put on Zika. Ebola will not go away. We cannot rob Peter to pay Paul.

My good friend from Oklahoma, I know in 2003, we sent legislators up to his district. I hope in Texas we don't send mosquitos up to his district, because that could happen.

Congress has a constitutional and moral duty to protect the health and welfare of our country. I am saddened to say this bill fails to uphold our responsibilities to the American people.

Crises of this magnitude demand robust, multi-year investments in our public health infrastructure, vaccine, diagnostic development, and transmission control.

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

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Funding to fight the Zika virus must be treated as an emergency that is similar to past emergencies, like Ebola and H1N1 viruses. It should not be offset or use previously appropriated funds for other public health priorities. Doing so will only continue the broken cycle of lurching from outbreak to outbreak.

Even worse, this bill only funds the Department of Health and Human Services' response until September 30. Mosquitos don't follow our fiscal year. This threat is real, immediate, and grave.

On behalf of American families, mothers, and the next generation, we must do better.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill and bring meaningful legislation to the floor that adequately and responsibly funds our response to the Zika virus.

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

My good friend, Mr. GENE GREEN—and he is my good friend—as I recall, those Texas legislators were called the Killer Bees. And if you want to compare them to mosquitos, I will leave you that luxury and that political risk. We just call Texas legislators welcome guests. So they are welcome to come any time.

In terms of the point, though, I think I agree with much of what you say, other than the last part of what you said about adequately, responsibly funding. That is exactly what we are doing.

The total amount of money here we are talking about, my friends keep forgetting about this $600 million that has already been deployed, and they keep suggesting that this is like only Ebola money.

That is not the way the legislation is written. It is written for Ebola and other infectious diseases. In other words, we are using that money exactly the way we are supposed to use it, not shortchanging anybody.

If we need money later—because this is money that is to be spent over multiple years—we will come back and put it in. But that money, frankly, if it had not been available, there would not have been an immediate response possible. It was available, so it is being used in the appropriate way.

This is the next third. So when we hear this talk about only a third of what the administration requested, we have already done a third. We are getting ready to do the next third, and we are telling you, in bills that are coming

to the floor, both State and foreign ops, and Labor-HHS, that there will be additional money that will essentially total about what the administration has asked to spend.

We recognize that these things do develop, do change. Our understanding of them changes over time. This is actually a thoughtful way to do this. But the assurance has been made: if you need more money, then you have got it. We will work with you. We will find a way to do it. Our assistance is, if we can pay for it, then we do pay for it; and that is exactly what we do in this bill.

We hear comparisons, erroneous comparisons, you are only doing half as much as the Republicans in the Senate. No. We are doing it through September 30 of this year. They are doing it through September 30 of next year. The amounts are essentially about the same.

The difference, then, is also the same, frankly, with all due respect to my friends in the Senate, we are offsetting and paying for this. And that just seems, to us, the prudent way to do it, not to put more debt on the back of the American taxpayer when you don't have to.

If we had some emergency that called for hundreds of billions of dollars or something of that nature, that would be different. That is not what we are dealing with here.

Now, I have a lot of respect for my friend's concerns, but the chairman of our committee actually led a delegation to South America partially on this issue recently. I happened to have the privilege of going along with Chairman ROGERS.

We stopped in Peru, where there is a Naval research station we have operated for decades. It normally focuses on tropical diseases—we have a lot of issues with that when our military is deployed in those areas—but it is working around the clock on Zika and is doing some great work.

Then we went to Brazil, which is really the epicenter of this outbreak; sat down and talked with the Centers for Disease Control people on the ground, which we did; talked with the Brazilian government, which we did; saw, as Brazil was deploying literally hundreds of thousands, 220,000 of its own military personnel, to go door to door.

So I think probably Chairman ROGERS has as good a grasp, with all due respect, as anybody in this body on what is being done, what needs to be done, and how to proceed.

At every step along the way, he has shown that resources are going to be made available. They have been, but they are being made available in a responsible, prudent way, with appropriate oversight, in a timely manner, but in a manner which is offset and paid for.

That is what I think the American people want us to do: take care of what is important, do it right, do it responsibly, and pay for it if you have the funds available before you automatically add it to the credit card that our kids and grandkids are going to someday have to pay off.

So we will continue to work with our friends. We will work with our colleagues in the Senate. But to suggest for 1 minute that the Federal Government doesn't have the resources it needs, when it has much more than it has asked sitting still unobligated in funds, is just simply not the case. It has the money it needs. It is getting the resources in the right way. We are simply paying for them.

I know that is hard for some of my friends to accept, but it is actually the appropriate way to proceed. We actually should do more of this in this body rather than less.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it has become clear that the Republican leadership has either abdicated its authority to govern to the far right of its party, or never had the wherewithal to do so in the first place.

□ 1330

Either way, the American people are tired of this majority's inability to address the issues facing our country.

During the 114th Congress, Republicans have brought to the floor bills with absolutely no hope of becoming law, strictly partisan measures that were more messaging bills than serious legislative proposals. We saw it a couple of weeks ago with a string of bills attacking the Internal Revenue Service to score political points during tax day.

None of that is going to become law. We have seen it with bills to weaken environmental protections or to limit a woman's right to choose. Now we see it with a bill that the President has threatened to veto because Republicans have included ideological riders. The majority seems to be more focused on scoring political points than actually getting to the business of governing.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle attempt to merely swat away the looming public health crisis posed by the Zika virus. This approach is as lacking in leadership as it is callous. I can guarantee you that the mosquitos carrying the Zika virus do not care if you are a Democrat or a Republican. They do not care if the money used to stop them is offset. But I can promise my Republican friends, pinching pennies on basic investments to address a public health emergency will inevitably heighten costs—in dollars and lives—down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a ''no'' vote on the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank, as always, my good friend from Florida. He is truly a delight to work with, one of the really great Members in this body. Not surprisingly, he knows I disagree with him on his characterization of the current Congress, because saying that we haven't done anything is forgetting what has actually happened.

This is the first Congress to pass a multiyear highway bill since 2005 and the first one to overhaul common education since 2002. Last week, we had opioid legislation on this floor that we all know is critical and is certainly going to come into law, and it will be funded. We had the first real human trafficking bill; an overhaul of the Veterans Administration; a budget agreement that meant we had no closures and no debt crisis; more funding for the National Institutes of Health—it has been one of the central issues in this debate—than the President asked for last year, more new funding; and the same thing for the Centers for Disease Control. So I actually argue it has been a pretty productive Congress in many, many ways.

In terms of Zika, though, let's again get back and just clarify things. The President asked for $1.9 billion in emergency funding. The chairman of the Appropriations Committee immediately said: You have got plenty of money. Use whatever you want; $600 million of that was used. If you need that replenished, we will replenish that in the normal course of appropriations.

He now brings to the floor a bill that carries the next third of the funding that the administration has asked for, fully offset, money that is more than they expect to spend from now until September 30. Some of that money is available into next year, certainly the money that the NIH would need for diagnostics and vaccines. We will bring to the floor the rest of it.

So the only thing that we really differ on is should we pay for this major effort or not when we have the resources. We have the resources. Ours is paid for. The administration's proposal is not. It is just that simple. Do you just want to add $1.9 billion, or do you want to responsibly work the problem?

This committee, the Appropriations Committee, has been at the forefront of responding to this every step along the way. It will continue to do so. We will work with our friends.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the Constitution gives the Congress the power of the purse. Article I, section 9 gives that authority to Congress. While the President has every right and duty to submit a supplemental appropriations request, it is the duty of Congress to examine that request and provide for the funds and conditions it feels appropriate to execute them. That is exactly what we have done on Zika, and that is exactly what we have done on MILCON–VA.

With that in mind, I would encourage my friends to support the rule and the underlying legislation.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 736 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS

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

SEC. 6. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5044) making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2016 to respond to Zika virus. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 7. Clause 1(c) of rule XLX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 5044.

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

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4909, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 735 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 735

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

SEC. 2. (a) No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution and amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution.

(b) Each further amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

(c) All points of order against the further amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules or amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution are waived.

SEC. 3. It shall be in order at any time for the chair of the Committee on Armed Services or his designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc offered pursuant to this section shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services or their designees, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

SEC. 4. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment pursuant to this resolution the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such further amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BYRNE. 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 Alabama?

There was no objection.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 735 provides for continued consideration of H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

The resolution provides for a structured rule and makes in order 120 amendments. These amendments are on top of the 61 amendments that were made in order by yesterday's rule. That is a combined 181 amendments on one bill.

As I mentioned during yesterday's debate, the NDAA process has always been bipartisan. In fact, Congress has successfully passed the NDAA for each of the last 54 years. That is a really impressive accomplishment. I hope this year is no different.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleagues that the NDAA passed out of the Armed Services Committee by a vote of 60–2. That vote total is very, very impressive and demonstrates the bipartisan nature in which our committee, the Armed Services Committee, operates.

Another thing I really appreciate about the NDAA process is how open it is and how so many different Members are able to have input into the final product. The first round of amendment debate yesterday was an example of a healthy debate on a wide range of amendments.

You look around the country, and so many of our communities are home to important military assets and programs. Some communities are home to military bases where we are training our future fighters. Other communities contribute to our military success with industry suppliers; and every single community across the country is home to servicemembers, whether Active Duty, Guard, or Reserve. Each of these communities faces unique challenges and offer different perspectives. That is why I believe it is so important that we have such an open process to allow a wide range of views to be discussed and debated.

During the Armed Services Committee process, we considered 248 amendments. When you add up the amendments considered at the committee level to the amendments we will consider on the floor, it brings us to a huge total of 429 amendments on one bill. These amendments cover a range of important issues from National Guard to cybersecurity, to sexual assault, to religious freedom, to military health care. Looking at specific security threats we face, these amendments address issues relating to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Europe, Russia, and many more places.

I know my colleague from Massachusetts is particularly interested in the Authorization for Use of Military Force, or AUMF, debate, as I am. Although the Foreign Affairs Committee, not the Armed Services Committee, has jurisdiction over AUMFs, I was pleased that we were able to obtain the committee's approval for Ms. LEE's amendment to be made in order so the House can debate this issue on the floor. I know that doesn't go as far as my colleague from Massachusetts would want it to go, and I hope that there is a time when this body, after hearings in appropriate committees of jurisdiction, can have a full and informed debate on a new AUMF, but we cannot do that under these circumstances today and give the American people the full and fair hearing that they deserve.

A few of my colleagues have also expressed concerns about the way this NDAA is funded. This rule makes in order an amendment by Mr. ELLISON that would cut money out of the overseas contingency operations account. While I think these concerns are misguided, this rule allows that debate to take place.

The rule makes in order an amendment by our Rules Committee colleague, Mr. POLIS, which would put in place a 1 percent across-the-board reduction in total spending under the NDAA. Again, I think this would be a grave error, but this rule provides for that important debate.

We have heard bipartisan concerns about visa programs for certain at-risk populations in Afghanistan, and this amendment makes in order a bipartisan amendment by Mr. BLUMENAUER to reform the Special Immigrant Visa program.

The rule allows for debate on another bipartisan amendment that would require the Department of Defense to report on China's activities in the South China Sea in their annual report on Chinese military power. I think this is an issue that is particularly important.

I hope this gets my point across that we have taken a comprehensive look at national security issues and allowed a wide range of Members, both Republicans and Democrats, to bring their amendments forward.

We hear a lot about the need for an open process. Again, I am very pleased that, between the Armed Services Committee and the House floor, 429 amendments will be considered. Given the large number of amendments, I want to thank our Rules Committee staff who put in very late hours to help sort through the amendments. I know it wasn't easy work, but we certainly appreciate all that they do and the extra hours they put in to help facilitate this debate.

Yesterday, I outlined why the National Defense Authorization Act is so critically important. I talked about the critical investment the bill makes to boost our military readiness. I discussed how the bill increases accountability and efficiency at the Pentagon, and I highlighted some of the critical reforms included in the bill.

I won't rehash these points, but I do want to reemphasize one key point: every day we send our servicemembers into dangerous situations. When we do so, we don't send them into battle as Democrats or Republicans. We send them into battle as Americans.

So as we continue working through this bill, I want to again plead with my colleagues to avoid making this about politics. Instead, let's make this about America and about ensuring our servicemembers have sound policy and the resources they need in order to keep our country safe. We shouldn't—and, quite frankly, we can't—let politics get in the way of passing this critical national security bill. Our military men and women deserve nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 735 and the underlying bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

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

□ 1345

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honorable chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. THORNBERRY, and the ranking member, Mr. SMITH of Washington, for once again working in a bipartisan manner to bring before this House H.R. 4909, the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. I don't agree with everything that is in this bill. In fact, there is a lot I do disagree with. But I appreciate that the chairman and the ranking member always treat all Members submitting amendments to the NDAA with respect, and that is very much appreciated.

But I must rise in very strong opposition to this structured rule because there are very serious issues that merit the time and attention of this House that were submitted to the Rules Committee by Members from both sides of the aisle, which have not been included in this structured rule. Almost 200 amendments were not made in order. As a Democrat, I am used to being shut out by the Republican majority, but dozens of Republican amendments were blocked as well.

Let me say to my Republican friends who did not have their amendment made in order: If you don't want this to be a pattern, then vote ''no'' on this rule; if you don't want this to be a precedent, then vote ''no'' on this rule. Send a message to your leadership that, in fact, you want a more open and transparent process. Don't go along just to get along. Don't be a cheap date when it comes to an open process in this House. The issues that are involved with the Defense Authorization Act are too important to be just blocked with no debate, no deliberation, and no votes. My friend talks about an open process. Open process, my foot. It is not an open process. Almost 200 amendments were not made in order. That is just not right.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that disturbs me in particular about this structured rule, it is how it fails the American people once again in not allowing substantial debate about the issues of war and peace. Mr. Speaker, nothing is more critical than the issues of war and peace.

And once again, the Republicans on the Rules Committee have ensured that no amendment that deals with authorizing the current U.S. military engagements in Iraq, Syria, or Afghanistan was made in order. The only amendment made in order is the one offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) to repeal the 2001 AUMF for Afghanistan, an amendment that she has courageously offered for several years now.

Mr. Speaker, one of the amendments not made in order was an amendment

offered by me and several colleagues to prohibit the use of any U.S. funds after April 30, 2017, for the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to Iraq or Syria in the fight against the Islamic State if an AUMF has not been enacted. This was a bipartisan amendment offered by Representatives JONES, GARAMENDI, YOHO, LEE of California, CICILLINE, and myself.

And let me make one thing very clear, Mr. Speaker: this amendment is not an AUMF. There is not one single syllable in this amendment that reflects the language of an AUMF.

The distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee was very clear during the committee markup of the NDAA that AUMF amendments were not the jurisdiction of his committee but, rather, the Foreign Affairs Committee. But this amendment is not an AUMF. And it is germane, by the way.

My amendment only prohibits the obligation and expenditure of funds after April 30, which is the chairman's chosen date for the cutoff of all OCO funding, and then only for the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to Iraq and Syria to combat ISIS, unless an authorization for that purpose has been enacted.

Quite simply, if you want the money to fight a war, then pass an AUMF. This amendment doesn't care who writes it. It doesn't care when it is debated or approved. It just requires that an AUMF be enacted by April 30. If not, no more funds for U.S. troops in the air, on the water, or on the ground until an AUMF is enacted.

All this amendment asks is that Congress do its job. We ask our men and women in the military to do their jobs, and Heaven only knows, they carry out their duty with courage, honor, and professionalism. I only ask that Congress do the same. This should not be too much to ask.

We have sent our uniformed men and women into harm's way in Syria and Iraq for nearly 2 years now and still Congress refuses to do its duty and authorize their deployment. We have been bombing, we have got boots on the ground and engaged in combat, and we have had troops killed in action, yet this Congress can't seem to debate and vote on an AUMF.

I personally believe that endless wars, endless bombing, and an ever-expanding U.S. military footprint in the Middle East is not a substitute for efforts aimed at reconciliation and political solutions. The status quo will not make the world more secure. I know some of my colleagues differ with me, and that is fine, but let's have the debate. Let's have clarity in what we are doing, and let's make sure that what we are doing works. Dodging responsibility only means that these wars will remain on remote control, and that is sad.

Last night in the Rules Committee, we heard lots and lots and lots of excuses. One of my favorite excuses that we heard last night was that 10 minutes would not be enough time to debate such a serious matter as what my amendment proposes. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Rules Committee can assign as much time as it wants to debate an amendment. That is what we are there for. Two hours, 3 hours, 3 days, 3 weeks if it wishes. That is what the Rules Committee is supposed to do: provide serious time to debate serious issues.

I heard that the Foreign Affairs Committee should be and would be drafting an AUMF. Fine. Terrific. If it comes out and is enacted before April 30, then it would fit right in with my amendment. But if this House continues to dawdle and whine and shirk its duties, then there should be no more money after April 30 for a war that hasn't been authorized by Congress.

I was told that the Republican leadership doesn't like the AUMF that the President sent to Congress over a year ago. Well, neither do I. I think it is too broad. But, Mr. Speaker, if the majority or anyone here doesn't like the President's AUMF, then it is the duty of Congress to draft debate and vote upon its own version of an AUMF and send the bill back to the President for his signature or veto. That is how the system works, or at least that is how it would work if this House ever managed to do its job.

I was told that the next President wouldn't have enough time to figure out an AUMF for Iraq and Syria by April 30. But, Mr. Speaker, I didn't choose April 30 as a date when all funds for the Overseas Contingency Operations account would be cut off. That date is built into the NDAA already. If April 30 is enough time for a new President and new Congress to ask for more money for these wars that are supplemental, then it should be plenty of time for Congress to take up and debate an AUMF.

Now, of course, this Congress or the next one should and could take up an AUMF any day it so desires. I remember, in 2014, that Speaker Boehner told us that it would be better for the 114th Congress to debate and pass an AUMF for Iraq and Syria rather than the 113th Congress. Well, here we are 16½ months into the 114th Congress with no thought of taking up an AUMF on battling the Islamic State.

I guess this Congress is just too damned chicken to do its job when it comes to war, and we are going to kick the can into the 115th Congress or maybe the 116th Congress. Enough with the excuses, enough. In fact, I remember, last year, Speaker RYAN said an AUMF for Iraq and Syria for the war against the Islamic State would be one of the first things this Congress would take up this year. Well, here we are in the middle of May and there is no AUMF in sight, just the same old tired excuses, the same cowardice, the same political posturing.

There is no shortage of Members of Congress talking tough against ISIS. We hear it all the time on the House floor. But let's be honest: that takes absolutely no courage at all. None of us are on the frontlines in Syria or Iraq. We are all safe and sound in the U.S. Capitol.

But think for a minute. What must be going through the minds of our troops when they see a Congress that doesn't even have the guts to debate these wars while they have been put in harm's way?

Every single Member of this House should be ashamed. Our collective silence—our collective indifference—is dismissive of our constitutional responsibility. This Chamber is guilty of moral cowardice.

Mr. Speaker, there are nearly 200 reasons to oppose this rule, and that is how many of the amendments submitted to the Rules Committee were not made in order under either the first rule to the NDAA or today's rule. Basically, 50 percent of all amendments submitted are not being allowed a chance to be heard.

I urge my colleagues to reject this rule. I urge my colleagues to show some backbone and demand that the majority leadership of this House carry out its constitutional duty to debate and vote on an AUMF for Iraq and Syria.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

My colleague from Massachusetts raises some very important points. It would be appropriate for our Foreign Affairs Committee to take up those points and consider them after we have had a lot of hearings, including an opportunity for a notice to the American people so the American people can be heard.

Coming up with this sort of an idea that it is just going to come through the Rules Committee without any hearing, without any real expertise in the Rules Committee to consider it, and then putting it on the floor for limited debate is not the way to do it.

Now, I must admit I have some reservations about establishing a hard stop of April 30 of next year. Saying that we are going to allow the next President to come forward with a new OCO proposal before April 30 of next year, which we did 8 years ago, is not the same thing. What my colleague is proposing is a hard stop. That is exactly what the President did in Iraq: a hard stop. We pulled out, and look what happened: absolute chaos, a nation that has gone from being a nation into being a nation in total dissolution.

We came close to doing the same thing in Afghanistan. Thankfully, the President has pulled back from that. Because when we telegraph to our enemies, ''Hey, we are out of here after a certain date,'' they know when we are leaving, they know when we are stopping, and they know exactly how to time their activities against us. I don't think we should give that opportunity to our enemies.

Now, I completely agree with my colleague from Massachusetts that we

need a new AUMF. I have said that on multiple occasions. I have signed letters to that effect. And I do believe that we have a situation in Syria that is not authorized, as it should be under the law.

Why are we in this situation? Because we have yet to receive a strategy from the Obama administration on how to prosecute that war. We had the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD) before the committee last night. She has fought over there. She knows this better than just about anybody in this room. She laid out clear deficiencies in the administration's so-called plan, which they sent over to the Armed Services Committee 45 days later, and only after we had to browbeat the Secretary of Defense to meeting its statutory responsibility.

And she laid out clearly what we need to do in terms of a strategy. We have yet to get that from the Commander in Chief of our own Armed Forces. If we would get that, if we would get a clear strategy for victory, not a clear strategy for some pie in the sky, we are going to arm some Free Syrian Army that is not working, then I think we could have something to work on to bring to this floor. The problem is we are having to put ourselves in the place of the Commander in Chief, which is not what the Constitution calls for, nor will it work. We are going to continue to struggle with this because of the failure of this administration, not because of the failure of this House.

I agree with the gentleman: I want to see a new AUMF. I want to see it go through hearings. I want to see it debated on this floor so I can vote for it or against it, and everybody can vote for it or against it. But the proposal he makes is not the right way to do that, so I hope that we continue to reject it.

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

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

With respect to the gentleman, I don't think we agree with each other. The reason why we are doing this is because Congress has failed to act. The time for an AUMF is before you put troops in harm's way. Some of us tried before we entered into this latest Syrian war to actually have a debate on an AUMF, and we were denied that opportunity. We are reengaged in Iraq. We asked before we did that, ''Let's have an AUMF,'' and we were denied that opportunity. We have been denied and denied and denied and denied.

All we are saying is that we ought to do our job. The President submitted an AUMF to Congress. He did his job. You don't like it—I don't like what he submitted either—but he did his job. He doesn't control what we do here. We decide what to do. The Foreign Affairs Committee 2 years ago could have taken this issue up. They didn't. They are not taking it up now. Here we are 2 years into these latest conflicts and nothing. It is shameful. Come on. We ought to come together, even if we disagree on what our strategy should be, and debate this.

□ 1400

We have no trouble sending our young men and women into harm's way; yet when it comes to doing our job, all of a sudden we have 1,000 excuses why we can't do it. That is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER).

Mr. KILMER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the NDAA is about ensuring that we have the best trained and equipped fighting force in the world. It is about honoring our commitment to the men and women who serve and to their families. It is not about targeting proud Americans simply based on who they love; but this rule would effectively discriminate against LGBT men and women who serve our Nation as private contractors.

This rule runs contrary to our values. It runs contrary to what we believe in. It runs contrary to the idea that we treat everyone with equal respect. It also runs contrary to what the majority said it wants—a transparent process, allowing the House to work its will. This rule blocks an amendment that was offered by my Republican colleague, CHARLIE DENT, to strip this discriminatory provision from even being considered.

As we approach Memorial Day, our focus should be on providing our servicemembers with the proper tools so that they may carry out their missions, not on pushing forward provisions that target LGBT Americans. Let's vote down this rule. Let's strip this harmful policy from the NDAA so that we remain committed to equal rights, and let's get back to debating how best to support our troops.

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

I appreciate the gentleman's comment. This is something that we had some significant discussion about last night in the Committee on Rules.

Let's make sure that the facts are straight. There is not one single thing in this bill that discriminates against anybody. In fact, in the provision he is talking about, there is not one single mention of LGBT.

What is in that provision is a clear application by this law of protections of religious liberties that people have enjoyed in this country since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act—one of the hallmarks of the legislative achievements of this body and an act, I believe, everybody in this body supports today. It says that the religious protections in that law that we are all so proud of should be enjoyed by people who have Federal contracts. Private parties that contract with the government should enjoy religious freedom. That is not discrimination. That is protecting the rights of the American people. Sometimes we get confused around here about that, and we are getting confused in the military bill about that, and that is very troublesome.

Let's talk about the First Amendment.

The First Amendment says that the government can't do anything to restrict the expression of religion, the practice of religion, the belief of religion by anybody in this country. It is called the Free Exercise Clause. We have forgotten the Free Exercise Clause in this body and in this country. We need to go back to it.

About 20 years ago, this body passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. It was so popular that it passed by a voice vote. It had just a handful of people who voted against it in the Senate. It specifically requires that we do exactly what is in this bill. We are being consistent with that law by putting this provision in there.

What do we do with this particular provision?

We say that the provisions of title VII in the 1964 act and the provisions that regard this in the Americans with Disabilities Act apply to private contractors with the Federal Government. That is not discrimination. By anybody's definition, that is not discrimination. To try to turn it into that is doing something on a bill that is talking about the defense of this country, which is just not appropriate.

It is absolutely appropriate that the Committee on Rules rejected that amendment. If the people on the other side of the aisle or on our side of the aisle want to have this debate, there are other forums and other times to do it. When we are talking about the defense of this country, it is not the right time.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

In the dead of night in the Committee on Armed Services, House Republicans added what we believe is discriminatory language to the NDAA, which would effectively overturn President Obama's historic executive order that protects LGBT workers in Federal contracts, therefore, enabling discrimination with taxpayer funds. That is what we believe.

We had a very vigorous debate in the Committee on Rules last night, and the gentleman defended his position quite ferociously; but we believe it is discrimination, plain and simple. An amendment was offered by a Republican Member to strike that discriminatory language from the bill. It was germane, and the Committee on Rules decided on its own not to make it in order.

The Committee on Rules shouldn't be about making decisions on issues that, I think, the entire Congress has an interest in debating and in voting on, but, unilaterally, the Republicans in the Committee on Rules last night said: No, we are not going to make a

Republican amendment in order that would have struck what we believe is discriminatory language.

That is not an open and transparent process. That is shutting the process down in a way that, I think, demeans this House.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule. This is not consistent with what the Speaker and the other leaders of the Republican Party have said they were going to do. It is inconsistent with how they said they were going to manage this House. It is inconsistent with the rights of the American people to have their Representatives vote on issues of great importance, which, of course, is what the Speaker and Mr. MCCARTHY and Mr. Cantor said in this book, ''Young Guns.''

I am going to read a paragraph from this book. This is in PAUL RYAN's section, under his heading, the Speaker of the House:

''The new Washington way,'' in speaking about what was apparently the stuff he didn't like, ''isn't open debate broadcast on C–SPAN; it is closed-door, backroom deals. The Washington way doesn't seek input from both sides of the issue; it muscles through bills on strict one-party votes. And the Washington way,'' speaking clearly of the way the majority of the Democrats were leading, ''isn't interested in honest up-or-down votes on transformational programs. It rigs the process,'' it reads, ''to produce the outcome it desires through any means necessary.''

That is exactly what is happening in this rule—exactly. PAUL RYAN and the young guns promised transparency, openness, and the House's being allowed to work its will.

So what has happened in the Committee on Rules?

Exactly the opposite. No transparency—a muzzling of the Members of the House of Representatives in not allowing a vote—but simply, unilaterally, in the dead of night, pocketing an amendment that was adopted in the committee that says that women would be treated just like men.

Now, I know that is a revolutionary concept for some on your side of the aisle here, and I know you certainly didn't want your Members to vote on that extraordinarily controversial issue. So in the dead of night, without any debate, without a vote in the Committee on Rules, it was simply put in the chairman's pocket, and 434 of us were ripped out of the process. The young guns said that wouldn't happen. Now, the young guns, by the way, so we all understand, are the Speaker and the majority leader now.

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

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

Mr. HOYER. Ladies and gentlemen, we ought to reject this rule, and the American people ought to reject this rule. The American people ought to say: bring the issues to the floor and let the House work its will. That is why they elected us, not to have the chairman of the Committee on Rules say: Sorry, you don't get to vote.

He wasn't elected dictator; STENY HOYER wasn't elected dictator; JIM MCGOVERN wasn't elected dictator. We were elected to be one of 435 people to make policies for this country and for our people.

Reject this rule. Bring democracy back to the House of Representatives. Let the people's representatives set policy in the light of day.

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

I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Maryland. He wasn't on the floor when I spoke earlier. Perhaps he didn't hear that, between the Committee on Armed Services and on this floor, 429 amendments have been made in order—181 for this floor alone. That is an open process, and it is a far more open process than what this House saw when other people were in charge. This is the process that the American people have a right to expect, and they are getting exactly what they were told they were going to get.

Mr. Speaker, the provision that he is referring to, a provision regarding including women in the draft, was, in fact, offered in the middle of the night without there being any hearings in the Committee on Armed Services, without there being any notice to the American people. There wasn't an adequate hearing; there wasn't an adequate opportunity for everybody to be heard. So the decision was made that the better way to do it, if we are going to consider it—and it probably is something we need to consider at some time—is to do it through a regular committee process, where we notice it to the American people, where we have hearings, and when people can be heard. Then we can have a full and honest debate with the American people having had a chance to weigh in.

I disagree with the gentleman from Maryland. I think this is exactly the appropriate process. If we are going to take up something of that magnitude, we ought to do it right and not do it because of an amendment that was offered as sort of a last-minute thing in the middle of the night when we are considering this bill.

I have great respect for the gentleman from Maryland. He was not there when it was offered. He was not there during the Committee on Rules' consideration last night, so he is probably not fully aware of the number of amendments that we have both in the committee and on the floor today—429 amendments. This is an open process.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 seconds to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for protecting us from ourselves. That seems to be somewhat paternalistic, of course.

As I understand it—and I was not there, but it wouldn't have mattered whether I was in the Committee on Rules—it was not done in open session in the Committee on Rules. The Committee on Armed Services voted upon it, and apparently the majority of your side lost, and they don't want us to consider it, and they don't want to subject your Members to voting on it and letting the American people know where you stand.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are advised to address all remarks to the Chair and not to each other.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, while millions of Americans are struggling to get by and sustain their families, Republicans are trying to make it easier for employers to steal their wages. Right now we know that there are reports of at least $5 million in stolen wages and penalties from the U.S. contract companies.

Last month, Representative JOHN KLINE, my colleague and friend, introduced an amendment to this bill to block the President's Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order at the Department of Defense. This executive order that the President issued helps ensure companies with Federal contracts are following Federal labor laws, like protections against wage theft, workplace safety rules, and the right for workers to organize. It is the result of years of advocacy by workers, labor rights activists, members of the Progressive Caucus, and Members of Congress generally.

This week I introduced an amendment to strike Mr. KLINE's language. Let's at least have a debate about it. Let's at least debate whether or not workers should get protection from wage theft. I guess that was one of those amendments that didn't quite make it through the process.

It is no surprise that the Republican-led Committee on Rules didn't give us a vote on our amendment, because they don't want to have to debate this in front of the American people. The American people might like to know that there are companies that are stealing workers' wages but that the President is trying to protect those workers. Now the Republican majority is trying to stop the President from protecting those workers.

□ 1415

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

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, now, the President's executive order isn't punitive. It actually helps companies to follow the rules.

Debarment is the last resort, and it is the clear nuclear option for companies that refuse to correct their behavior, but Republicans don't like it. Instead of helping companies that are fair to workers, they want to make it easier for companies that steal workers' wages.

Workers aren't the only ones who should be outraged. This amendment actually gives a leg up to contractors who don't play by the rules, putting companies who are doing right at a disadvantage.

Please vote ''no'' on this rule for this and many other reasons.

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

I wasn't able to respond to that last comment from the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER). I want to make sure that he knows—and everybody in the House knows—that during the consideration of the rule we passed yesterday, an amendment was offered in the Rules Committee to strip out this executing amendment. That was offered in the Rules Committee and rejected by the Rules Committee in an open vote. Our meetings are on C–SPAN. They are not behind closed doors. Everybody can watch what we do.

Then yesterday we came on the floor, and that rule was offered on this floor and there was a full debate. I know; I was here for it. I managed that rule as well. After that full debate, this House voted, and voted by a clear majority to adopt the rule.

So we went through a democratic process. We went through an open and clear process, both to consider that particular issue and consider the rule itself, and the House acted its will.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Give me a break. To insinuate that this is somehow all on the level or an open process, I take exception to that characterization.

The amendment that the distinguished minority whip was referring to was put into the rule. It was a self-executing amendment so that the majority here did not have an opportunity here to vote up or down on it on its own merits. Instead, they were forced to vote up or down on a rule that made in order a whole bunch of amendments on a variety of issues where they could vote up or down on, but not on this. So to defend this process, a process that is indefensible, is getting a little tired.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule for a number of reasons: because it doesn't make a proper AUMF in order, because it fails to make in order an amendment I cosponsored along with Representatives DENT, SMITH, and several others.

The bill contains language adopted by the Committee on Armed Services at 1 in the morning the other day with no warning that would effectively overturn President Obama's executive order protecting LGBT workers for companies with private contracts. In other words, private contractors using our Federal tax dollars in any area—not just in the defense area, by the way—would be allowed to fire someone just because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. This is unacceptable, it is cruel, and it is totally unnecessary.

Now, the distinguished gentleman said that the language contains nothing referring to gay or lesbian people; it simply protects religious liberty. It says that private contractors, in the exercise of their religious liberty, may discriminate. It disallows the President's executive order, and so the effect is that private contractors may discriminate on the basis of sexual identity or gender if that is their religious belief.

No one has said it for years on this floor, but they used to, that it is okay to say: My religious belief says I shouldn't hire a Black person or a Jewish person.

We don't think that is acceptable, and we don't call that religious liberty. But we now call religious liberty the ability of a private contractor to fire someone or refuse to hire them just because they are gay or lesbian. That is cruel and unacceptable.

Why not allow the House to vote on whether or not to include this type of hateful language in the defense bill? Why not allow a vote on the Dent-Smith amendment? Must we let this bigotry and intolerance win the day?

We ought to defeat this rule. I, for one, will not vote for the entire bill if this language is included in it. We must strip this toxic, hateful measure from the NDAA, if not through an amendment, then in conference. We ought to ensure that no Federal contractor has the ability to fire someone just because of who they are or who they love and because they profess that it is their religious belief. So they cannot be allowed to impose their religious beliefs on hiring and firing other people. We must continue to fight until all Americans have the rights they deserve.

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

With regard to the amendment in question, it was considered late at night because of the fair and open process we have in the committee. And it took us that long—from 10 in the morning until that time of the night—to get to it. Everybody knew it was coming because it was noticed and everybody had a copy of it well in advance. So it wasn't a surprise to anybody. Everybody knew it was coming.

Now, the particular provision itself does not contain anything close to a word like discrimination. But just so we can make the record straight, I am going to read it:

> Any branch or agency of the Federal Government shall, with respect to any religious corporation, religious association, religious educational institution, or religious society that is a recipient of or offeror for a Federal Government contract, subcontract, grant, purchase order, or cooperative agreement, provide protections and exemptions consistent with section 702(a) and 703(e)(2) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and section 103(d) of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

It doesn't provide discrimination. It provides protection for rights, and, unfortunately, people want to try to twist it around to be something it simply is not.

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

Many of us on this side, including many Republicans—because a Republican actually offered the amendment to strike this provision that the gentleman referred to because they thought it was discriminatory—we think it is potential discrimination against members of the LGBT community.

But here is the deal—I get you disagree with us—but what is wrong with allowing an amendment that is germane, to debate it and vote on it? I mean, where does the Rules Committee get off saying you can't have that debate, you can't have that vote?

It is germane.

Now, we could disagree. We think it is discrimination. We ought to have that vote, and the Rules Committee denied us. This is another reason for Democrats and Republicans to vote down this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ).

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express a deep disappointment in the Rules Committee's decision to throw out three of the amendments I put forward.

By not doing those amendments, you failed to provide to those serving our country the same necessary health services that all of us get now guaranteed under ACA. You refused to take steps to protect young athletes attending United States military academies. And you neglected to provide congressional oversight on over $1 trillion worth that this country plans to invest in our nuclear deterrents.

We need to fix the current TRICARE system so that we can ensure that servicemembers are provided the same access to preventive health services as those ensured under the ACA, including gestational diabetes with no copayments, smoking cessation, et cetera.

My second amendment was simple. It directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study on the effects of concussions in contact sports, including hockey, football, lacrosse, and soccer at our United States service academies. We all know that we see what concussions can do to people.

The third amendment was to simply direct the Department of Defense to include a 25-year plan to look at our nuclear spending.

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

I was listening to my friend from Massachusetts talk about what he considers to be discriminatory. Well, I am going to go through the list again.

Do we consider the First Amendment to the Constitution to be discriminatory? Do we consider the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that passed this House by a voice vote to be discriminatory? Do we consider title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to be discriminatory? Do we consider the Americans with Disabilities Act to be discriminatory?

Because that and only those things are what are contained in this provision.

So we can call things discriminatory, but when you look at the actual text of it and understand what they actually are, they are protecting basic rights. And that is what we should be all about.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I appreciate the gentleman reciting the Republican talking points of the Republican leadership, but that doesn't explain why the amendment to strike this provision was not made in order.

I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule and the underlying bill.

Our armed service chiefs and secretaries have requested two results from Congress in defense: stability and predictability in the budget.

Instead of adhering to their requests, this bill actually creates a contentious budget environment next April that causes even more harm to our military.

The bill is full of contradiction. It authorizes funds for over 50,000 more troops, but no money to send them anywhere after April. It authorizes much-needed equipment, but not any money to employ it on the battlefield. It authorizes 9,800 troops in Afghanistan, just not any money to keep them there during the actual fighting season.

It sends a message to our allies that we are only 60 percent committed to our missions with them, and it sends the message to our adversaries that we are only 60 percent committed to stopping them.

It is like we are a basketball team who bought new uniforms, recruited highly skilled players, built a new facility, and didn't even have any money left to play the second half of the season. No team wins under those circumstances. It doesn't matter how many state-of-the-art weapons you have or how well-trained your troops are, you can't win if you don't show up.

Much like General Breedlove, who believes ''virtual presence means actual absence,'' I believe this is a virtual plan and will be an actual disaster.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule and ''no'' on the underlying bill.

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

With great respect to the gentlewoman, she, I am sure, was not here yesterday and was not listening when I said this: that provision she is referring to, which gives the next President the opportunity to make changes in the overseas contingency operation account, is exactly what this House did in 2008, the last time we were about to change administrations. Then-Senator Obama voted for it. Then-Senator Kerry voted for it. Then-Senator BIDEN voted for it. This is not new. This is standard when you are changing administrations. Nothing more. Nothing less.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the gentleman how many more speakers he has on his side?

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I believe I am the only speaker from my side.

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

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote against this rule. Almost 200 germane amendments, substantive amendments were not made in order.

Again, I am used to, as a Democrat, having the Republicans shut me out every chance they get; but to my Republican colleagues who were shut out on their legitimate amendments, the germane amendments, stand with us and send a signal to your leadership that this closed process is unacceptable.

My colleague, Mr. BYRNE, talks about this being an open process. We must have different definitions of openness because when almost 200 amendments are shut out—and, by the way, on top of all of that, there were really kind of unusual shenanigans in the Rules Committee about self-executing amendments so that we don't have an opportunity to even vote up or down on them—that is not an open process. That is something we should try to move away from.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am going to close as I began by saying to my colleagues to please vote against this rule because it does not make in order the opportunity for us to be able to debate the issues of war and peace when it comes to Iraq and Syria.

We have been involved in Syria and again in Iraq now for almost 2 years. By the way, we left Iraq not because President Obama wanted us to, but because the Iraqi Parliament voted us to leave. That is a little bit of history that my colleague left out.

The time to debate an AUMF, an Authorization for Use of Military Force, was before we commit our forces into harm's way. Many of us, Democrats and Republicans, pleaded with the leadership to let us have that opportunity, for us to work in a bipartisan way to see whether we could come together. And time and time and time again, we were denied that ability, that right.

Now, we are being told: Well, you know, this is not the time. We don't have enough time to do it. Maybe the Committee on Foreign Affairs should do it, but this is not the place to do it.

When is?

You have waited for over 2 years. Nothing. I will say that these excuses, they are insulting to the American people, but more importantly and more significantly, they are insulting to the men and women who are in harm's way. They do their job. They do what we have asked them to do, but yet we don't have the guts to do what we are supposed to do. Shame on all of us for allowing this to go on this long without debating these wars.

The President of the United States submitted an AUMF. I have problems with it. I think it is too broad. If you don't like it, fine. Then come up with a new idea, but doing nothing is not an option.

Read the Constitution. We have an obligation. We are not living up to it. Do what is right by the American people, by the men and women who risk their lives every day because we have put them into harm's way.

□ 1430

It is absolutely unconscionable that we can't even have the ability to debate the amendment that I offered to be able to say that we are not going to continue funding these wars unless Congress does its job. That is the least we can do, and yet the Committee on Rules said no. It is germane, it is in order, there is no problem, but because some majority in the Committee on Rules says, ''No, we are not going to do it,'' everybody is denied that right? It is a bipartisan amendment. This is not just a Democratic concern. There are a lot of Republicans who share my views on this as well.

Let's do our job. Stop being so chicken when it comes to debating issues of war and peace. This is the time when we ought to come together and do the right thing. Vote ''no'' on this closed rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BYRNE. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand all 1,271 pages of the underlying bill, and it is filled with the things that we need to do to defend the American people. As interesting as the debate we have just had has been, think of how much of it had nothing to do with defending the American people, which is what we are supposed to be here about, which is the single most important thing that we do.

My colleague talked about guts. The guts I care about are the guts of the fighting men and women of the United States. We have a solemn obligation to them to pass this bill, to make sure that we are doing everything to supply them, to train them, to make sure that they are ready, to make sure we have reformed the Pentagon so that the Pentagon is doing its job by them, so that we have a policy that will make sure that we are defending the American people. That is what this law is all about.

The rule itself makes in order, between yesterday and today, 181 amendments. That is on top of over 200 amendments that were considered as part of this bill. This has been a completely open and transparent process and will continue to be as we consider it over the next several hours.

Mr. Speaker, I again urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 735 and the underlying bill.

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

The previous question was ordered.

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.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the resolution will be followed by 5-minute votes on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 736 and adoption of House Resolution 736, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 230, nays 175, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 200]

YEAS—230

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
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
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
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
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—175

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brat
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
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
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gohmert
Gosar
Graham
Grayson
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
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
Yoho

NOT VOTING—28

Bishop (GA)
Carson (IN)
Cohen
Edwards
Fattah
Fortenberry
Green, Al
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
King (IA)
LaMalfa
Lewis
Meeks
Moore
Pascrell
Perlmutter
Richmond
Roby
Schiff
Sessions
Sherman
Smith (TX)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Westmoreland
Young (AK)

□ 1452

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

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.

Stated for:

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 200: I intended to vote "yes" instead of "no."

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on 5/18/2016. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

"Yes" on rollcall No. 200.

Stated against:

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 200.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 200.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, today, May 18, 2016, I was unable to vote on H. Res. 735. Had I been present, I would have voted:

"Nay"—Rollcall No. 200—H.R. 735—Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4909—National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I missed the following vote:

H. Res 735—Rule Providing for consideration of H.R. 4909—National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4974, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5243, ZIKA RESPONSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 736) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5243) making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, to strengthen public health activities in response to the Zika virus, and for other purposes; and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 240, nays 182, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 201]

YEAS—240

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton

Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
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
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—182

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
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Fattah
Hartzler
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Kaptur
Lewis
Roby
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Young (AK)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1459

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.

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 241, noes 183, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 202]

AYES—241

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

NOES—183

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
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
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster

Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
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—9

Cramer
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Lewis
Roby
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1505

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 bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1335. An act to implement the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean, as adopted at Tokyo on February 24, 2012, and for other purposes.

S. 2840. An act to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds for active shooter training, and for other purposes.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 732 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 4909.

Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) kindly take the chair.

□ 1507

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, with Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, amendment No. 60 printed in part B of House Report 114–569 pursuant to House Resolution 732 offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ZINKE) had been disposed of.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in part B of House Report 114–569 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 10 by Mr. MCKINLEY of West Virginia.

Amendment No. 12 by Mr. NADLER of New York.

Amendment No. 14, as modified, by Mr. POE of Texas.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the time for any electronic vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. MCKINLEY

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MCKINLEY) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 211, noes 213, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 203]

AYES—211

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barton
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bustos
Calvert
Capps
Cárdenas
Carney
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Clyburn
Cole
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Emmer (MN)
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fitzpatrick
Fleming
Flores
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Garamendi
Gibson
Goodlatte
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harris
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hice, Jody B.
Himes
Holding
Honda
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hurt (VA)
Jackson Lee
Jenkins (WV)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
King (NY)
Kline
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lance
Larson (CT)
Latta
Levin
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McCollum
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perry
Peterson
Pingree
Pitts
Polis
Rangel
Reed
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Ros-Lehtinen
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Serrano
Sherman
Simpson
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stewart
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Upton
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walker
Walz
Watson Coleman
Webster (FL)
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—213

Adams
Amash
Barr
Bass
Beatty
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Butterfield
Byrne
Capuano
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Castor (FL)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Coffman
Cohen
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
Deutch
Doggett
Dold
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Engel
Eshoo
Fincher
Fleischmann
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Franks (AZ)
Fudge
Gallego
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Grayson
Grijalva
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings
Hensarling
Higgins
Hill
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Israel
Issa
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
Lamborn
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Lawrence
Lee
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
McClintock
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McSally
Miller (FL)
Moore
Mulvaney
Newhouse
Nugent
O'Rourke
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Peters
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reichert
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher

Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Stefanik
Stivers
Stutzman
Tiberi
Tsongas
Turner
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Wagner
Walden
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yoho
Young (IN)
Zinke

NOT VOTING—9

Barletta
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Lewis
Roby
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1512

Ms. JACKSON LEE changed her vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MR. NADLER

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 163, noes 259, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 204]

AYES—163

Adams
Amash
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Grayson
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
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
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—259

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
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
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Salmon
Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
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

NOT VOTING—11

Bass
Fattah
Foster
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Lewis
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1515

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today for rollcall 204 on agreeing to the Nadler amendment, which failed 163 to 259:

I voted ''no'' and would like the record to reflect that I would have voted ''yes.''

AMENDMENT NO. 14, AS MODIFIED, OFFERED BY MR. POE OF TEXAS

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment, as modified, offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 243, noes 180, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 205]

AYES—243

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger

Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
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

NOES—180

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
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)
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Labrador
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stewart
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—10

Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Hudson
Johnson, Sam
Lewis
Roby
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Waters, Maxine

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1518

So the amendment, as modified, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. There being no further amendments, pursuant to House Resolution 732, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia) having assumed the chair, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 4909.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 735 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 4909.

Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) kindly resume the chair.

□ 1521

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, with Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, amendment No. 14 printed in part B of House Report 114–569 pursuant to House Resolution 732 offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) had been disposed of.

Pursuant to House Resolution 735, no further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in House Report 114–571 and amendments en bloc described in section 3 of House Resolution 735.

Each further amendment printed in the report shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

It shall be in order at any time for the chair of the Committee on Armed Services or his designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of amendments printed in the report not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services or their designees, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BUCK

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title III, add the following new section:

SEC. 3___. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY USE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

(a) COST COMPETITIVENESS REQUIREMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Defense shall not purchase alternative energy unless such energy is equivalent to conventional energy in terms of cost and capabilities.

(2) COST CALCULATION.—The cost of each energy source described in paragraph (1) shall be calculated on a pre-tax basis in terms of life-cycle cost. Such calculation shall take into account—

(A) all associated Federal grants, subsidies and tax incentives applied from the point of production to consumption;

(B) fixed and variable operations and maintenance costs; and

(C) in the case of fuel, fully burdened costs, including all associated transportation and security from the point of purchase to delivery to the end user.

(b) PROHIBITION ON RENEWABLE ENERGY MANDATES.—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Defense shall be used to carry out any provision of law that requires the Department of Defense—

(1) to consume renewable energy, unless such energy meets the requirements of subsection (a); or

(2) to reduce the overall amount of energy consumed by the Department.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak about this amendment to the 2017 NDAA.

Since taking office in 2009, President Obama's administration has forced its green energy agenda on the American people despite the devastating costs.

For our military, this means a mandate to purchase renewable energy and to incorporate climate change into almost every aspect of training, regardless of cost or efficiency. As you might imagine, these mandates result in some absurd wastes of money. Every cent spent by the Department of Defense on the incorporation of the administration's climate change agenda is a cent lost for the defense of the American people.

The U.S. military should be focused on defending American citizens, not serving as a playground for the green energy movement. Moreover, spending the American people's tax dollars on crony capitalism is despicable. Renewable energy should be free to compete in the energy marketplace. American families shouldn't be asked to subsidize costly, inefficient, and uncompetitive green energy with their hard-earned tax dollars.

My amendment ends this wasteful and dangerous practice; it prohibits renewable energy mandates placed on the Department of Defense; and ensures that every unit of energy our military purchases is the most cost-effective option available.

I ask for support on this amendment.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK.)

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Chair, I stand today opposed to this amendment, as the representative of Fort Drum, an Army post that is 100 percent energy-independent and self-sustainable, relying solely on biomass energy.

Unfortunately, this amendment would impede military facilities, like Drum, from continuing to pursue energy solutions that enhance national security, training capabilities, and operational flexibility.

Fort Drum and the north country serve as models for operating government facilities more efficiently, where ReEnergy, our alternative partner, positively affects the Army and has created 300-plus jobs throughout our community.

Providing our military with resilient energy ensures our servicemembers remain able to respond to any threats at any time. DOD's use of alternative energy strengthens their ability to conduct combative operations, humanitarian response, and protects our national security.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment which would have a detrimental effect on alternative energy technologies that make our troops safer, increases combat effectiveness, and severely undercuts programs like those at Fort Drum.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chairman, I am also opposed to this amendment.

The DOD's employment of alternative energy is not about hugging trees; it is about improving our mission capabilities and saving lives.

The military's investments in alternative energy technologies not only make our troops safer and increase combat effectiveness, but they also reap government energy savings. Renewable energy systems reduce our reliance on foreign oil and have saved lives by cutting down on refueling trips in the battlefields.

Around 3,000 American soldiers were killed or wounded in Afghanistan while protecting fuel convoys. The military is already adopting cutting-edge renewable energy technologies, like transportable solar panels and backpacks used by marines to generate electricity.

Last August, I was at Naval Base Coronado when the Navy signed the largest renewable energy purchase by the Federal Government in history. The project will provide 210 megawatts of energy at an estimated savings of $90 million over the length of the contract.

Since 2009, the department estimates that they have saved over $1 billion through renewable energy projects on installations.

As we consider how to allocate the limited resources we have to support our servicemembers and keep Americans safe, it is counterproductive at best to prohibit the military from using funds on cost-saving alternative sources of energy and redirecting it toward mission priorities. A 21st century military with the capability to counter new and dynamic threats cannot be powered by the energy of yesterday.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this amendment.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposition.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the gentleman's support of this amendment and not opposition to this amendment. This amendment simply says that the military must determine the most cost-effective method. It does not ban renewables at all.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON.)

Mr. GIBSON. I thank the ranking member and appreciate his leadership.

Mr. Chair, I am sure that the gentleman from Colorado has the best intentions. And, with respect, I ask him to withdraw the amendment because it is very problematic, as it is currently worded, prohibiting the reduction of energy consumption. I mean, this is important not only in terms of savings itself but, quite candidly, for saving lives.

After four combat tours in Iraq, we found any way possible to reduce the amount of convoys to go forward into our most forward positions and outposts because we knew every time that we were on the road, we could be at risk; we could lose lives.

I appreciate the effort to save money. And I think that if the gentleman withdraws the amendment and works with the committee, I am sure that we can find a way to move forward on that score.

But, as Ms. STEFANIK mentioned, her post at Fort Drum really is reliant on—or is certainly benefiting from this biomass endeavor that is right there at Fort Drum.

So I want to thank Mr. SMITH for yielding me the time, and I certainly respect to the gentleman who offered the amendment.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ).

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Chairman, I join my colleagues, national security experts, military leaders, and America's energy producers, and rise in strong opposition to this amendment.

The Department of Defense's use of alternative energy as accelerated in recent years and strengthened the military's ability to conduct combat operations, humanitarian response, and homeland defense.

□ 1530

In short, it has improved the readiness of the Armed Forces to protect freedom overseas. DOD is the largest consumer of energy in the world, 117 million barrels of oil. Every 25 cent increase in a gallon of gas costs $1 billion to the American taxpayers and $1 billion less to the troops.

DOD's fuel costs from 2005 to 2011 were so volatile, the costs went from to $4.5 billion to $17.3 billion, even though we reduced our usage by 4 percent. An example of this is the U.S. Pacific Fleet in 2012 faced a $200 million budget

gap that had to be filled by taking money from elsewhere because of rising fuel costs.

This willingness to not look at all American homegrown energy and security is simply wrongheaded. And the idea that it costs more to do this—it costs $83 billion more to protect shipping oil coming from overseas.

I ask my colleagues to resist this amendment.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of the time.

I agree with my colleagues, three of whom have served in the military and understand the need for this.

This is an investment. This is an investment in alternatives. If we are tied to oil, tied to fossil fuels, and have no alternative—right now they are cheap, but then they go up in costs. And they are also far more difficult to get into the field, as Mr. GIBSON pointed out. This is an investment to give us the alternatives that we need.

Nothing is more important to the success of a military—past the people who serve—than the ability to get the fuel they need, whatever form it comes in. This is an investment in developing much-needed alternatives.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Chairman, the fact that this amendment requires the military to choose the most cost-effective energy source allows the military to spend its money on those priorities, rather than on energy.

I would ask my colleagues to support this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado will be postponed.

The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of its secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

The Committee resumed its sitting.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. FLEMING

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title III, add the following new section:

SEC. 3____. PROHIBITION ON CARRYING OUT CERTAIN AUTHORITIES RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Defense may be obligated or expended to carry out the provisions described in subsection (b).

(b) PROVISIONS.—The provisions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6(b)(iii), and 6(c) of Executive Order 13653 (78 Fed. Reg. 66817, relating to preparing the United States for the impacts of climate change).

(2) Sections 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15(b) of Executive Order 13693 (80 Fed. Reg. 15869, relating to planning for Federal sustainability in the next decade).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, my amendment prevents scarce dollars from being wasted to fund two of President Obama's executive orders regarding climate change and green energy. These are dollars that should go to the readiness of our Armed Forces.

A similar amendment has already been adopted by voice vote for the past 2 years during House floor consideration of the Defense appropriations bills.

My amendment is supported by 28 outside organizations, including the Competitive Enterprise Institute, Americans for Prosperity, Council for Citizens Against Government Waste, and many others.

These executive orders require the Department of Defense to squander—squander—precious defense dollars by incorporating climate change bureaucracies into its acquisition and military operations and to waste money on green energy projects. EPA bureaucrats and other political appointees are directing our military commanders on how to run their installations and procure green weapons, which undermines ongoing acquisition reforms in the NDAA. These activities are simply not the mission of the U.S. military.

Regarding DOD's energy policy, decisions by installation commanders and DOD personnel need to be driven by requirements for actual cost-effectiveness, readiness, not arbitrary and inflexible green energy quotas and CO_2 benchmarks. My amendment does not prevent the DOD from considering renewable energy projects where it makes sense. But these decisions should not be driven by these mandates.

Take, for example, the Naval Station Norfolk, where the solar array cost the Navy $21 million but only provided 2 percent of the base's electricity. According to the Inspector General's Office, it will take 447 years for the savings to pay the cost of the project. However, solar panels usually only last about 25 years.

These mandates are diverting limited military resources to Solyndra-style boondoggles while sacrificing our military's readiness, modernization, and end strength. In a time of declining defense budgets, we need to ensure that every dollar spent goes directly to support the lethality of our Armed Forces.

Again, my amendment is similar to repeated efforts by the House to prevent national security dollars from being wasted to advance the President's onerous green energy and climate change requirements. So I ask that the House continue that opposition to this nondefense agenda by supporting my amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chairman, I oppose this amendment.

In January of this year, the Pentagon issued a directive saying: ''The Department of Defense must be able to adapt current and future operations to address the impacts of climate change in order to maintain an effective and efficient U.S. military.''

This followed a DOD report to Congress released last July that said: ''Climate change is an urgent and growing threat to our national security, contributing to increased natural disasters, refugee flows, and conflicts over basic resources such as food and water . . . and the scope, scale, and intensity of these impacts are projected to increase.''

From 2006 to 2010, Syria experienced overwhelming refugee flows that DOD characterized as a climate-related security risk creating negative effects on human security and requiring DOD involvement and resources.

In 2014, the Pentagon reported that the impacts of climate change may increase the frequency, scale, and complexity of future missions, while at the same time undermining the capacity of our domestic installation to support training activities.

The readiness of our military depends on being able to train and equip the most advanced force in the world, but the threat of rising sea levels from escalating temperatures and melting icecaps could put dozens of military installations at risk.

San Diego is home to the largest concentration of military forces in the world. With seven military installations in my district alone, rising sea levels, drought, and finding reliable energy sources all pose challenges. San Diego military installations are investing in energy security and increasing

water and energy efficiency. We should not undermine those efforts.

This amendment is an attempt by top politicians to prevent the Department of Defense, which is tasked with maintaining a strong military, keeping all Americans safe, and protecting our global interests from addressing what they call an urgent and growing threat to our own national security. But national defense is not about politics or ideology. It is about security, readiness, and continuing to field the most dynamic and effective military in the world. We cannot have that if we ignore science and the concerns of the brightest military minds in the United States of America.

I oppose this reckless amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Louisiana has 2 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Washington has 2¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, I would respond, first of all, by saying I think we all see the reports. If you are on Armed Services, you hear our generals talk about how our readiness is in dire straits, that we can't respond to the challenges around the world.

At a time like this, why would we want to pay 5 or 10 times the nominal amount for fuel? It makes no sense.

To my colleague who wants to argue climate change: fine, we can argue that. But this is not the place to debate that.

You see, my amendment allows for the Department of Defense to do whatever is best for our Armed Forces. Whether you agree with climate change or not, it doesn't matter. All we say is let's free up the DOD, our Armed Forces, and our generals to do the right thing.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES).

Mr. SARBANES. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, the Obama administration issued two critical executive orders directing Federal agencies to take responsibility for anticipating and responding to the effects of climate change.

This amendment that is being proposed would block the Department of Defense from undertaking that effort. The amendment is ill-advised. It doesn't protect and prepare the American people for the impacts of climate change, and it won't help our military operate in a new security environment created by climate change.

Climate change poses a significant security threat to the United States and the world at large. But don't take it from me. Our Nation's military leaders are saying we need to prepare for this new threat. The proponents of this amendment should listen to the military experts, not the special interest polluters that benefit from climate denial and the status quo.

As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I have been frustrated that the Republican majority has refused to hold serious hearings on the urgent problem of climate change, so Democrats on that committee went to Annapolis in my State to hold a climate change field forum.

We heard testimony from Vice Admiral Ted Carter, the Superintendent of the Naval Academy. He told us that our future military leaders are learning about the science of climate change and the national security consequences that stem from it. He testified that because the Naval Academy sits on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, they have several projects in motion to address sea level rise and the increased regularity of flooding. They are retrofitting older buildings and building new facilities that double as seawalls to protect the campus.

Vice Admiral Carter also told harrowing stories of sailing aircraft carriers in between two massive hurricanes and equipment that short-circuited in waters with surface temperatures in excess of 100 degrees.

Certainly my colleagues on the Republican side would not deny that these are consequential problems. Leaders like Admiral Carter cannot afford the luxury of ideological climate denial. He is taking the right steps to address climate change. We should support him and our other military leaders. Unfortunately, this amendment would do the opposite. For that reason, I urge its defeat.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, again, my amendment is not a debate about climate change, regardless of where you fall on that issue. All this does is free up DOD to make the vital important decisions on that, instead of handcuffing it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, actually, it precisely does handcuff them by telling them how to make their decisions, saying they can't make a decision based on their belief that needs for alternatives to fossil fuels are important. If we don't wish to handcuff them, don't offer an amendment telling them that they have to spend their money in a certain way. That is exactly what this amendment does.

Again, there are multiple reasons for making these investments in alternative energy. I will return to one that was raised by Mr. GIBSON.

Out in the field, you need multiple different sources of energy. If you can get a situation where you have properly developed solar power or thermal power and you can use that on the spot where you are at, instead of relying on trucks to bring in diesel or gasoline, you are saving lives.

This is an investment in making our military more prepared. What this amendment does is it restricts the ability of the Department of Defense to make that investment. If you don't want to restrict them, don't restrict them.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Louisiana has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, with all due respect to the ranking member, all my amendment does is holds the status quo before these two executive orders; and that is, the commanders in the field and the generals at the Pentagon can do whatever is best for the military, whether or not it has to do with saving money or spending more money on alternative forms of energy.

My amendment frees them up. It does not restrict them in any way.

I urge adoption of this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING).

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana will be postponed.

□ 1545

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. PEARCE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

After section 7004, insert the following:

SEC. 7005. RETURN OF CERTAIN LANDS AT FORT WINGATE TO THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Return of Certain Lands At Fort Wingate to The Original Inhabitants Act''.

(b) DIVISION AND TREATMENT OF LANDS OF FORMER FORT WINGATE DEPOT ACTIVITY, NEW MEXICO, TO BENEFIT THE ZUNI TRIBE AND NAVAJO NATION.—

(1) IMMEDIATE TRUST ON BEHALF OF ZUNI TRIBE; EXCEPTION.—Subject to valid existing rights and to easements reserved pursuant to subsection (c), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity depicted in dark blue on the map titled ''The Fort Wingate Depot Activity Negotiated Property Division April 2016'' (in this section referred to as the ''Map'') and transferred to the Secretary of the Interior are to be held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the Zuni Tribe as part of the Zuni Reservation, unless the Zuni Tribe otherwise elects under clause (ii) of paragraph (3)(C) to have the parcel conveyed to it in Restricted Fee Status.

(2) IMMEDIATE TRUST ON BEHALF OF THE NAVAJO NATION; EXCEPTION.—Subject to valid existing rights and to easements reserved pursuant to subsection (c), all right, title,

and interest of the United States in and to the lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity depicted in dark green on the Map and transferred to the Secretary of the Interior are to be held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the Navajo Nation as part of the Navajo Reservation, unless the Navajo Nation otherwise elects under clause (ii) of paragraph (3)(C) to have the parcel conveyed to it in Restricted Fee Status.

(3) SUBSEQUENT TRANSFER AND TRUST; RESTRICTED FEE STATUS ALTERNATIVE.—

(A) TRANSFER UPON COMPLETION OF REMEDIATION.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary of the Army, with the concurrence of the New Mexico Environment Department, notifies the Secretary of the Interior that remediation of a parcel of land of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity has been completed consistent with subsection (d), the Secretary of the Army shall transfer administrative jurisdiction over the parcel to the Secretary of the Interior.

(B) NOTIFICATION OF TRANSFER.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary of the Army transfers administrative jurisdiction over a parcel of land of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity under subparagraph (A), the Secretary of the Interior shall notify the Zuni Tribe and Navajo Nation of the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the parcel.

(C) TRUST OR RESTRICTED FEE STATUS.—

(i) TRUST.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the Secretary of the Interior shall hold each parcel of land of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity transferred under subparagraph (A) in trust—

(I) for the Zuni Tribe, in the case of land depicted in blue on the Map; or

(II) for the Navajo Nation, in the case of land depicted in green on the Map.

(ii) RESTRICTED FEE STATUS.—In lieu of having a parcel of land held in trust under clause (i), the Zuni Tribe, with respect to land depicted in blue on the Map, and the Navajo Nation, with respect to land depicted in green on the Map, may elect to have the Secretary of the Interior convey the parcel or any portion of the parcel to it in restricted fee status.

(iii) NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION.—Not later than 45 days after the date on which the Zuni Tribe or the Navajo Nation receives notice under subparagraph (B) of the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over a parcel of land of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity, the Zuni Tribe or the Navajo Nation shall notify the Secretary of the Interior of an election under clause (ii) for conveyance of the parcel or any portion of the parcel in restricted fee status.

(iv) CONVEYANCE.—As soon as practicable after receipt of a notice from the Zuni Tribe or the Navajo Nation under clause (iii), but in no case later than 6 months after receipt of the notice, the Secretary of the Interior shall convey, in restricted fee status, the parcel of land of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity covered by the notice to the Zuni Tribe or the Navajo Nation, as the case may be.

(v) RESTRICTED FEE STATUS DEFINED.—For purposes of this section only, the term ''restricted fee status'', with respect to land conveyed under clause (iv), means that the land so conveyed—

(I) shall be owned in fee by the Indian tribe to whom the land is conveyed;

(II) shall be part of the Indian tribe's Reservation and expressly made subject to the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribe;

(III) shall not be sold by the Indian tribe without the consent of Congress;

(IV) shall not be subject to taxation by a State or local government other than the government of the Indian tribe; and

(V) shall not be subject to any provision of law providing for the review or approval by the Secretary of the Interior before an Indian tribe may use the land for any purpose, directly or through agreement with another party.

(4) SURVEY AND BOUNDARY REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall—

(i) provide for the survey of lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity taken into trust for the Zuni Tribe or the Navajo Nation or conveyed in restricted fee status for the Zuni Tribe or the Navajo Nation under paragraph (1), (2), or (3); and

(ii) establish legal boundaries based on the Map as parcels are taken into trust or conveyed in restricted fee status.

(B) CONSULTATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with the Zuni Tribe and the Navajo Nation to determine their priorities regarding the order in which parcels should be surveyed and, to the greatest extent feasible, the Secretary shall follow these priorities.

(5) RELATION TO CERTAIN REGULATIONS.—Part 151 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations, shall not apply to taking lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity into trust under paragraph (1), (2), or (3).

(6) FORT WINGATE LAUNCH COMPLEX LAND STATUS.—Upon certification by the Secretary of Defense that the area generally depicted as ''Fort Wingate Launch Complex'' on the Map is no longer required for military purposes and can be transferred to the Secretary of the Interior—

(A) the areas generally depicted as ''FWLC A'' and ''FWLC B'' on the Map shall be held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the Zuni Tribe in accordance with this subsection; and

(B) the areas generally depicted as ''FWLC C'' and ''FWLC D'' on the Map shall be held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the Navajo Nation in accordance with this subsection.

(c) RETENTION OF NECESSARY EASEMENTS AND ACCESS.—

(1) TREATMENT OF EXISTING EASEMENTS, PERMIT RIGHTS, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity held in trust or conveyed in restricted fee status pursuant to subsection (b) shall be held in trust with easements, permit rights, and rights-of-way, and access associated with such easements, permit rights, and rights-of-way, of any applicable utility service provider in existence or for which an application is pending for existing facilities at the time of the conveyance or change to trust status, including the right to upgrade applicable utility services recognized and preserved, in perpetuity and without the right of revocation (except as provided in subparagraph (B)).

(B) TERMINATION.—An easement, permit right, or right-of-way recognized and preserved under subparagraph (A) shall terminate only—

(i) on the relocation of an applicable utility service referred to in subparagraph (A), but only with respect to that portion of the utility facilities that are relocated; or

(ii) with the consent of the holder of the easement, permit right, or right-of-way.

(C) ADDITIONAL EASEMENTS.—The Secretary of the Interior shall grant to a utility service provider, without consideration, such additional easements across lands held in trust or conveyed in restricted fee status pursuant to subsection (b) as the Secretary considers necessary to accommodate the relocation or reconnection of a utility service existing on the date of enactment of this section.

(2) ACCESS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE ACTIONS.—The lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity held in trust or conveyed in restricted fee status pursuant to subsection (b) shall be subject to reserved access by the United States as the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Interior determine are reasonably required to permit access to lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity for administrative and environmental response purposes. The Secretary of the Army shall provide to the governments of the Zuni Tribe and the Navajo Nation written copies of all access reservations under this subsection.

(3) SHARED ACCESS.—

(A) PARCEL 1 SHARED CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ACCESS.—In the case of the lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity depicted as Parcel 1 on the Map, the lands shall be held in trust subject to a shared easement for cultural and religious purposes only. Both the Zuni Tribe and the Navajo Nation shall have unhindered access to their respective cultural and religious sites within Parcel 1. Within 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section, the Zuni Tribe and the Navajo Nation shall exchange detailed information to document the existence of cultural and religious sites within Parcel 1 for the purpose of carrying out this subparagraph. The information shall also be provided to the Secretary of the Interior.

(B) OTHER SHARED ACCESS.—Subject to the written consent of both the Zuni Tribe and the Navajo Nation, the Secretary of the Interior may facilitate shared access to other lands held in trust or restricted fee status pursuant to subsection (b), including, but not limited to, religious and cultural sites.

(4) I–40 FRONTAGE ROAD ENTRANCE.—The access road for the Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity, which originates at the frontage road for Interstate 40 and leads to the parcel of the Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity depicted as ''administration area'' on the Map, shall be held in common by the Zuni Tribe and Navajo Nation to provide for equal access to Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity.

(5) COMPATIBILITY WITH DEFENSE ACTIVITIES.—The lands of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity held in trust or conveyed in restricted fee status pursuant to subsection (b) shall be subject to reservations by the United States as the Secretary of Defense determines are reasonably required to permit access to lands of the Fort Wingate launch complex for administrative, test operations, and launch operations purposes. The Secretary of Defense shall provide the governments of the Zuni Tribe and the Navajo Nation written copies of all reservations under this paragraph.

(d) ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as alleviating, altering, or affecting the responsibility of the United States for cleanup and remediation of Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980.

(e) PROHIBITION ON GAMING.—Any real property of the Former Fort Wingate Depot Activity and all other real property subject to this section shall not be eligible, or used, for any gaming activity carried out under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chair, in January of 1993, the BRAC Commission closed

Fort Wingate in New Mexico. Fort Wingate was destined and designated to go to two tribes, equitably divided between the two—the Navajo Nation and the Zunis.

During the past 12 years, I have been involved in negotiations back and forth between the tribes. The lands were occupied ancestrally by both tribes. There have been many long, ongoing discussions between all of the parties. We have gotten signatures in the past from different members of the Navajo government. We currently have a letter dated May 16, 2016, in which it states that it is the opinion of the Navajo Nation that the land division and the terms developed between the two tribes would provide a solution to the land division.

All we are asking is that the agreed-upon maps be distributed in accordance with the terms, signed by the speaker of the Navajo Nation and the Zunis. That is the purpose of this amendment today. It is a fairly simple distribution according to the provisions that are listed in the BRAC ruling of January 1993.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment in its current form and at this particular time.

This amendment, as it has been pointed out, directly impacts two federally recognized tribal nations: the Navajo Nation and the Zuni Pueblo Nation in New Mexico.

They have been working with the Department of Defense to resolve the disposition of this excess Federal land. The Navajo is one of the tribes that would receive the land in transfer, and it is opposed to some of the language that is still occurring in this amendment. The Pearce amendment, unfortunately, claims a provision that would require a right-of-way in perpetuity to the Navajo, and the Navajo agrees, it is my understanding, to work toward some of the land transfer.

I ask the gentleman: Are they aware that the Navajo doesn't agree in having this land transfer go in perpetuity and that it would like to work something else out?

I yield to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chair, that is a provision that I, personally, did not put into the bill. It came from the committee of jurisdiction, the Natural Resources Committee. They insisted on it because it is prevailing language under the law.

The objection in the letter from the Navajo, which I was just showing the gentlewoman previously, describes that, and the language reads that they have so far failed to acquire a new right-of-way with the U.S. Army and now have come to Congress to address their error.

What has happened is that the right-of-way has yielded, and the language here was language that has previously been set up by the committee in order to address this.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Chair, there is some disagreement as to how this language should be structured. I don't think we should be pushing through something that the Navajo Nation now finds controversial but that wasn't controversial when working with the Department of Defense and making sure that they had the right-of-way and access to the land.

It is a sovereign nation. There are only 10 minutes of debate. There seems to be a little bit of uncertainty as to where the Navajo Nation is coming down on the particular language that the gentleman has. I do not fault the gentleman for bringing the language forward, as Chairman BISHOP has changed from what the original conversation had been between the sovereign nation and the Department of Defense by putting the perpetuity in it.

I believe we should respect the right of sovereignty of the tribe, and I believe at this time we should defeat the amendment. I would like to work with the gentleman to come up with language that is acceptable both for the Department of Defense and the two tribal nations. They were so very close. I would like to make that happen.

Mr. PEARCE. Again, addressing the gentlewoman, those are the subjects that Mr. LUJÁN and I have agreed that we would work on in conference. I think that we are more than willing to accommodate, but to stall this out now—this is the last vehicle this year. Literally, we are out of time. I would gladly accept the gentlewoman's help in the conference committee, and I want to resolve this. Again, I have been working on it for 12 years. We go and we get the signatures. It has been very arduous on the parts of all, and I understand the difficulty when you have aboriginal lands.

Again, when I look at the language, it is language that was previously established in the Ho-Chunk Nation distribution. The language literally is set in precedent, and the committee explains to us there is not much option there; but I am more than willing to work on the issue with the gentlewoman.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PEARCE. I yield to the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I look forward to working with the gentleman. I am sure we can come up with an accomodation that will make everyone satisfied.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chair, reclaiming my time, what we are trying to do is put into the hands of two Indian nations land that has been designated for them since 1993. I think that all parties just want it to be done in the right fashion. We are so close at this point that I would really appreciate the fact that we put it in this bill, that we include it, and move it into the conference. I am certain that with the Senator's input, they will be listening to the same concerns as the gentlewoman is listening to.

Again, I appreciate the help of Mr. YOUNG, Mr. LUJÁN—all of those parties—and both Chairman THORNBERRY and Chairman BISHOP.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chair, in closing, again, I just appreciate the consideration by the gentlewoman.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 1 consisting of amendment Nos. 4, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 26, 29, 30, and 31 printed in House Report No. 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. SCHWEIKERT OF ARIZONA

Page 372, after line 8, insert the following:

SEC. 1014. UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS TRAINING MISSIONS.

The Secretary of Defense shall coordinate unmanned aerial systems training missions along the southern border of the United States in order to support the Department of Homeland Security's counter-narcotic trafficking efforts.

AMENDMENT NO. 13 OFFERED BY MRS. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA

In section 522, page 120, strike lines 9 through 19, and insert the following:

Section 701(i) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(3) In the event that two members of the armed forces who are married to each other adopt a child in a qualifying child adoption, the two members shall be allowed a total of at least 36 days of leave under this subsection, to be shared between the two members. The Secretary concerned shall permit the transfer of such leave between the two members to accommodate individual family circumstances.''.

In section 529, page 130, strike lines 9 through 20.

AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MR. COSTELLO OF PENNSYLVANIA

At the end of subtitle H of title V, add the following new section:

SEC. 5___. REPORT ON EXTENDING PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENT LOANS FOR ACTIVE DUTY BORROWERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report detailing the information, assistance, and efforts to support and inform

active duty members of the Armed Forces with respect to the rights and resources available under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.) regarding student loans. The report shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A description of the coordination and information sharing between the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Education regarding the eligibility of members, and requests by members, to apply the interest rate limitation under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act with respect to existing Federal and private student loans.

(2) The number of such members with student loans who elect to have the maximum interest rates set in accordance with such Act.

(3) The number of such members whose student loans have an interest rate that exceeds such maximum rate.

(4) Methods by which the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Education can automate the process by which members with student loans elect to have the maximum interest rates set in accordance with such Act.

(5) A discussion of the effectiveness of such Act in providing protection to members of the Armed Forces with respect to student loans.

(b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means the follow:

(1) The congressional defense committees.

(2) The Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA

Page 173, after line 2, insert the following:

SEC. 599A. EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN REIMBURSEMENTS OF MEDICAL EXPENSES AND OTHER PAYMENTS FROM DETERMINATION OF ANNUAL INCOME WITH RESPECT TO PENSIONS FOR VETERANS AND SURVIVING SPOUSES AND CHILDREN OF VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1503(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (6) through (12) as paragraphs (7) through (13), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph (6):

''(6) payments regarding reimbursements of any kind (including insurance settlement payments) for medical expenses resulting from any accident, theft, loss, or casualty loss (as defined by the Secretary), but the amount excluded under this clause shall not exceed the costs of medical care provided to the victim of the accident, theft, loss, or casualty loss.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 17 OFFERED BY MR. LARSON OF CONNECTICUT

At the end of subtitle C of title VII, add the following new section:

SEC. 7 ___. APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS.

(a) RATES OF REIMBURSEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In furnishing applied behavior analysis under the TRICARE program to individuals described in paragraph (2) during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, and ending on December 31, 2018, the Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the reimbursement rates for providers of applied behavior analysis are not less than the rates that were in effect on March 31, 2016.

(2) INDIVIDUALS DESCRIBED.—Individuals described in this paragraph are individuals who are covered beneficiaries (as defined in section 1072 of title 10, United States Code) by reason of being a member or former member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps, including the reserve components thereof, or a dependent of such a member or former member.

(b) ANALYSIS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Upon the completion of the Department of Defense Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs shall conduct an analysis to—

(A) use data gathered during the demonstration to set future reimbursement rates for providers of applied behavior analysis under the TRICARE program; and

(B) review comparative commercial insurance claims for purposes of setting such future rates, including by—

(i) conducting an analysis of the comparative total of commercial insurance claims billed for applied behavior analysis; and

(ii) reviewing any covered beneficiary limitations on access to applied behavior analysis services at various military installations throughout the United States.

(2) SUBMISSION.—The Assistant Secretary shall submit to the congressional defense committees the analysis conducted under paragraph (1).

(c) FUNDING.—

(1) INCREASE.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D, the amount authorized to be appropriated in section 1405 for the Defense Health Program, as specified in the corresponding funding table in section 4501, for Private Sector Care is hereby increased by $32,000,000.

(2) OFFSET.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D, the amount authorized to be appropriated in section 4301 for operation and maintenance, as specified in the corresponding funding table in section 4301, for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Line 300) is hereby reduced by $32,000,000.

(d) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that amounts should be appropriated for behavioral health treatment of TRICARE beneficiaries, including pursuant to this section, in a manner to ensure the appropriate and equitable access to such treatment by all such beneficiaries.

AMENDMENT NO. 19 OFFERED BY MR. KELLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT THE ARMS TRADE TREATY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Defense may be obligated or expended to fund a Secretariat or any other international organization established to support the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, to sustain domestic prosecutions based on any charge related to the Treaty, or to implement the Treaty until the Senate approves a resolution of ratification for the Treaty and implementing legislation for the Treaty has been enacted into law.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude the Department of Defense from assisting foreign countries in bringing their laws, regulations, and practices related to export control up to United States standards.

AMENDMENT NO. 21 OFFERED BY MR. MULVANEY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Page 603, after line 6, insert the following:

SEC. 1523. CODIFICATION OF OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET CRITERIA.

The Secretary of Defense shall implement the following criteria in requests for overseas contingency operations:

(1) Geographic Area Covered – For theater of operations for non-classified war overseas contingency operations funding, the geographic areas in which combat or direct combat support operations occur are: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrhyzstan, the Horn of Africa, Persian Gulf and Gulf nations, Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Philippines, and other countries on a case-by-case basis.

(2) Permitted Inclusions in the Overseas Contingency Operation Budget

(A) Major Equipment

(i) Replacement of loses that have occurred but only for items not already programmed for replacement in the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP), but not including accelerations, which must be made in the base budget.

(ii) Replacement or repair to original capability (to upgraded capability if that is currently available) of equipment returning from theater. The replacement may be a similar end item if the original item is no longer in production. Incremental cost of non-war related upgrades, if made, should be included in the base.

(iii) Purchase of specialized, theater-specific equipment.

(iv) Funding for major equipment must be obligated within 12 months.

(B) Ground Equipment Replacement

(i) For combat losses and returning equipment that is not economical to repair, the replacement of equipment may be given to coalition partners, if consistent with approved policy.

(ii) In-theater stocks above customary equipping levels on a case-by-case basis.

(C) Equipment Modifications

(i) Operationally-required modifications to equipment used in theater or in direct support of combat operations and that is not already programmed in FYDP.

(ii) Funding for equipment modifications must be able be obligated in 12 months.

(D) Munitions

(i) Replenishment of munitions expended in combat operations in theater.

(ii) Training ammunition for theater-unique training events.

(iii) While forecasted expenditures are not permitted, a case-by-case assessment for munitions where existing stocks are insufficient to sustain theater combat operations.

(E) Aircraft Replacement

(i) Combat losses by accident that occur in the theater of operations.

(ii) Combat losses by enemy action that occur in the theater of operations.

(F) Military Construction

(i) Facilities and infrastructure in the theater of operations in direct support of combat operations. The level of construction should be the minimum to meet operational requirements.

(ii) At non-enduring locations, facilities and infrastructure for temporary use.

(iii) At enduring locations, facilities and infrastructure for temporary use.

(iv) At enduring locations, construction requirements must be tied to surge operations or major changes in operational requirements and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(G) Research and development projects for combat operations in these specific theaters that can be delivered in 12 months.

(H) Operations

(i) Direct War costs:

(I) Transport of personnel, equipment, and supplies to, from and within the theater of operations.

(II) Deployment-specific training and preparation for unites and personnel (military and civilian) to assume their directed missions as defined in the orders for deployment into the theater of operations.

(ii) Within the theater, the incremental costs above the funding programmed in the base budget to:

(I) Support commanders in the conduct of their directed missions (to include Emergency Response Programs).

(II) Build and maintain temporary facilities.

(III) Provide food, fuel, supplies, contracted services and other support.

(IV) Cover the operational costs of coalition partners supporting US military missions, as mutually agreed.

(iii) Indirect war costs incurred outside the theater of operations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

(I) Health

(i) Short-term care directly related to combat.

(ii) Infrastructure that is only to be used during the current conflict.

(J) Personnel

(i) Incremental special pays and allowances for Service members and civilians deployed to a combat zone.

(ii) Incremental pay, special pays and allowances for Reserve Component personnel mobilized to support war missions.

(K) Special Operations Command

(i) Operations that meet the criteria in this guidance.

(ii) Equipment that meets the criteria in this guidance.

(L) Prepositioned Supplies and equipment for resetting in-theater stocks of supplies and equipment to pre-war levels.

(M) Security force funding to train, equip, and sustain Iraqi and Afghan military and police forces.

(N) Fuel

(i) War fuel costs and funding to ensure that logistical support to combat operations is not degraded due to cash losses in the Department of Defense's baseline fuel program.

(ii) Enough of any base fuel shortfall attributable to fuel price increases to maintain sufficient on-hand cash for the Defense Working Capital Funds to cover seven days disbursements.

(3) Excluded items from Overseas Contingency Funding that must be funded from the base budget

(A) Training vehicles, aircraft, ammunition, and simulators, but not training base stocks of specialized, theater-specific equipment that is required to support combat operations in the theater of operations, and support to deployment-specific training described above.

(B) Acceleration of equipment service life extension programs already in the Future Years Defense Plan.

(C) Base Realignment and Closure projects.

(D) Family support initiatives

(i) Construction of childcare facilities.

(ii) Funding for private-public partisanships to expand military families' access to childcare.

(iii) Support for service members' spouses professional development.

(E) Programs to maintain industrial base capacity including ''war-stoppers.''

(F) Personnel

(i) Recruiting and retention bonuses to maintain end-strength.

(ii) Basic Pay and the Basic allowances for Housing and Subsistence for permanently authorized end strength.

(iii) Individual augmentees on a case-by-case basis.

(G) Support for the personnel, operations, or the construction or maintenance of facilities, at U.S. Offices of Security Cooperation in theater.

(H) Costs for reconfiguring prepositioned supplies and equipment or for maintaining them.

(4) Special Situations – Items proposed for increases in reprogrammings or as payback for prior reprogrammings must meet the criteria above.

AMENDMENT NO. 22 OFFERED BY MR. HIMES OF CONNECTICUT

At the end of subtitle C of title XVI, add the following:

SEC. 16__. REPORT ON POLICIES FOR RESPONDING TO MALICIOUS CYBER ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AGAINST THE UNITED STATES OR UNITED STATES PERSONS BY FOREIGN STATES OR NON-STATE ACTORS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on policies, doctrine, procedures, and authorities governing Department of Defense activities in response to malicious cyber activities carried out against the United States or United States persons by foreign states or non-state actors.

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

(1) Specific citations to appropriate associated Executive branch and agency directives, guidance, instructions, and other authoritative policy documents.

(2) Descriptions of relevant authorities, rules of engagement, command and control structures, and response plans.

AMENDMENT NO. 24 OFFERED BY MS. TSONGAS OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the end of subtitle C of title I, add the following new section:

SEC. 1___. REPORT ON P–8 POSEIDON AIRCRAFT.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than October 1, 2017, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report regarding future capabilities for the P–8 Poseidon aircraft.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include, with respect to the P–8 Poseidon aircraft, the following:

(1) A review of possible upgrades by the Navy to the sensors onboard the aircraft, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance sensors currently being fielded on Air Force platforms.

(2) An assessment of the ability of the Navy to use long-range multispectral imaging systems onboard the aircraft.

AMENDMENT NO. 26 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER OF OREGON

At the end of subtitle D of title I, add the following new section:

SEC. 1___. REPORT ON COST OF B–21 AIRCRAFT.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the cost of the B–21 aircraft. The report shall include an estimate of the total cost of research, production, and maintenance for the aircraft expressed in constant base-year dollars and in current dollars.

AMENDMENT NO. 29 OFFERED BY MR. KILDEE OF MICHIGAN

At the end of subtitle B of title III, insert the following:

SEC. ___. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the Sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should work with State and local health officials to prevent human exposure to perfluorinated chemicals.

AMENDMENT NO. 30 OFFERED BY MR. POLIQUIN OF MAINE

At the end of subtitle D of title III, add the following new section:

SEC. 3___. REPORT ON AVERAGE TRAVEL COSTS OF MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report on the travel expenses of members of reserve components associated with performing active duty service, active service, full-time National Guard duty, active Guard and Reserve duty, and inactive-duty training, as such terms are defined in section 101(d) of title 10, United States Code. Such report shall include the average annual cost for all travel expenses for a member of a reserve component.

AMENDMENT NO. 31 OFFERED BY MR. FARENTHOLD OF TEXAS

At the end of title III, add the following new section:

SEC. 3___. ACCESS TO WIRELESS HIGH-SPEED INTERNET AND NETWORK CONNECTIONS FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES DEPLOYED OVERSEAS.

Consistent with section 2492a of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of Defense is encouraged to enter into contracts with third-party vendors in order to provide members of the Armed Forces who are deployed overseas at any United States military facility, at which wireless high-speed Internet and network connections are otherwise available, with access to such Internet and network connections without charge.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD).

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment, which is included in here, that encourages the Department of Defense to provide free Wi-Fi access of the Internet to military personnel who are deployed overseas.

Right now our military personnel, in some instances, are required to pay twice as much as a typical American family would pay for access to the Internet. Access to the Internet is a way for our troops to keep their morale high by staying in touch with their families back home by using technology like FaceTime and Skype.

This amendment does not require any expenditure by the military. It merely instructs the military to work towards this goal: to make it available where possible and to indicate that it should be a priority. It doesn't cost anything, but it is a great morale booster, and it should be great for our troops.

I urge my colleagues to support this.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield myself 3 minutes.

I speak about the broader bill. Unfortunately, something happened in the Rules Committee yesterday that has been happening far too often in recent years. This was much debated during the debate over the rule, but I didn't have a chance to come and talk about it.

There was an amendment added in committee that overturns an executive

order by the President. The executive order basically says: if you discriminate against the LGBT community, you will not be allowed to get government contracts.

That executive order also had an exception for religious organizations. The amendment that was added in committee—and it is much debated as to what it did or didn't do, but my reading of it is that it dramatically expands that exception and basically increases the ability of defense firms and subcontractors to discriminate against the LGBT community.

The larger problem here is: Why couldn't we vote on it?

It puts our Members in the position of voting for a defense bill that has what we believe to be discriminatory language in it without our even having had the opportunity to have voted to remove that language.

This is something that has happened for the last 3 or 4 years on an increasing basis. It used to be that this was an open rule. With the defense bill, you basically offered an amendment; you had a debate; and you had a chance. Then we started to shrink them down a little bit. Now, in the last couple of years, anything that is inconvenient for the majority to vote on or, even more distressingly, anything that they think will make it inconvenient for us to vote on the bill gets struck.

That is not the way the Rules Committee is supposed to work. They are supposed to give us the opportunity to vote on these amendments. They, again, have narrowly crafted it down to just the amendments that they like. Having this discriminatory provision within the defense bill, in addition to all of the other problems, has forced me to the point at which I am actually going to oppose the bill, which I do not want to do and did not want to do; but I hope, in the future, the Rules Committee will at least give us a chance to vote.

We had a robust debate about the substance of this particular amendment earlier. Again, it is not so much about the substance of the particular amendment. It is about the opportunity for our Members to have a vote. If we could go on record and vote against that amendment on the floor—do our best to strip it out—then at least we are on record. Here, we are simply forced to vote for a defense bill that contains discriminatory language that we do not support.

I hope, in the future, the Rules Committee will stop doing this, will let the democratic process work, will give us the opportunity to vote, accept the outcome of that vote, and move forward.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I yield myself 30 seconds.

My understanding is that the provision that the gentleman refers to is a restatement of religious liberties from the 1964 Civil Rights Act. What that tells me, if he opposes the bill based on that, is that there are Members who are looking for some excuse to vote against this bill. You can always find one. I can find one myself. I don't think that is the right thing to do, however, for the men and women who serve our Nation.

Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN).

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Chair, each month across our great country, our brave men and women in the National Guard and the Armed Forces Reserves leave their homes and report for duty. Each month they train on the ground and in the air and on the sea so that they are ready at a moment's notice to fight for our freedom. Our guardsmen and reservists often travel long distances to their training sites, and their travel costs often exceed their monthly training pay, which forces them to buy gas, meals, and sometimes hotel rooms out of pocket.

Right now, today, under existing law, if you work for the IRS or the EPA or some other Federal Government agency, you are granted a tax deduction for out-of-pocket travel expenses if you travel beyond 50 miles of your home; but if you are a guardsman or a woman or if you are in the Reserves, you need to travel more than 100 miles to receive the same benefits.

Mr. Chair, this is not fair, and this is not right. I urge everybody to endorse and support my amendment No. 300.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) will control the time of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH).

There was no objection.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Chair, for many years, the Air Force used perfluorinated chemicals in its compound for firefighting foam, but in the past few years, very high levels of these PFCs have been discovered in the fish near the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Michigan, which is in my district. Tests have revealed the presence of PFCs as well in the groundwater that people who live near the former Air Force base depend upon.

The CDC and the EPA have both said that PFCs can be potentially harmful to people's health, though there is still not clear guidance as to what is a safe level of exposure, especially in the long term; although, there is great concern on this question.

I have asked the Air Force as well as the State of Michigan to provide bottled water to those identified individuals who are living near Wurtsmith whose water may be contaminated by PFCs at least until more research is done on the safety of their water. My amendment would require the Department of Defense to do whatever it can to prevent further exposure to PFCs.

□ 1600

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of the amendment to renew the 1-year ban on the Obama administration or any other administration from using any Department of Defense funds to implement the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty, a treaty which, by the way, has never been ratified by our Senate.

Specifically, the amendment bans the use of Department of Defense funds for the ATT Secretariat, a body that was created for effectively implementing the ATT according to the treaty's supporters.

Last August, ATT member nations organized the Conference of States Parties to the ATT, a conference in which we did not have a vote and which decided that American taxpayers are now on the hook to pay 22 percent of the expenses of this annual meeting. This taxpayer money would go directly to the ATT Secretariat and become part of its core budget. My amendment prevents these hardworking American taxpayer dollars from flowing into the coffers of those who are working to implement the ATT.

I thank the chairman and the ranking member for including this in the en bloc amendment, and I urge all my colleagues to stand in support of our Second Amendment and of our Nation's sovereignty and vote in support of this amendment to renew the annual ban on the funding of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Chair, my amendment would exempt reimbursement for medical expenses from the Department of Veterans Affairs calculation of annual income when determining pension eligibility for veterans. This amendment is a version of H.R. 4994, the Veterans Pensions Protection Act, bipartisan legislation endorsed by the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and others.

A few years ago, a disabled veteran and a constituent of mine was struck by a vehicle while crossing the street. After receiving insurance compensation for his injuries, he lost his pension. This is because, under current law, compensation for medical expenses, including insurance settlement payments or reimbursements, are considered income by the VA.

We effectively punish our veterans when they receive these types of compensation after suffering medical emergencies like the one I just outlined. This is, quite simply, wrong. My amendment will rectify this.

I ask the House to support this amendment.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD) to discuss an additional amendment he has.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of an amendment that directs our service academies to notify the Members of Congress of acceptees at least 48 hours before publishing the acceptance or letting the acceptee know.

As most Members of this body know, we are actually the interviewing source for the service academies. Young men and women seeking to serve this country attending a service academy apply for a nomination from their Member of Congress, most often go through a very lengthy vetting process, and we develop a relationship with these young men and women.

Historically, the service academies have allowed us to call them and tell them they are accepted and congratulate them. This year, in some instances, the service academies have quit doing that, which was a longstanding practice.

I believe that it is appropriate that those who interview and work so hard to get those young men and women into our service academies should be the ones delivering the news to them rather than them reading it on a Web site or in a piece of mail.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment when it comes before the House.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES).

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank both the chairman of the committee and the ranking member for the opportunity to offer this amendment, which would be a very straightforward amendment, which simply requires the Department of Defense to report to the Congress on the policies, doctrine, procedures, and authorities, as well as the definitions associated with a cyber attack on the United States.

This is a small step in a larger very, very important effort that Chairman WESTMORELAND and I have been working on for some period of time now to try to bring some clarity to what is, today, kind of the Wild West in the cyber realm. In the kinetic realm, we understand very clearly what an act of war is. We understand our doctrine for responding as such.

In the cyber realm, we don't know exactly when a crime becomes an act of war, how to deal with an asymmetric actor versus a nation-state. It is terribly important that we begin the process, with other nations around the world, of establishing some clarity on these points. That won't help our adversaries, but it will remove uncertainty from the system in this new and very, very important realm.

Again, I thank the leadership of the House Armed Services Committee and hope this amendment will be supported.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time on this en bloc amendment.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the committee for including, en bloc, my amendment No. 59, which is a step to look at commonsense, cost-saving proposals that the United States Navy itself has offered earlier this year that could save as much as $900 million by consolidating carrier Air Force wings from 10 to 9.

In the fiscal year 2017 budget request, the Navy asked Congress to reallocate their 10th carrier wing into their 9 existing wings, which they feel would boost readiness and save money.

I understand there is reluctance to make what I believe is a strategic, cost-effective move, and that is why I offer my amendment today, directing the Secretary of Defense to offer Congress a study on this issue. As Vice Admiral Michael Shoemaker said: ''Restructuring to nine carrier air wings is the most efficient use of those operational forces to meet global requirements.''

The study will serve as an important step in realizing a more efficient, capable, cost-effective Navy. I am very encouraged that the committee was willing to include this en bloc today, and I see this as an important first step toward recognizing increased readiness as well as cost savings.

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

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on the en bloc amendment, and I appreciate the committee having accepted the amendment dealing with cost accountability for the B–21 bomber. This is a new weapon that has both conventional and nuclear weapons capability.

We are in a situation now where there is tremendous stress on our Defense Department budget with a whole range of weaponry. I think it is more important now than ever that we are able to understand exactly what we are getting into, how much this is going to cost. There is about $1.4 billion already into this. We ought to be able to know what the total commitment is being made, to be able to have appropriate decisions made by Congress.

I am deeply concerned that the Defense Department, to this point, has resisted giving an appraisal of what the total cost is going to be, somehow fearing that, if the total budget were available, that would give too much information to our adversaries about the weight, size, and range of the plane. I think not. I think the real danger here is that the American public and Congress would know what the costs are. This is not an acceptable approach as we deal with these critical questions.

It is important, Mr. Chairman, that we have full transparency about what the costs are going to be for these massive, expensive, and, in some cases, questionable weapons systems. This is not an argument for or against it. It is an argument for transparency and being able to know what we are getting into.

The worst of all possible worlds is making commitments and then finding, 5 and 10 years down the line, that we can't follow through on them or they result in cannibalizing other important priorities. I would think that this is one area that we could all agree we need to have this transparency and have this information available.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, this seems to me to be a priority going forward, given the experience we have had with cost overruns and given how many elements that this committee is trying to juggle. The demands on the committee, I think, are remarkable. It is not a job that I envy. These are hard decisions that are being made.

The Department of Defense can do a favor for themselves and for us by being fully transparent so we know what we should be budgeting for in the future and that they can be held accountable for performance.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak about one of the amendments that is in this en bloc package offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY). My understanding of that amendment is that it tries to have a clearer process by which we fund the military, and that is a goal for which I have enormous sympathy.

We clearly need to have more predictable funding for the military. That is true on behalf of our military commanders and all the troops. It is true on behalf of industry. It is true on behalf of budgeting in the government.

I personally also agree we need to do away with the artificial caps that have caused such difficulty for the military in recent years. I also believe that it would be beneficial if administrations did not play political budgetary games.

For example, in this year's budget, the President requests a very low number for Israeli missile defense, knowing full well that the Congress, on a bipartisan basis, is not going to let that go through. We are going to be more responsible. So they are counting on us to have to cut other programs so that we can do what they should have done to begin with. There are all sorts of tactics that are used in developing budgets. There has got to be a better way.

Apparently, some administration political appointees have been urging Members of the House to call the approach in this bill a gimmick. Actually, I have heard that term used a few times on the floor over the last couple of days.

Well, one question I have is: Was it a gimmick in 2008 when, under Democratic majority, this House used exactly the same approach in fully funding the base requirements for the year and then had a bridge fund that allowed the new President to evaluate deployments and the funding and to make adjustments, which President Obama took advantage of? That is what it was intended for. Now, why was it okay then, but it is a gimmick now? It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, someone would consider that a double standard.

Would Members rather that we continue to cannibalize aircraft and deny pilots the minimum amount of training they are supposed to get? Are Members content to have class A mishaps continue to go up in service after service, or is the desire to score political points so strong that Members would rather let those trends continue rather than deal with them here in this bill before us?

Mr. Chairman, my point is that I agree there has got to be a better way. But I also believe that we have a choice before us today, and that is whether we fund the training, the maintenance, the end strength, the modernization that starts to fix the problems that I have talked about or we stick with name-calling, we look for excuses to vote ''no'' and allow those problems to get worse. Lives are at stake.

So while I don't know that I agree with all the particulars of the gentleman from South Carolina's amendment, I think he raises important issues. Therefore, I urge Members to support that amendment as part of this en bloc package and resolve to try to put partisanship and excuses aside and think about the men and women who serve and what is in their best interest.

I urge adoption of the en bloc amendments.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

□ 1615

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MS. LEE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in House Report 114–571.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. REPEAL OF AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) is hereby repealed.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The repeal contained in subsection (a)—

(1) takes effect on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) applies with respect to each operation or other action that is being carried out pursuant to the Authorization for Use of Military Force initiated before such effective date.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, first let me just thank the Committee on Rules Chairman SESSIONS and Ranking Member SLAUGHTER and all of the members of the committee for making this amendment in order.

My amendment is very straightforward. It would, after 90 days of enactment of this act, repeal the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force which Congress passed into law September 14, 2001. When we repeal this 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, Congress would finally be forced to debate and vote on a specific AUMF to address the ISIL threat.

Now, I voted against the 2001 authorization because I believed it opened the door for any President to wage endless war without a congressional debate or a vote, and I believe, quite frankly, that history has borne that out.

I include in the RECORD a new report from the Congressional Research Service.

CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE,
May 11, 2016.

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Presidential References to the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force in Publicly Available Executive Actions and Reports to Congress.

From: Matthew Weed, Specialist in Foreign Policy Legislation.

This memorandum was prepared to enable distribution to more than one congressional office.

This memorandum sets out information and analysis concerning presidential references in official notifications and records to the Authorization for Use of Military Force (2001 AUMF; Public Law 107–40; 50 U.S.C. §1541 note), enacted in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, to justify and undertake military and other action. It contains very brief discussions of the relevant provisions of the 2001 AUMF, and the uses of U.S. armed forces connected with 2001 AUMF authority, as well as excerpted language and other information from the notifications.

USE OF MILITARY FORCE AUTHORIZATION LANGUAGE IN THE 2001 AUMF

Section 2(a) of the 2001 AUMF authorizes the use of force in response to the September 11 attacks:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

* * *

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

The 2001 AUMF does not include a specified congressional reporting requirement, but states that the authorization is not intended to supersede any requirement of the War Powers Resolution, which does require congressional reporting for initial and continuing deployments of U.S. armed forces into imminent or ongoing hostilities.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH POLICY CONCERNING UTILIZATION OF 2001 AUMF AUTHORIZATION

Prior to the U.S. military campaign against the Islamic State that began in summer 2014, executive branch officials made statements that included certain interpretations concerning the 2001 AUMF, including the following interpretations:

The 2001 AUMF is primarily an authorization to enter into and prosecute an armed conflict against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The 2001 AUMF authorizes the President to use military force against Al Qaeda and the Taliban outside Afghanistan, but such uses of force must meet a higher standard of threat to the United States and must use limited, precise methods against specific individual targets rather than general military action against enemy forces.

Because the 2001 AUMF authorizes U.S. involvement in an international armed conflict, the international law of armed conflict informs the authority within the 2001 AUMF. This law permits the use of military force against forces associated with Al Qaeda and the Taliban as co-belligerents; such forces must be operating in some sort of coordination and cooperation with Al Qaeda and/or the Taliban, not just share similar goals, objectives, or ideologies.

According to the Obama Administration, this interpretation of the scope of 2001 AUMF authority fits within the overall framework of presidential power to use military force against those posing a threat to U.S. national security and U.S. interests. In situations where the 2001 AUMF or other relevant legislation does not seem to authorize a given use of military force or related activity, the executive branch will determine whether the President's Article II powers as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, as interpreted by the executive branch itself, might authorize such actions. In this way, similar U.S. military action to meet U.S. counterterrorism objectives might be interpreted to fall under different authorities, of which the 2001 AUMF is just one, albeit important, example.

RECORDS OF EXECUTIVE ACTIONS AND PRESIDENTIAL REPORTING TO CONGRESS REFERENCING THE 2001 AUMF

CRS has located 37 relevant occurrences of an official record, disclosed publicly, of presidential reference to the 2001 AUMF in connection with initiating or continuing wilitary or related action (including nonlethal military activities such as detentions and military trials). Of the 37 occurrences, 18 were made during the Bush Administration, and 19 have been made during the Obama Administration. The notifications reference both statutory and constitutional authority for the President to take such action, as well as statutory provisions requiring congressional notification, including reference to provisions in the 2001 AUMF. As will be discussed in detail below, the manner in which Presidents have presented information on military deployments and actions in these notifications, the constitutional and statutory authority for such actions, and the reporting requirements for such actions, have changed over time.

NOTIFICATIONS OF DEPLOYING U.S. ARMED FORCES AND/OR USING MILITARY FORCE INVOLVING REFERENCE TO THE 2001 AUMF

Both President Bush and President Obama have provided formal notifications of military deployments and/or action to Congress at various times since enactment of the 2001 AUMF, referring to that authorization to various degrees and ends. While presidential reports to Congress concerning the use of military force and other activities undertaken by the U.S. armed forces initially provided a fairly simple and straightforward discussion of actions and related authorities, over time these reports became increasingly detailed, complicated, and difficult to decipher with regard to determining applicable presidential authority. At all times, both Presidents have relied primarily on their constitutional Article II powers as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. In many instances, reference to 2001 AUMF authority has been supplementary and indirect; in only a few cases has a President relied directly on 2001 AUMF authority as justification for a military operation, deployment, or other action. This is not to say that 2001 AUMF authority does not serve as a sole or primary legal basis for military action in any given situation reported in a notification, only that the notification language is susceptible to more than one interpretation when it concerns presidential authority to use to military force or undertake other military action.

Below are provided several tables of information concerning presidential notifications and records of other executive action referencing the 2001 AUMF. Each table provides:

a date of each notification or record;

the relevant military activity, location, and/or purpose of such activities, as available;

the constitutional and statutory authority provided in the notification or record as provided; and

the reference to applicable reporting requirements precipitating each respective notification or record.

For Tables 1–8, each set out in its own section with accompanying analysis, each table includes a group of notifications that are similar in composition and content. Each subsequent table and section, therefore, denotes a change in composition of the notifications referencing the 2001 AUMF in some way.

Initial Reporting in the Aftermath of the September 11, 2001 Attacks

President Bush's reports to Congress concerning military deployments in the weeks following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks were relatively concise, focusing on the need to address the terrorist threat in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, and the deployments and actions taken in response to such threat. The first notification on September 24, 2001 references deployments to ''a number of foreign nations'' in the ''Central and Pacific Command areas of operations.'' Major military operations in Afghanistan had not yet commenced. The second notification on October 9, 2001 includes similar information but also notifies Congress of the commencement of combat against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. In these two notifications, President Bush stated that he had taken the actions described pursuant to his constitutional authority as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. In both notifications, he referred to the 2001 AUMF as evidencing the continuing support of Congress, but did not specifically state he had taken such action pursuant to 2001 AUMF authority. The President stated in these notifications that he was reporting on these actions to Congress consistent with both the War Powers Resolution and the 2001 AUMF. It is possible to conclude that reporting action consistent with the 2001 AUMF would mean that the action was considered taken pursuant to 2001 AUMF authority.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I want to encourage all my colleagues to read this report. It shows that this authorization has, in fact, become that blank check for war. In the more than 14 years since its passage, it has been used 37 times in 14 countries to wage war with little or no congressional oversight. It has been used 18 times by President Bush and 19 times by President Obama.

This report only looks at unclassified incidents. How many other times has it been used without the knowledge of Congress or the American people? Not only has this authorization been used to justify military action thousands of miles away, it has also been used much closer to home to allow warrantless surveillance and wiretaps, indefinite detention practices at GTMO, and targeted killing by drones, including of American citizens. It has also been cited as the authority for the nearly 2-year-long war against ISIL, a war that Congress has never debated, voted on, or specifically authorized.

Mr. Chairman, our brave servicemen and -women continue to be deployed around the world. Whether they are combat troops or not, they are in combat zones. They are risking their lives. Don't we at least owe them our representation in terms of our job to debate and vote on the cost and consequences of the war? I think we owe them that.

If we all agree that ISIL must be degraded and dismantled, then why is Congress missing in action? Every day more bombs fall. We have already lost three brave servicemen. We have already spent more than $9.6 billion, and we spend an additional $615,000 per hour.

I know that while we may not share a common position on what the shape of any new AUMF to address ISIL might look like, I know that many of us do agree that the overly broad and almost 15-year-old AUMF represents a major and very concerning deterioration of congressional oversight. That means a lack of involvement and input and voice of the American people.

Let's repeal this blank check and finally, 90 days later, debate and vote on an AUMF to address the ISIL threat.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Chair, I oppose this amendment which would unilaterally end the fight against ISIS and al Qaeda.

Mr. Chair, ISIS grew out of al Qaeda in Iraq. The President has determined that the 2001 AUMF allows the United States to target ISIS. Both the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs agree that they have full legal authority to combat ISIS, and Congress has supported that view by appropriating funds.

Many Members want to enact a new AUMF to renew the authority to fight ISIS and support our troops, but this amendment fails to do so. We must understand that a new AUMF cannot give President Obama any more authority to fight ISIS than he currently claims. It could give him less. The President asked for less in his proposal. It is clear many want an AUMF that limits the authority of this President and the next President.

The administration still does not have the broad, overarching strategy needed to defeat these radical Islamist terrorists. Once the President provides that strategy, this House can have an informed debate over a new AUMF, but this amendment would leave us with no strategy and no authority. That is irresponsible.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, let me just make one comment before yielding to my colleague from Minnesota.

First, the President has sent over an AUMF. He sent this over 15 months ago. The Speaker yet has to take this Authorization for Use of Military Force up. The President has asked for it. Why don't we do our job? We could at least either bring the one that he sent over, or we need to put our own on the floor.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California has 1¼ minutes remaining.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the gentlewoman's amendment.

I want to just say that the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is absolutely wrong when he says there would be a unilateral ending to the struggle against Daesh, or ISIL. The only way that would happen is if we do not take up a new AUMF that would authorize us to take on that battle.

What we need to do is take on our constitutional responsibility. We cannot abdicate it with this out-of-date AUMF that is only tenuously connected to many of the conflicts we see arising today. We have a responsibility under the Constitution, Article I, section 8, to debate and vote, up or down, use of force. We should do that. We should do it now. There is nothing to prevent us from passing a new one or crafting our own or passing the President's unless we abdicate that responsibility.

This allows us to criticize anything the President does and yet, at the same time, never take responsibility for

passing our own AUMF adapted for the moment that we are in. That is not right.

I support the gentlewoman's amendment.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, I will just close by saying my amendment is enacted 90 days after the signing of this law. That means we have 90 days to debate and vote upon an ISIL-specific Authorization for Use of Military Force. We need to do our job. We have a constitutional responsibility to do our job. Unfortunately, Congress is missing in action. We need to do exactly what the American people sent us to do.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, no one can contest the gentlewoman from California's sincerity on this issue. On September 14, 2001, when this House passed the Authorization for the Use of Military Force that she is talking about, 3 days after 3,000 Americans had been murdered on 9/11, the vote in this House was 420–1, and the one person who voted against this AUMF was the gentlewoman from California who offered this amendment. So her sincerity cannot be questioned.

I also, by the way, happen to agree with her that we need to update this AUMF. As a matter of fact, this House passed, twice, provisions that I had authored to update the 2001 AUMF. We passed it in 2011; we passed it in 2012. Unfortunately, the administration says: No, we are opposed to that; the one we have got is just fine. And the Senate took that position, and so it did not get passed into law.

But to say, now, to unilaterally repeal the 2001 AUMF on which the administration is relying for all its counterterrorism activities not only against al Qaeda, but against ISIS and others, to repeal it now, I believe, would be a mistake. There are still real dangers in the world from terrorists. I don't think I need to remind Members of Paris, of Brussels, of San Bernardino, and just today, of Baghdad.

The other point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is I think we all underestimate the catastrophes that have been avoided—in other words, the terrorist plots, what they wanted to do, what they tried to do—that were thwarted. Sometimes they were thwarted just because we were lucky, but a lot of times they were thwarted because of the work of the men and women in the military, the men and women in the intelligence community, the men and women in law enforcement doing a lot of hard work, sacrificing, some of them losing their lives to make sure that we did not have a repeat of the 3,000 people murdered on 9/11.

We owe them, Mr. Chairman, more than just a thank-you. We owe them whatever preparation, whatever equipment, whatever support they need to continue to battle terrorists today. That is what this bill tries to do: to make sure that we don't send people out in the Middle East to bomb terrorists on airplanes that cannot fly, that cannot be maintained, that we don't wear our pilots and our mechanics out. That is readiness. That is what we are talking about in this bill. That is what we have an obligation in this House to do for them who do so much for us.

I oppose the gentlewoman's amendment. As I say, I have tremendous respect for her views and the sincerity with which she holds them. I think it results in a more dangerous world.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle G of title X, add the following new section:

SEC. 1098. REDUCTION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) REDUCTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, but subject to subsection (b), the President, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Energy, and the Administrator for Nuclear Security, shall make such reductions in the amounts authorized to be appropriated under this Act in such manner as the President considers appropriate to achieve an aggregate reduction of 1 percent of the total amount of funds authorized to be appropriated under this Act. Such reduction shall be in addition to any other reduction of funds required by law.

(b) EXCLUSIONS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the President shall not reduce the amount of funds for the following accounts:

(1) Military personnel, reserve personnel, and National Guard personnel accounts of the Department of Defense.

(2) The Defense Health Program account.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Chair, this is a very simple amendment. When we look at our country's national security, it is important to make sure that we don't mortgage our national security because fiscal security is an important part of protecting our country.

My amendment would give authority to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense to reduce the overall amount of money authorized by this bill by 1 percent. It simply cuts defense spending by 1 percent.

As you know, we spend as much as the rest of the world, combined, on defense. We want to have a strong defense, but of course, as you know, this current authorization exceeds the levels of the Budget Control Act, even with this 1 percent reduction, which is really a compromise. It only reduces it by $5.5 billion and, in fact, continues to authorize at a level of $10 billion more than the bipartisan Budget Control Act.

In a bill in which we overfunded multiple accounts and weapons systems above the request level of the military, I think 1 percent is a very reasonable request. It is about $5.5 billion. It is certainly possible to find these cuts. In fact, they are very likely to occur because, again, if we conform to the Budget Control Act, there would actually be a larger cut than even this humble one that we are offering before you today.

As an example, the bill authorizes $9.5 billion in nuclear weapons activities alone. We could pass my amendment. Even if we allocated the entire cuts to nuclear weapons, we would still be spending $4 billion on nuclear weapons. I think the estimate is we would then have enough to destroy the entire world and wipe out life as we know it three times instead of six times. How much is enough?

There are plenty of other programs that we could look at. Of course, it should not be Congress making those decisions in a political manner; it should be the military and the executive. I imagine they would start with accounts that Congress has chosen to overfund.

At some point, we have to stand up for fiscal security and realize that mortgaging our future and our children's future to Saudi Arabia and China does not enhance our national security; it detracts from it.

My amendment is a small first step toward taking a stand against a military budget that we simply cannot afford. We need to reduce our budget deficit. This is a very small and simple way to start. We can make these strategic cuts and, of course, still fully protect our national security and even enhance it.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on my amendment and take this modest step toward fiscal responsibility as a compromise between the Budget Control Act levels and the committee authorization levels.

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

□ 1630

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 2 minutes.

This amendment cuts defense below the President's request, below last year's funding, and below what the last Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said was the lower, ragged edge of what it takes to defend this country.

Let's just put in a little bit of context here. This bill, counting OCO and everything, is a whopping one-half of 1 percent over what we spent last year. One-half of 1 percent. Inflation is supposed to be 2.1 percent. So what it really means is this bill, even in real dollars, is a cut, even as it is.

This bill is 23 percent less than we were spending on defense in real terms in 2010. Mr. Chairman, the world is not 23 percent safer now than it was 6 years ago. And yet the gentleman from Colorado's amendment would cut that even further.

This bill stays within the amount requested by the President. It meets the need for base requirements and provides a bridge fund for deployments, just like Democratic majorities did for the last change of administration. And I think that is the most reasonable response.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from the great State of California (Ms. LEE), a cosponsor of this amendment.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I want to first thank Congressman POLIS for yielding time and for his work to ensure that our Nation's fiscal security is secure through this amendment. It is an honor to cosponsor this amendment with him. I want to thank the ranking member also for guiding us through this very difficult bill to make sure that we all know what is included in the bill.

I just have to say, our amendment, I think, would take a modest step in making this bill a lot better to help us rein in the over-the-top, quite frankly, Pentagon spending, while protecting the pay or health benefit accounts of our brave servicemen and -women and their families.

Over the last 15 years, Pentagon spending has ballooned by 50 percent in real terms. Pentagon spending now consumes more than half of the Federal discretionary budget. That is just outrageous.

Recently, The New York Times made this case in their editorial called ''A Better, Not Fatter, Defense Budget,'' which I include for the RECORD.

[From the New York Times, May 9, 2016]

A BETTER, NOT FATTER, DEFENSE BUDGET

(By the Editorial Board)

To hear some military commanders and members of Congress talk, the American military is worn out and in desperate need of more money. After more than a decade in Iraq and Afghanistan, they say, troops are lagging in training and new weaponry, which is jeopardizing their ability to defeat the Islamic State and deal with potential conflicts with Russia and China.

While increased funding for some programs may be needed, total military spending, at nearly $600 billion annually, is not too low. The trouble is, the investment has often yielded poor results, with the Pentagon, Congress and the White House all making bad judgments, playing budget games and falling under the sway of defense industry lobbyists. Current military spending is 50 percent higher in real terms than it was before 9/11, yet the number of active duty and reserve troops is 6 percent smaller.

For nearly a decade after 9/11, the Pentagon had a virtual blank check; the base defense budget rose, in adjusted dollars, from $378 billion in 1998 to $600 billion in 2010. As the military fought Al Qaeda and the Taliban, billions of dollars were squandered on unnecessary items, including new weapons that ran late and over budget like the troubled F–35 jet fighter.

The waste and the budget games continue with the House Armed Services Committee approving a $583 billion total defense authorization bill for 2017 last month that skirts the across-the-board caps imposed by Congress in 2011 on discretionary federal spending.

The caps are supposed to restrain domestic and military spending equally, but defense hawks have insisted on throwing more money at the Pentagon. That doesn't encourage efficiency or wise choices. The panel took $18 billion from a $59 billion off-budget account, which has become a slush fund renewed annually to finance the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and other trouble spots, and is not subject to the budget caps, and repurposed that money for use in the $524 billion base military budget.

The move will underwrite the purchase of more ships, jet fighters, helicopters and other big-ticket weapons that the Pentagon didn't request and will keep the Army from falling below 480,000 active-duty troops. It also means the war account will run out of money next April. Representative Mac Thornberry, the Republican chairman of the committee, apparently assumes the next president will be forced to ask for, and Congress will be forced to approve, more money for the war account. This sleight of hand runs the risk that troops overseas, at some point, could be deprived of some resources, at least temporarily. The full House should reject this maneuver.

Many defense experts, liberals and centrists as well as hawks, agree that more investment is needed in maintenance, training and modernizing aging weapons and equipment. These needs were identified years ago, yet the Pentagon and Congress have chosen to invest in excessively costly high-tech weaponry while deferring maintenance and other operational expenses.

The Pentagon can do with far fewer than the 1,700 F–35s it plans on buying. It should pare back on President Obama's $1 trillion plan to replace nearly every missile, submarine, aircraft and warhead in the nuclear arsenal. Defense officials recently reported that 22 percent of all military bases will not be needed by 2019. Civilian positions will have to be reduced, while reforms in health care and the military procurement system need to be carried out. All of these changes make good sense, given the savings they would bring. But they are politically unpalatable; base closings, for instance, have been stubbornly resisted in recent years by lawmakers fearful of angering voters by eliminating jobs in communities that are economically dependent on those bases.

Todd Harrison, a defense budget expert with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, says that sustaining the current military force of roughly two million and paying for all the new weapons systems will cost billions more than Congress has allowed under the budget caps. To maintain sensible troop levels, Congress and the administration need to begin honestly addressing the hard fiscal choices that they have largely been loath to make.

Ms. LEE. The article lists program after program, many of which our generals did not ask for, that have cost taxpayers billions without making us any safer.

Clearly, we also need to audit the Pentagon. That is why I am pleased the House adopted the Burgess-Lee amendment yesterday to require a report on auditability and help keep moving toward auditing the Pentagon. While we were working on that, we should take every opportunity to address Pentagon spending.

The article in The New York Times sets forth: ''The waste and the budget games continue with the House Armed Services Committee approving a $583 billion total defense authorization.''

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate the importance of making sure that we are funding defense at the President's request. The FY 2017 request, I think, is minimally adequate, but it is not just me. The administration's own Secretary of the Army Murphy stated that this budget request is minimally adequate and that we are taking a high risk as an Army and as a Nation when the Army is funded at this level. So there is still risk there with this level of funding.

As the chairman pointed out, we live in a more dangerous world today, but we see our Marine Corps and Air Force having to go to aircraft that are museum exhibits to cannibalize parts to bring them in to have a minimally operational cadre of aircraft.

We see this, too, when we talk about only 9 of the 20 B–1 bombers are available today because they are lacking parts and when we have 30 percent or less of our Marine Corps helicopters available because they are lacking parts. We see that, in a squadron of 14 jets, only 3 in the Marine Corps are available because they are lacking parts.

It is irresponsible not to provide to the brave men and women that serve this Nation the things that they need. We are asking them to go into harm's way. We are asking them to do tremendously difficult jobs. We are asking them to maintain safety. Yet we are not providing them the resources necessary.

This amendment would do even more to take away what is already a challenging situation for those brave men and women that are doing a tremendous job and that, as their leaders have said, are being stressed to the breaking point because they do not have the basic resources to keep those aircraft flying, to keep those ships on the

water, to keep those systems necessary to be able to perform the job that we have asked them to do.

We have an obligation as a Nation that, when we ask those brave men and women to go into harm's way, to support them. It is unconscionable when we don't do that, when we have situations like 84 percent of our Marine Corps aircraft are in a nonready status, based on a 10-year average.

So when we talk about taking dollars away, what signal does that send to the brave men and women serving in the military? I think this amendment cuts to the heart of what we must do as a Nation, and that is to rebuild readiness, not degrade readiness.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Chairman, there are a number of programs which Congress has forced spending on the military that even the military has not requested.

As an example, we blocked the Navy from making a sound fiscal decision saving $900 million to shutter a carrier air wing. There are a dozen more Black Hawk and Apache helicopters than requested by the military to meet our national defense needs. There are two extra V–22 Ospreys that were not requested, 500 extra Javelin missiles above the request, 500 more extra Hydra guided rockets, and 75 extra Sidewinder missiles.

These are just some of the examples of some the low-hanging fruit that we can use to restore military funding to a more fiscally responsible manner.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman from Colorado raising the issue that he just raised because it gives me the opportunity to affirm that many of the programs he was just mentioning like the Black Hawks, for example, have been requested by many of the Members on his side of the aisle. And they were included in the unfunded requirements list from the Army.

So the way it works is we get all sorts of requests from Members on both sides of the aisle. Each of the services gives us a list of what they would like to have had in the budget request but the administration took out, and then where the two match up as Member priorities and service priorities, that is what these funds are.

It is not that they weren't asked for from the military. It is the military wanted them but OMB took them out. And when you have many Members, particularly on the Black Hawks, the V–22s, the LCS, and a number of the items he just mentioned on his side of the aisle, asking for them as well as the service, then that becomes part of the modernization priority.

Let me just make one other point. In the Black Hawk case specifically, these new Black Hawks will replace helicopters that were built in 1979, for which we cannot get parts, which have very restricted flight envelopes because of all the restrictions. They can't be repaired. They can't do everything the Army wants them to do.

So the administration did not ask for any. Many Members on the Democratic side asked for some. We put them in here. And that is the way to fix readiness: by replacing a 1979 helicopter with a 2016 helicopter.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 2 consisting of amendment Nos. 8, 14, 25, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, and 45 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. DESANTIS OF FLORIDA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. LIMITATION ON MILITARY CONTACT AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA.

(a) LIMITATION.—Except as provided in subsection (b), none of the funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Defense may be used for any bilateral military-to-military contact or cooperation between the Governments of the United States and Cuba until the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, certify to the appropriate congressional committees that—

(1) the Government of Cuba has—

(A) met the requirements and satisfied the factors specified in sections 205 and 206 of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (22 U.S.C. 6065 and 6066); and

(B) resolved, to the full satisfaction of United States law, all outstanding claims and judgments belonging to United States nationals against the Government of Cuba, including but not limited to claims regarding property confiscated by the Government of Cuba;

(2) the Cuban military and other security forces in Cuba have ceased committing human right abuses, including arbitrary arrests, beatings, and other acts of repudiation, against those who express opposition to the Castro regime, civil rights activists and other citizens of Cuba, as well as all persecution, intimidation, arrest, imprisonment, and assassination of dissidents and members of faith-based organizations;

(3) the Cuban military has ceased providing military intelligence, weapons training, strategic planning, and security logistics to the military and security forces of Venezuela;

(4) the Government of Cuba no longer demands that the United States relinquish control of Guantanamo Bay, in violation of an international treaty;

(5) the Government of Cuba returns to the United States fugitives wanted by the Department of Justice for crimes committed in the United States; and

(6) the officials of the Cuban military that were indicted in the murder of United States citizens during the shoot down of planes operated by the Brothers to the Rescue humanitarian organization in 1996 are brought to justice.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—The limitation on the use of funds under subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to—

(1) payments in furtherance of the lease agreement, or other financial transactions necessary for maintenance and improvements of the military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, including any adjacent areas under the control or possession of the United States;

(2) assistance or support in furtherance of democracy-building efforts for Cuba described in section 109 of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (22 U.S.C. 6039); or

(3) customary and routine financial transactions necessary for the maintenance, improvements, or regular duties of the United States mission in Havana, including outreach to the pro-democracy opposition.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) BILATERAL MILITARY-TO-MILITARY CONTACT OR COOPERATION.—The term ''bilateral military-to-military contact or cooperation''—

(A) means—

(i) reciprocal visits and meetings by high-ranking delegations;

(ii) information sharing, policy consultations, security dialogues or other forms of consultative discussions;

(iii) exchange of military instructors, training personnel, and students;

(iv) defense planning; and

(v) military training or exercises; but

(B) does not include any contact or cooperation that is in support of the United States stability operations.

(3) CUBAN MILITARY.—The term ''Cuban military'' means—

(A) the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, the Ministry of the Interior of Cuba, or any subdivision of either such Ministry;

(B) any agency, instrumentality, or other entity that is owned, operated, or controlled by an entity specified in subparagraph (A); or

(C) an individual who is a senior member of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba or the Ministry of the Interior of Cuba.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section takes effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and applies with respect to funds described in subsection (a) that are unobligated as of such date of enactment.

AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MR. DESANTIS OF FLORIDA

Page 139, after line 22, insert the following:

SEC. 547. CAREER MILITARY JUSTICE LITIGATION TRACK FOR JUDGE ADVOCATES.

(a) CAREER LITIGATION TRACK REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of each military department shall establish a career military justice litigation track for judge advocates in the Armed Forces under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

(2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Air Force shall establish the litigation track required by this section in consultation with the Judge Advocate General of the Army and the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, respectively. The Secretary of the Navy shall establish the litigation track in consultation with the Judge Advocate General of the Navy and the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

(b) ELEMENTS.—Each career litigation track under this section shall provide for the following:

(1) Assignment and advancement of qualified judge advocates in and through assignments and billets relating to the practice of military justice under chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code (the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

(2) Establishing for each Armed Force the assignments and billets covered by paragraph (1), which shall include trial counsel, defense counsel, military trial judge, military appellate judge, academic instructor, all positions within criminal law offices or divisions of such Armed Force, Special Victims Prosecutor, Victims' Legal Counsel, Special Victims' Counsel, and such other positions as the Secretary of the military department concerned shall specify.

(3) For judge advocates participating in such litigation track, mechanisms as follows:

(A) To prohibit a judge advocate from more than a total of four years of duty or assignments outside such litigation track

(B) To prohibit any adverse assessment of a judge advocate so participating by reason of such participation in the promotion of officers through grade O–6 (or such higher grade as the Secretary of the military department concerned shall specify for purposes of such litigation track).

(4) Such additional requirements and qualifications for the litigation track as the Secretary of the military department concerned considers appropriate, including requirements and qualifications that take into account the unique personnel needs and requirement of an Armed Force.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE.—Each Secretary of a military department shall implement the career litigation track required by this section for the Armed Forces under the jurisdiction of such Secretary by not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, each Secretary of a military department shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the progress of such Secretary in implementing the career litigation track required under this section for the Armed Forces under the jurisdiction of such Secretary.

AMENDMENT NO. 25 OFFERED BY MR. LAMALFA OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle D of title I, add the following new section:

SEC. 1___. PROHIBITION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR RETIREMENT OF U–2 AIRCRAFT.

None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for the Air Force may be obligated or expended to retire, prepare to retire, or place in storage or on backup aircraft inventory status any U–2 aircraft.

AMENDMENT NO. 27 OFFERED BY MR. HUDSON OF NORTH CAROLINA

At the end of title I, add the following new section:

SEC. 1___. BRIEFING ON ACQUISITION STRATEGY FOR GROUND MOBILITY VEHICLE.

(a) BRIEFING REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, in consultation with the Secretary of the Army, shall present to the congressional defense committees a briefing on the acquisition strategy for the Ground Mobility Vehicle for use with the Global Response Force.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The briefing under subsection (a) shall include an assessment of—

(1) whether the Ground Mobility Vehicle is a suitable candidate for solutions that would utilize militarized commercial off-the-shelf platforms leveraging existing global automotive supply chains to satisfy requirements and reduce the life-cycle cost of the program;

(2) whether the acquisition strategy meets the focus areas specified in the Better Buying Power initiative of the Secretary of Defense; and

(3) whether including an active safety system like electronic stability control in the Ground Mobility Vehicle, as such system is used on the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, is expected to reduce the risk of vehicle rollover.

AMENDMENT NO. 28 OFFERED BY MR. SANFORD OF SOUTH CAROLINA

At the end of title I, add the following new section:

SEC. 1___. STANDARDIZATION OF 5.56MM RIFLE AMMUNITION.

(a) REPORT.—If, on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Army and the Marine Corps are each using different variants of 5.56mm rifle ammunition, the Secretary of Defense shall, on such date, submit to the congressional defense committees a report explaining the reasons that the Army and the Marine Corps are using different variants of such ammunition.

(b) STANDARDIZATION REQUIREMENT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the Army and the Marine Corps are using the same variant of 5.56mm rifle ammunition.

(c) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (b) shall not apply in a case in which the Secretary of Defense—

(1) determines that a state of emergency requires the Army and the Marine Corps to use different variants of 5.56mm rifle ammunition; and

(2) certifies to the congressional defense committees that such a determination has been made.

AMENDMENT NO. 32 OFFERED BY MR. CARTWRIGHT OF PENNSYLVANIA

At the end of title III, add the following new section:

SEC. 3___. SYSTEM FOR COMMUNICATING AVAILABILITY OF SURPLUS AMMUNITION.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall implement a formal process to provide Government agencies outside the Department of Defense with information on the availability of surplus, serviceable ammunition for the purpose of reducing the overall storage and disposal costs related to such ammunition.

AMENDMENT NO. 33 OFFERED BY MR. FORBES OF VIRGINIA

Page 107, line 20, strike ''322,900'' and insert ''324,615''.

AMENDMENT NO. 34 OFFERED BY MR. JONES OF NORTH CAROLINA

At the end of subtitle D of title VI, add the following new section:

SEC. 6___. ACCEPTANCE OF MILITARY STAR CARD AT COMMISSARIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that—

(1) commissary stores accept as payment the Military Star Card; and

(2) any financial liability of the United States relating to such acceptance as payment be assumed by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

(b) MILITARY STAR CARD DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''Military Star Card'' means a credit card administered under the Exchange Credit Program by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

AMENDMENT NO. 35 OFFERED BY MR. ALLEN OF GEORGIA

Page 141, line 17, after ''senior military college'' insert the following: ''and each of the Reserve Officer Training Corps institutions selected for partnership by the cyber institutes at the individual service academies''.

AMENDMENT NO. 38 OFFERED BY MR. DESAULNIER OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle E of title V, add the following new section:

SEC. 568. INCLUSION OF INFORMATION IN TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 1144(b) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(10) Provide information regarding the deduction of disability compensation paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 1175a(h) of this title by reason of voluntary separation pay received by the member.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 40 OFFERED BY MR. KEATING OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the end of title V, add the following new section:

SEC. 5___. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON DESIRABILITY OF SERVICE-WIDE ADOPTION OF GOLD STAR INSTALLATION ACCESS CARD.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of each military department and the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating should—

(1) provide for the issuance of a Gold Star Installation Access Card to Gold Star family members who are the survivors of deceased members of the Armed Forces in order to expedite the ability of a Gold Star family member to gain unescorted access to military installations for the purpose of obtaining the on-base services and benefits for which the Gold Star family member is entitled or eligible;

(2) work jointly to ensure that a Gold Star Installation Access Card issued to a Gold Star family member by one Armed Force is accepted for access to military installations of another Armed Force; and

(3) in developing, issuing, and accepting the Gold Star Installation Access Card—

(A) prevent fraud in the procurement or use of the Gold Star Installation Access Card;

(B) limit installation access to those areas that provide the services and benefits for which the Gold Star family member is entitled or eligible; and

(C) ensure that the availability and use of the Gold Star Installation Access Card does

not adversely affect military installation security.

AMENDMENT NO. 41 OFFERED BY MS. KAPTUR OF OHIO

Page 186, after line 25, insert the following new subsection:

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the dependency and indemnity compensation offset under sections 1450(c) of title 10, United States Code. The report shall include the following:

(1) The total number of individuals affected by such offset.

(2) Of the number of individuals covered under paragraph (1), the number who are covered by section 1448(d) of title 10, United States Code, listed by the rank of the deceased member and the current age of the individual.

(3) Of the number of individuals under paragraph (1), the number who are not covered by section 1448(d) of title 10, United States Code, listed by the rank of the deceased member and the current age of the individual.

(4) The average amount of money that is affected by such offset, including the average amounts with respect to—

(A) individuals described in paragraph (2); and

(B) individuals described in paragraph (3).

(5) The number of recipients for the special survivor indemnity allowance under section 1450(m) of title 10, United States Code.

AMENDMENT NO. 42 OFFERED BY MR. KILDEE OF MICHIGAN

Page 264, line 7, insert ''and units'' after ''members''.

Page 265, after line 8, insert the following:

(3) HIGH RISK VETERANS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall use the results under subsection (c) to provide outreach regarding the available preventative and treatment resources for mental health for enrolled veterans who were deployed with the units identified under this subsection.

Page 265, line 16, insert ''and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs'' after ''Defense''.

Page 265, line 17, insert ''and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs'' after ''Services''.

Page 265, line 18, insert ''and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs'' after ''Services''.

Page 266, strike lines 3 through 6 and insert the following:

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) MILITARY SERVICES.—The term ''military services'' means the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Marine Corps, including the reserve components thereof.

(2) ENROLLED VETERAN.—The term ''enrolled veteran'' means a veteran enrolled in the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

AMENDMENT NO. 45 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

At the end of title VII (page 273, after line 12), insert the following new section:

SEC. 749. INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH NIH TO COMBAT TRIPLE NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER.

The Office of Health of the Department of Defense shall work in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health to—

(1) identify specific genetic and molecular targets and biomarkers for triple negative breast cancer; and

(2) provide information useful in biomarker selection, drug discovery, and clinical trials design that will enable both—

(A) triple negative breast cancer patients to be identified earlier in the progression of their disease; and

(B) the development of multiple targeted therapies for the disease.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chair, I am very grateful to Chairman THORNBERRY for allowing me to present this amendment.

Today, I rise in support of my amendment to the NDAA in support of the U–2, known as the Dragon Lady, one of the must successful spy planes ever built. Its unique capabilities have served our Nation's high-altitude intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission for decades.

What many don't know is that the U–2 is not a cold war relic. It is still current. The most recent ones were made in the 1980s. U–2s are currently flying more hours today than at any point since the end of the cold war and have been deployed in our ongoing efforts to defeat ISIS.

Flying at an altitude of 70,000 feet, the U–2 is able to reach heights other spy planes cannot. Because the U–2 can reach such extraordinary heights, it is able to use high-tech sensors to increase its ability to collect intelligence.

Other unique features of the U–2 include cloud-piercing radar and interchangeable nose cones. The U–2 can also take incredible high-resolution photographs on a 10,500-foot reel wet film.

My amendment to the NDAA will prevent the Air Force from retiring the U–2. It is absolutely essential to our ability to meet our high-altitude intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance needs.

In addition to aiding in the fight against ISIS, General Philip Breedlove, NATO's supreme allied commander and the head of U.S. forces in Europe, called for the use of U–2s in countering the strategic threat posed by Vladimir Putin.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. LAMALFA. General Breedlove said:

''EUCOM needs additional intelligence collection platforms, such as the U–2 or the RC–135, to assist the increased collection requirements in the theatre.''

Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption of this amendment.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I listened to the frustration of the chairman describing the process, and I sympathize with that. I have sat and admitted that this committee has one of the most difficult tasks, because as long as we are sort of unhinged here from the reality and the accountability of how they all work out, we will have people make requests for this or the administration will leave something out there, and it is difficult for the committee to try to make sense of reality out of these conflicting requests.

Out of this, I think there is an elephant in the room of an unrealistic, unsustainable, and unnecessary trillion-dollar path we are on for the nuclear triad of bombers, land-based missiles, and the submarines.

These are weapons that we have never used in 71 years. These are weapons that do not help us with the major challenges that vex this committee right now in terms of military readiness, the challenges dealing with ISIS, dealing with encroachment by the Chinese, problems with Russia.

These are weapons that didn't stop Russian aggression in the Crimea or Ukraine or Chinese encroachment. These are weapons that don't deter the greatest nuclear threat we face, which is nuclear materials falling into the hands of extremist elements from rogue nations like North Korea or some of our purported friends in Pakistan.

These are the threats that we face. And this muscle-bound nuclear triad that we are going to spend a trillion dollars on does not help us.

There is enough blame, I think, to go around. The administration made an agreement to upgrade and modernize all these nuclear weapons in their effort to get the nonproliferation treaty advanced. I think it was a foolish bargain, an expensive bargain. They are not going to be around to have to deliver on the trillion dollars. They are nibbling around the edges and moving these things forward and leaving the big decisions for the future.

They have actually made it worse by not fighting aggressively for nonproliferation resources to help us keep these materials out of the hands of the extremists and retire nuclear weapons that are floating around the world now.

We have more nuclear weapons than we need, more nuclear weapons than we can use, more nuclear weapons than we can afford. We can debate whether we have enough to destroy the world 3 times, 5 times, or 10 times. What is ironic is that we never have that debate on the floor of the House on how the tradeoffs occur, what the threats to conventional military capacity are, and how they fit into an overall scheme of affairs.

□ 1645

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I suggest this is the least-effective part of our overall

defense inventory. I would hope that, in the future, when maybe we have a new administration willing to turn a page, when we have a Congress that is willing to entertain a broad and robust debate about this critical issue, that we can deal with an effort to rein in this trillion-dollar spending folly that is going to have disastrous effects for our military readiness in the years ahead.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Chairman, the reason these weapons have not been used since 1945 is that we have had a credible nuclear deterrent. The fastest way to have a more dangerous, destabilized world is for the credibility of that deterrent to erode, and I worry about that.

Secondly, if you look at what is planned with upgrading the weapons and the delivery systems, at no point does it become more than 11 percent of the U.S. defense budget. That is a pretty good investment to make sure that they are not used, and I suggest that it is well worth the investment.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, the amendment I offer today, in cooperation with the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) requires a report simply from the Secretary of Defense, detailing the quantity, composition, and lost income of survivors currently affected by the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset to the Survivor Benefit Program.

It continues this body's crucial, bipartisan effort to find a feasible solution for the disgraceful way we shortchange and penalize our military widows and widowers.

This mandatory offset hurts those who have already given more to freedom than most of us ever will, the life of a spouse.

It hurts women like the Army Sergeant First Class who recently contacted me. She is an Afghan veteran herself, mother of three. Tragically, she also is a Gold Star Wife due to the death of her husband in Iraq in 2004. As a young widow of a servicemember who died as a result of his service, she is not eligible to receive the full amount of her benefits, making the burden of living without her spouse that much more difficult at a time of enormous adjustment for their family. What's more, if she were a Federal civil service survivor, she could receive both benefits.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. KAPTUR. If she were a civil service survivor, she could receive both benefits; and if she were over the age of 37, she could receive both benefits. Her husband gave his life for liberty. She is a veteran, too. We must honor their sacrifice as we honor the sacrifice of any other American who dies in service to our Nation, and find a way to fix this awkward offset.

This report will help us better define the situation so we can find just solutions. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Montana (Mr. ZINKE), a member of the committee.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my colleague from Florida's amendment to create a Judge Advocate General career litigation track in the Army and the U.S. Air Force.

The legislation provides the Army and Air Force JAG officers with trial and prosecutorial experience that is absolutely critical.

Currently, Army and Air Force JAGs lack experience, as multiple reports have said. As a matter of fact, a shocking 89 percent of military prosecutors only have 10 or fewer contested cases. This inexperience is a disservice to those who seek justice under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Anyone who has suffered a transgression and sexual assault or other crime while serving in the military, quite frankly, deserves the best.

The Navy has implemented this litigation path and is already reaping great results. It is time for the Air Force and the Army to follow suit.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to make clear that my opposition to the bill at this point is not just based on the exclusion of the amendment that would have lifted the discrimination against the LGBT community. That was sort of the last straw.

I was on the fence about this bill from the very beginning because, understand that this bill continues the pattern of the last few years, of putting our defense on a fiscal path to nowhere, a fiscal path towards a cliff of not having the money to fund what needs to be funded because the Budget Control Act remains in place.

Now, the chairman repeatedly says that in 2008, we did this when a new administration was coming in. We only funded half of the overseas contingency operation fund, knowing the supplemental was coming.

There was no Budget Control Act in 2008. The Budget Control Act is in place. Even if we get a supplemental in April—and in this Congress, getting additional money is no guarantee—the Budget Control Act remains in place, and this Congress has shown a complete unwillingness to get rid of it.

So what we are doing by funding all of these programs that some of my colleagues have started, we are funding a defense that we cannot sustain.

I think the best example of this is the military wanted to cut the size of the Marine Corps and the Army. Now, the levels that they wanted to cut them to were levels that no one in the defense community wanted to cut them to, but that was the amount of money that they have available under the Budget Control Act.

As soon as we repeal the Budget Control Act, we will have a lot easier conversation about how to fund defense; but what we are doing to national security right now is we are creating a bow wave that they will not be able to absorb.

When the Budget Control Act kicks in again next year, all of a sudden the Army and the Marine Corps will have to, like that, cut—my numbers may be off a little bit here—30,000 in the Army, 10,000 in the Marine Corps. You can't really do that in any sort of reasonable way. It will be incredibly disruptive to the military, incredibly disruptive to readiness.

Now, I will agree with the chairman that a passionate case can be made for spending more on defense. Heck, if we spent a trillion dollars on defense, a passionate case could be made for spending even more than that when you look at the threat environment. But we have the money we have.

He also cited that, in 2010 numbers, we are now 23 percent below where we are at, and that is true. But we are 23 percent below where we are at because of the 2011 Budget Control Act which, again, this House refuses to repeal.

So instead of dealing with the amount of money that Congress has forced the Department of Defense to deal with, we fantasize that more money will appear, and in that fantasy, we put the military in an impossible situation.

We start all of these programs. There is not the money to finish those programs. And maybe someone can tell me where this money is going to come from, how it is going to magically appear, when we are $19 trillion in debt—I forget off the top of my head what the deficit is this year, but it is somewhere in the neighborhood of 5 or $600 billion—deficits for as far as the eye can see; the Freedom Caucus on the Republican side refusing to spend any more money.

This money is not going to appear. And so what we are going to have is we are going to have a military that has to cut drastically and irresponsibly in the blink of an eye because we refused to let them do it responsibly.

I would urge Members to read Secretary Carter's testimony before the Senate earlier this week or last week where he outlined what a devastating impact this defense bill will have on our national security when the bills that it is charging actually come due.

Now, that is the primary reason to oppose this bill; contemplating swallowing that and hoping that, like last year, we could fix that in conference.

But in addition to that, to have discriminatory provisions in it brings me

back to 2009, when the Republicans opposed the defense bill because it had an antihate crime piece of legislation attached to it.

There are reasons to oppose the defense bill other than you just don't really like people who serve in the military, and that is a condescending and irresponsible argument to make against those who would oppose the bill.

If we continue down this funding path, we are not serving the military. All of these readiness disasters that we keep hearing about have, in part, happened because of the way this committee and the Appropriations Committee has funded defense for the last 3 or 4 years, by taking from readiness to fund a wide variety of programs, including the beginning of the $1 trillion Mr. BLUMENAUER talked about for our nuclear deterrent.

We are not making choices. We refuse to get rid of the A–10. We refuse to lay off 11 cruisers. We refuse to allow the military to shrink its size and, instead, we keep putting it on a credit card and hoping that the money will appear.

Well, when that money doesn't appear—and it is not going to. I haven't seen money just sort of burst out of nowhere in my lifetime. Maybe we will be lucky and maybe it will be the first time—but it puts the Department of Defense in a tenuous position.

We need to start making choices based on the money that we actually have. This bill doesn't do that.

Six months from now, our troops serving in Afghanistan and Iraq will have no money, and we hope that problem fixes itself. That is a national security reason for opposing this bill.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I think I made clear a few moments ago that I believe we need to have a better way to fund defense, a more predictable way. But, Mr. Chairman, I am not willing to wait to support the military until that is done. I am not willing to wait until we have tax reform and entitlement reform and all sorts of other things before I am willing to stand up and support the military. There are lives at stake today, and we have enormous challenges in the future, there is no question, budgetary and otherwise.

But I think it would be a mistake if I were to say we have all these challenges coming down the road, therefore, I am not going to fix this problem that is affecting pilots, mechanics, others today. We can do something about it today.

As a matter of fact, the gentleman talks about the Budget Control Act. We have made some alterations to the Budget Control Act for each of the last 4 years because of this problem.

I think most people, at least on both sides of the aisle, realize that when you cut defense 23 percent since 2010, and the world is not 23 percent safer, we are not asking our military folks for 23 percent fewer deployments, that something has got to give.

So there has been—it has been painful, it has been messy, it has not been ideal, but there has been some alterations to the Budget Control Act.

I said a while ago that I am for doing away with these artificial caps. The Budget Control Act did not work as anyone, I think, intended. There was never the mandatory spending reform that was the goal.

And what bore the brunt of the cuts?

Defense.

Fifteen percent of the budget has absorbed 50 percent of the cuts under the Budget Control Act. That is wrong.

Now, I think if Members on both sides of the aisle committed to working together to fix that, we could. Now, that would involve not having a President use the military as a hostage to try to force more domestic spending, which is what this President has done. That would mean that we focus on trying to fix defense, and understand that all of us have other priorities that we need to also work on at the same time.

But we are always going to have different budget laws and different circumstances. I still do not understand how a Democratic majority, in 2008, could use this approach, to give the new President the benefit of the doubt, the benefit of a fresh look; and when we try to do the same for the next President, who none of us know who it is going to be, but when we try to use the same approach, all of a sudden then you just can't do it. It is irresponsible, it is a gimmick, and all sorts of names.

The gentleman mentioned that we are not making choices and mentioned specifically the A–10.

Mr. Chairman, there are a lot more things that I would like to have done in this bill, lots of additional programs I would like to have authorized. We had to make difficult choices.

But just to take the A–10 for an example, the administration has proposed eliminating the A–10 for the past several years. This Congress reached a different judgment on that. That is what the Constitution, by the way, says we are supposed to do. It is our job to raise and support, build and maintain the Armed Forces of the United States.

On the A–10 program, we reached a different conclusion. We decided that, until you have something to take its place, we shouldn't get rid of it.

And you know what?

The Secretary of Defense has testified that it has been devastating in its use against ISIS today. If we had eliminated it, it wouldn't be there.

So sometimes our judgment—and we have a long list of instances where Congress, under majorities of both parties, have exercised a different judgment from the administration and where we were proved right. So we make tough choices. Sometimes our choices actually turn out to look pretty good in hindsight.

But the bottom line, Mr. Chairman, is we could all wait to support a defense bill until some far-off condition were met. It is easy to vote ''no'' unless something happens or unless some condition is met; but for this, if only that. That is easy.

But that does not fix the immediate problems that face the men and women who volunteer to defend our country, the problems that they are facing today. That is what we are trying to do with this bill. We don't actually fix them. We just start to turn it around.

I don't think there is an excuse that justifies opposing doing what is right for them, and that is the reason I believe that this bill should be supported. I hope Members will support this amendment.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

□ 1700

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

In section 1215(b)—

(1) strike paragraphs (2), (3), and (4);

(2) in paragraph (6), insert ''and'' after ''2018;'';

(3) in paragraph (7), strike ''; and'' and insert a period; and

(4) strike paragraph (8).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, my amendment strikes language telling the President to expand our mission in Afghanistan, language that tells the President to put more of our troops in harm's way, to go backwards towards a combat mission in Afghanistan.

Now, Republicans may not say it, but the effect is exactly what they are pushing for—moving the United States military and the United States back toward a combat mission in Afghanistan, not forward away from one. Worse yet, they are pushing for an expanded mission before the new commander on the ground, General John Nicholson, finishes his review. That is right. Congress is giving instructions to the President before the current commander has weighed in. This is a mistake.

So the opening line of the sense of Congress tells the President to leave 9,800 troops in Afghanistan next year. The current plan calls for 5,500. This sets the tone for what is next. Unfortunately, the amendment that strikes this language was not ruled in order.

My amendment starts by striking the next provision. The Republicans want our military to unilaterally strike the Taliban. Now, of course, these people are absolutely bad news, but the State Department does not recognize them as a terrorist organization at this time. This is a decision that should be based on military considerations.

Thus, our counterterrorism mission is allowed to strike and go after Daesh and al Qaeda, but the mission regarding the Taliban is defensive in nature; and if that is going to be changed, it should be based on military considerations, not just through a piece of legislation.

In fact, the Afghans are leading all missions against the Taliban, and this has been happening well before we transitioned to a noncombat mission. So let's not call for going back to combat mission tactics, especially when the commander has not asked for it.

Finally, I would like to talk about a particular provision that is close to me. I would like to address what I regard as actually a troubling piece in the provision, which says, and I will quote from the proposed legislation:

> The United States military personnel who are tasked with the mission of providing combat search and rescue support, casualty evacuation, and medical support should not be counted as part of any force management level limitation on the number of United States ground forces in Afghanistan.

This is a mistake. I believe that our medical personnel and others should be considered boots on the ground, contrary to the language in the provision. Combat medics carry weapons, they take casualties, and they are killed. Why shouldn't we count them? It doesn't seem to make sense to me. One of the closest people in the whole wide world to me is an Active Duty military combat medic, and if they are in a war zone, I want them counted.

So with that, I ask for my amendment to be approved and included, and I ask that we listen to military people on the ground before we start trying to tell them what to do, and that we absolutely count combat medics and people who do rescue.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, I am going to try to make some sense of this.

We just had an amendment where we were debating providing the Authorization of Use of Military Force to the President, and we wanted to make certain that the President had the authority, and this is the portion of our bill where we actually provide authority. The word ''authority'' is throughout these sections that are, by this amendment, being asked to be deleted. But as Mr. ELLISON stated, we should look to the commanders on the ground. So let's look at what they have said.

General Campbell, testifying about the Haqqani network, said that it remains the most capable threat to U.S. and coalition forces.

Now, what does threat mean? It means that they are trying to kill us and our coalition forces. It is a State Department-designated terrorist organization which harbors al Qaeda and is the most lethal actor on the battlefield. These provisions that will be deleted relate to our ability to fight them.

Approximately 30 percent of district centers are under Taliban control and influence or are at such risk, says General Campbell.

Now, General Nicholson, who is currently the commander, is doing his review. That is correct. But what we are doing in these provisions is providing the status quo. We are not presuming that he is going to come back and say: Let's cut; we can go do this with less troops. We are allowing that he would have the same resources that General Campbell had so that he would have an ability to defend our troops.

Basically, if you go down to these paragraphs that are being deleted, this comes down to some fairly easy decisions:

If you believe that ISIL is not a threat to our troops, vote for this amendment.

If you believe that ISIL is not a threat to our allies in the Middle East, vote for this amendment.

If you believe that the killings that were directed and inspired by ISIL in Brussels and Paris are not a threat to our Nation or our NATO allies, vote for this amendment.

If you believe that it is okay for the Taliban to control portions of Afghan territory, even though al Qaeda planned and directed 9/11 under Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, vote for this amendment.

If you believe that the U.S. and NATO troops should be responsible for Afghan security, and not Afghan security forces, vote for this amendment.

If you believe, however, that we have a responsibility for our national security and to our troops, vote against this amendment.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota has 1½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, first, let me thank Congressman ELLISON for yielding and for his tremendous leadership. This amendment is extremely important.

Today I rise to urge my colleagues to support this amendment and, really, allow our ground commanders to do their job. Now, of course, time and time again, Congress has refused to do its job. From Zika funding to confirming a new Supreme Court Justice, we failed to do our job.

Instead of letting Congress do its job, the majority only seems interested in Congress doing other peoples' jobs, and that is including our military commanders. There is no way we should be allowing this to happen.

Make no mistake, Republicans are trying to expand the U.S. mission in Afghanistan and further expand America's longest war. For nearly 15 years, we have been fighting a war in Afghanistan. Our brave servicemen and -women have gone way beyond the call of duty. They have done everything we have asked them to do. It is past time to bring them home to their families and to their children. But minimally, we should not be telling our military leaders what to do in a war zone, especially before they have completed their on-the-ground assessment.

So I hope that we vote ''yes'' on this commonsense amendment. While our young men and women are in Afghanistan, until we bring them home, let's use the best type of intelligence, the best information, and the best direction that the ground commanders have determined based on their ground assessment in this war.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, just to be clear, the underlying provisions which the gentleman's amendment would strike are sense of Congress provisions. Basically, it is the sense of Congress that the ground commanders ought to make these decisions.

Unfortunately, artificial troop caps and overly restrictive requirements on our military increase the danger that our military faces in Afghanistan. So if you draw down too low the number of people you have, for example, then you don't have enough to protect yourself. That is part of what we are seeing in Afghanistan.

If you tie the military's hands and say, ''Okay. You cannot go after this enemy, even though they may pose the most deadly threat to you,'' then you increase the danger to our military. That is exactly what these provisions try to deal with.

Mr. Chairman, the Afghans are doing the fighting in Afghanistan. They are advancing and getting more capable all the time, but they still need us to be there and to advise and assist them.

Just to look briefly at some of the provisions that the gentleman would strike, one says that the commander in

Afghanistan has the authority to strike the Haqqani network. They are the ones that pose, in many people's eyes, the biggest threat for big bombings and so forth in that region. Why would we not allow our military commander, if he wants to, if he thinks it is right, to strike them?

Another provision the gentleman strikes is the one that says that we ought to have resources to go after ISIS. Remember, Mr. Chairman, that it is not just al Qaeda and the Taliban that are growing in Afghanistan. ISIS is growing there, too. This just says we ought to do something about that. The gentleman's amendment would strike it.

On troop caps, part of what is happening in Afghanistan is that we are artificially limiting the number of people there. As I mentioned, that increases the danger to the troops we do have there. Otherwise, we are bringing some people in on a temporary basis or hiring contractors to do the job.

So these artificial troop caps mean that commanders and the administration have got to find all these ways around it, but they still increase the danger that the people we do have there face. That doesn't make sense. There are still dangers in Afghanistan to our national security.

These provisions the gentleman would strike just try to untie the hands of our military so they can deal with it on a military basis, not a political basis.

Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment, and I urge Members to do likewise.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Strike section 1502 and insert the following new section:

SEC. 1502. PROCUREMENT.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Funds are hereby authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2017 for procurement accounts for the Army, the Navy and the Marine Corps, the Air Force, and Defense-wide activities, as specified in—

(1) the funding table in section 4102; or

(2) the funding table in section 4103.

(b) FUNDING REDUCTION.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D, the amount authorized to be appropriated for procurement for overseas contingency operations for base requirements, as specified in the funding table in section 4103, is hereby reduced by $9,440,300,000.

Strike section 1504 and insert the following new section:

SEC. 1504. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Funds are hereby authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2017 for the use of the Armed Forces and other activities and agencies of the Department of Defense for expenses, not otherwise provided for, for operation and maintenance, as specified in—

(1) the funding table in section 4302, or

(2) the funding table in section 4303.

(b) PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY.—Amounts specified in the funding table in section 4302 shall remain available for obligation only until April 30, 2017, at a rate for operations as provided in the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2016 (division C of Public Law 114–113).

(c) FUNDING INCREASE.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D, the amount authorized to be appropriated in this section for operation and maintenance, as specified in the funding table in section 4302, is hereby increased by $9,440,300,000, of which $26,000,000 is designated for suicide prevention.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I rise to urge support for my amendment to H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

The overseas contingency operations account is supposed to provide emergency funding for wars and unexpected operations overseas, operations that cannot be planned for in the base budget.

Republicans are raiding this account. They are taking money from missions designed to protect our Nation from imminent threats to feed the military industrial complex. They argue that this makes our military stronger and that it improves our national security; but what it really does is, the Republicans have taken money from operations overseas and put it towards money for procurement, for nonwar needs, so much so that the operators would only be funded through 2017, April of next year. My amendment puts the money back.

Mr. Chairman, Secretary Carter stated that this gimmick is gambling ''with warfighter money at a time of war.'' He said: ''It would spend money taken from the war account on things that are not DOD's highest priorities across the joint force.''

My amendment takes the $9.4 billion taken for procurement on items like extra F–35s and the littoral combat ship, which the Pentagon did not prioritize, and puts the funds back in the OCO operations and maintenance account.

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Mr. Chair, $26 million of that money will go to preventing suicides amongst our military, as the President's request for this was $26 million lower than the amount we appropriated in 2016. This problem is not going down, and it should not receive less support from us.

In summary, we are putting money back where it belongs. We are supporting our troops on the ground. We are supporting those services overseas. We are supporting military readiness. We are supporting the priorities of the Pentagon and the President, not those of the defense industry.

And I will say, Mr. Chairman, that if I were to ask you who I got a call from and ask you to guess, did I get a call from the President's office or the Pentagon or Boeing, the answer would be number three, Boeing. That is who called me and doesn't like this particular amendment. In fact, we didn't hear from the others. We heard from the industry, the special interests.

Let's just say the Republicans do push through extra funds for OCO next year. This would still be shortchanging domestic programs that will have to be cut to pay for the defense industry.

We all know that Republicans won't let us raise taxes to cover additional costs. We won't be able to take on more debt. Americans are going to suffer under the Republicans' scheme to give the Pentagon equipment and the industry just more.

I oppose it, and I urge support for my amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER).

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, when we read our newspapers, we certainly know that the world is becoming a much less safe place. The conflicts around the world and the ability of our military to respond are incredibly important. But also, if you read the newspaper, you understand that our military is at a critical juncture. The effects of sequestration have significantly undermined the readiness of our military.

The argument that Mr. ELLISON is making about what pot of money funds come out of is kind of irrelevant in that his amendment isn't pure and that he doesn't take all of the money out of one pot and move it into another. He only takes a portion. The President does the same thing in this shell game of where dollars come from. It is not an issue of where do dollars come from. It is an issue of, where do they go?

If you read this bill, the issue of where these go, which is what Mr. ELLISON wants to stop, is moneys that go to readiness. It goes to the ability of our military to be prepared.

The Admiral Vice Chief of Staff, General Daniel Allyn, recently explained that to build readiness ''the Army has been forced to cancel or delay military construction, sustainment, restoration,

and modernization across our posts, camps, and stations. Additionally, the Army reduced key installation services, individual training programs, and modernization.'' In essence, readiness.

This amendment strips away funding from critical programs that have been identified by our military services that were not fully funded by the President's budget request that go to readiness. We are currently in a readiness crisis.

Marine pilots are having to cannibalize museum parts to get their F–18s ready to deploy. Of the Marine Corps 271 strike aircraft, only 46 can fly. Of the most severe type of aviation accidents, Marines are 84 percent above their 10-year average. The Air Force maintainers are also cannibalizing museum parts to get aircraft in the air. Of the 20 B–1 bombers, which are workhorses in Iraq and Syria, only 9 can fly due to parts and maintenance shortfalls. Pilots are getting less than half of their training required during a time when our adversaries are becoming increasingly capable and technologically advanced.

The Air Force's Vice Chief of Staff, David Goldfein, recently stated during congressional testimony that lower than planned funding levels have resulted in one of the smallest, oldest, and least ready forces across the full-spectrum of operations in our history.

Voting for this amendment supports cutting our troops' strength, cutting training and maintenance, forcing our armed services to maintain crumbling facilities, and forcing our servicemembers to continue to rely on faulty and worn out equipment.

It is not an issue of what pot this money comes out of. It is a matter of where it goes. It needs to go for our servicemembers, so vote against this amendment.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. RICE of South Carolina). The gentleman from Minnesota has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, let me thank the gentleman for yielding, and for introducing this amendment, and for his leadership to end waste, fraud, and abuse at the Pentagon.

This amendment, which I am proud to cosponsor, would stop Republicans from using the overseas contingency operation fund as a piggy bank for more wasteful Pentagon spending. Yes, it really does appear that Christmas is coming in May for the military-industrial complex.

Right now, Republicans have robbed critical programs, like military suicide prevention, and redirected that money to the OCO fund where there is no accountability, no transparency, or oversight. By funneling this money to the OCO account, Republicans are short-changing lifesaving programs to fund wasteful programs, like the F–35 and tanks that rust in the Nevada desert.

Even the Pentagon say they don't want these programs funded. Yet, Republicans are jeopardizing our real national security priorities to further enrich the military-industrial complex.

Our troops deserve better, Mr. Chairman. This is a dangerous budgeting gimmick. This amendment would end the OCO fraud and return the funds to the important programs that they were intended for.

Let's end this scheme and put the money back into where it belongs, and that is protecting our troops and the American people.

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, let me just conclude by saying that it is time to put resources where they are needed, among suicide prevention and directly to our troops, not into simply more military-industrial complex procurement stuff, not just to help private business feed its bottom line profit, but to help our soldiers and to help our military on the ground, when needed.

I urge support for my amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, just to be clear, the President in his budget request takes some of the OCO dollars and uses it to meet base requirements. He does that in his budget. It is not a question of whether it is done or not. The question is, how much?

And even though the President uses OCO dollars to help meet base shortfalls, his own Comptroller in the defense budget review writes, even though they do that in the President's budget request: ''The Department will continue to experience gaps in training and maintenance over the near term and have a reduced margin of error in dealing with risks of uncertainty in a dynamic and shifting security environment.''

In other words, even the President's own budget documents say that it is not enough what he has done. So what we try to do is we try to do more. We are not going to do it all, but we try to do more to make sure that the training and maintenance that our troops are entitled to are provided. What that means is we should not send anyone out on a mission for which they are not fully prepared and fully supported.

The problem is, as I mentioned awhile ago with the Black Hawk example, some of these folks have to fly helicopters that were made in 1979. I, myself, saw a fighter plane that President Reagan sent to bomb Muammar Qadhafi in 1986, and they couldn't find the parts for it. The pilot tried. He figured out a way to take a part off of a museum aircraft and tried to make it fit, but the holes were drilled in the wrong place, so it didn't work.

The only thing you can do to replace a helicopter made in 1979 or an airplane that was flown on a mission in 1986 is to get a new one. So that is what the procurement is.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, we have had a number of people from the Democratic side of the aisle who have asked for C–40s, MQ–4s, Black Hawks, B–22s, F–18s, F–35s, C–130s. Now, they didn't just invent that. The reason that Democratic Members have asked for those things above and beyond what the President submitted is because there is a real need and because the only way we are going to fix some of these readiness problems, in addition to more money for training and maintenance, more money for facilities, and preventing further cuts in end strength, is to replace some of this old equipment with new equipment. That is what we do. The gentleman would undo that. I think his amendment should be defeated.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota will be postponed.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 3 consisting of amendment Nos. 20, 36, 37, 39, 48, 49, 52, 53, 59, and 63 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 20 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense and the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall establish a Global Engagement Center (in this section referred to as the ''Center''). The purposes of the Center are—

(1) to lead and coordinate the compilation and examination of information on foreign government information warfare efforts monitored and integrated by the appropriate interagency entities with responsibility for such information, including information provided by recipients of information access fund grants awarded under subsection (f) and other sources;

(2) to establish a framework for the integration of critical data and analysis provided by the appropriate interagency entities with responsibility for such information on foreign propaganda and disinformation efforts into the development of national strategy;

(3) to develop, plan, and synchronize, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, and the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, whole-of-government initiatives to expose and counter foreign propaganda and disinformation directed

against United States national security interests and proactively advance fact-based narratives that support United States allies and interests;

(4) to demonstrate new technologies, methodologies and concepts relevant to the missions of the Center that can be transitioned to other departments or agencies of the United States Government, foreign partners or allies, or other nongovernmental entities;

(5) to establish cooperative or liaison relationships with foreign partners and allies in consultation with interagency entities with responsibility for such activities, and other entities, such as academia, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector; and

(6) to identify shortfalls in United States capabilities in any areas relevant to the United States Government's mission, and recommend necessary enhancements or changes.

(b) FUNCTIONS.—The Center shall carry out the following functions:

(1) Integrating interagency and international efforts to track and evaluate counterfactual narratives abroad that threaten the national security interests of the United States and United States allies.

(2) Integrating, and analyzing relevant information, data, analysis, and analytics from United States Government agencies, allied nations, think tanks, academic institutions, civil society groups, and other nongovernmental organizations.

(3) Developing and disseminating fact-based narratives and analysis to counter propaganda and disinformation directed at United States allies and partners.

(4) Identifying current and emerging trends in foreign propaganda and disinformation based on the information provided by the appropriate interagency entities with responsibility for such information, including information obtained from print, broadcast, online and social media, support for third-party outlets such as think tanks, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations, and the use of covert or clandestine special operators and agents to influence targeted populations and governments in order to coordinate and shape the development of tactics, techniques, and procedures to expose and refute foreign misinformation and disinformation and proactively promote fact-based narratives and policies to audiences outside the United States.

(5) Facilitating the use of a wide range of technologies and techniques by sharing expertise among agencies, seeking expertise from external sources, and implementing best practices.

(6) Identifying gaps in United States capabilities in areas relevant to the Center's mission and recommending necessary enhancements or changes.

(7) Identifying the countries and populations most susceptible to foreign government propaganda and disinformation based on information provided by appropriate interagency entities.

(8) Administering the information access fund established pursuant to subsection (f).

(9) Coordinating with allied and partner nations, particularly those frequently targeted by foreign disinformation operations, and international organizations and entities such as the NATO Center of Excellence on Strategic Communications, the European Endowment for Democracy, and the European External Action Service Task Force on Strategic Communications, in order to amplify the Center's efforts and avoid duplication.

(c) COORDINATOR.—The Secretary of State shall appoint a full-time Coordinator to lead the Center.

(d) EMPLOYEES OF THE CENTER.—

(1) DETAILEES.—Any Federal Government employee may be detailed to the Center without reimbursement, and such detail shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege for a period of not more than three years.

(2) PERSONAL SERVICE CONTRACTORS.—The Secretary of State may exercise the authority provided under section 3161 of title 5, United States Code, to establish a program (referred to in this subsection as the ''Program'') for hiring United States citizens or aliens as personal services contractors for purposes of personnel resources of the Center, if—

(A) the Secretary determines that existing personnel resources are insufficient;

(B) the period in which services are provided by a personal services contractor under the Program, including options, does not exceed three years, unless the Secretary determines that exceptional circumstances justify an extension of up to one additional year;

(C) not more than 20 United States citizens or aliens are employed as personal services contractors under the Program at any time; and

(D) the Program is only used to obtain specialized skills or experience or to respond to urgent needs.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Under ''Diplomatic and Consular Programs'', for each of fiscal years 2017 and 2018, $10,000,000 is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of State and may remain available until expended to carry out the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the Center.

(f) INFORMATION ACCESS FUND.—

(1) AUTHORITY FOR GRANTS.—The Center is authorized to provide grants or contracts of financial support to civil society groups, journalists, nongovernmental organizations, federally-funded research and development centers, private companies, or academic institutions for the following purposes:

(A) To support local independent media who are best placed to refute foreign disinformation and manipulation in their own communities.

(B) To collect and store examples in print, online, and social media, disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda directed at the United States and its allies and partners.

(C) To analyze and report on tactics, techniques, and procedures of foreign government information warfare with respect to disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda.

(D) To support efforts by the Center to counter efforts by foreign governments to use disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda to influence the policies and social and political stability of the United States and United States allies and partners.

(2) FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND LIMITATIONS.—The Secretary of State shall provide that each organization that applies to receive funds under this subsection undergoes a vetting process in accordance with the relevant existing regulations to ensure its bona fides, capability, and experience, and its compatibility with United States interests and objectives.

(g) LIMITATION.—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by the Act to carry out this section shall be used for purposes other than countering foreign propaganda and misinformation that threatens United States national security.

(h) TERMINATION OF CENTER.—The Center shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 12yy. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION.

The United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6201 et seq.; Public Law 103–236) is amended—

(1) by amending section 304 (22 U.S.C. 6203) to read as follows:

''SEC. 304. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

''(a) CONTINUED EXISTENCE WITHIN EXECUTIVE BRANCH.—The Broadcasting Board of Governors shall continue to exist within the Executive branch of Government as an entity described in section 104 of title 5, United States Code.

''(b) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The head of the Broadcasting Board of Governors shall be a Chief Executive Officer, who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The President shall nominate the Chief Executive Officer not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this section. Until such time as a Chief Executive Officer is appointed and has qualified, the current or acting Chief Executive Officer appointed by the Board may continue to serve and exercise the authorities and powers under this Act.

''(2) TERM.—The first Chief Executive Officer appointed pursuant to paragraph (1) shall serve for an initial term of three years.

''(3) COMPENSATION.—A Chief Executive Officer appointed pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be compensated at the annual rate of basic pay for level III of the Executive Schedule under section 5314 of title 5, United States Code.

''(c) TERMINATION OF DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING BUREAU.—Immediately upon appointment of the Chief Executive Officer under subsection (b), the Director of the International Broadcasting Bureau shall be terminated, and all of the responsibilities, authorities, and immunities of the Director or the Board under this or any other Act or authority before the date of the enactment of this section shall be transferred to and assumed or overseen by the Chief Executive Officer, as head of the agency.

''(d) MEMBERS OF THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS.—Members of the Broadcasting Board of Governors in office as of the date of the enactment of this section may serve the remainder of their terms of office in an advisory capacity, but such terms may not be extended beyond the date on which such terms are set to expire.

''(e) IMMUNITY FROM CIVIL LIABILITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all limitations on liability that apply to the Chief Executive Officer shall also apply to members of the board of directors of RFE/RL, Inc., Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, or any organization that consolidates such entities when such members are acting in their official capacities.''; and

(2) in section 305 (22 U.S.C. 6204)—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking ''Board'' each place it appears and inserting ''Chief Executive Officer'';

(ii) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''direct and'' before ''supervise'';

(iii) in paragraph (5)—

(I) by inserting ''and cooperative agreements'' after ''grants''; and

(II) by striking ''sections 308 and 309'' and inserting ''this Act, and on behalf of other agencies, accordingly'';

(iv) in paragraph (6), by striking ''subject to the limitations in sections 308 and 309 and'';

(v) in paragraph (11), by inserting ''not'' before ''subject'';

(vi) in paragraph (15)(A), by striking—

(I) ''temporary and intermittent''; and

(II) ''to the same extent as is authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code,''; and

(vii) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(20) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including section 308(a), to condition, if appropriate, any grant or cooperative agreement to RFE/RL, Inc., Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks on authority to determine membership of their respective boards, and the consolidation of such entities into a single grantee organization.

''(21) To redirect funds within the scope of any grant or cooperative agreement, or between grantees, as necessary, and to condition grants or cooperative agreements, if appropriate, on similar amendments as authorized under section 308(a) to meet the purposes of this Act.

''(22) To change the name of the Board pursuant to congressional notification 60 days prior to any such change.'';

(B) by striking subsections (b) and (c); and

(C) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (b).

SEC. 12zz. UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING ACT OF 1994.

The United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6201 et seq.; Public Law 103–236) is amended—

(1) in section 306 (22 U.S.C. 6205)—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking the heading; and

(ii) by striking ''Board'' each place it appears and inserting ''Agency''; and

(B) by striking subsection (b);

(2) by striking section 307 (22 U.S.C. 6206); and

(3) by inserting after section 309 the following new sections:

''SEC. 310. BROADCAST ENTITIES REPORTING TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

''(a) GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the following provisions shall apply:

''(1) CONSOLIDATION.—The Chief Executive Officer, subject to the regular notification procedures of the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, who is authorized to incorporate a grantee, may condition annual grants to RFE/RL, Inc., Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks on the consolidation of such grantees into a single, consolidated private, non-profit corporation (in accordance with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code), which may broadcast and provide news and information to audiences wherever the Agency may broadcast, for activities that the Chief Executive Officer determines are consistent with the purposes of this Act, including the terms and conditions of subsections (g)(5), (h), (i), and (j) of section 308, except that the Agency may select any name for such a consolidated grantee.

''(2) FEDERAL STATUS.—Nothing in this or any other Act, or any action taken pursuant to this or any other Act, may be construed to make such a consolidated grantee described in paragraph (1) or RFE/RL, Inc., Radio Free Asia, or the Middle East Broadcasting Networks or any other grantee or entity provided funding by the Agency a Federal agency or instrumentality. Employees or staff of such grantees or entities shall not be considered Federal employees. For purposes of this subsection and this Act, the term 'grant' includes agreements under section 6305 of title 31, United States Code, and the term 'grantee' includes recipients of such agreements.

''(3) LEADERSHIP OF GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS.—Officers of RFE/RL Inc., Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks or any organization that is established through the consolidation of such entities, or authorized under this Act, shall serve at the pleasure of the Chief Executive Officer of the Agency.

''(b) VOICE OF AMERICA.—

''(1) STATUS AS A FEDERAL ENTITY.—The Chief Executive Officer is authorized to establish an independent grantee organization, as a private nonprofit organization, to carry out all broadcasting and related programs currently performed by the Voice of America. The Chief Executive Officer may make and supervise grants or cooperative agreements to such grantee, including under terms and conditions and in any manner authorized under section 305(a). Such grantee shall not be considered a Federal agency or instrumentality and shall adhere to the same standards of professionalism and accountability required of all Board broadcasters and grantees. The Board is authorized to transfer any facilities or equipment to such grantee, and to utilize the provisions of subchapter VI of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code.

''(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Voice of America, operating as a nonprofit organization, should have the mission to—

''(A) serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news on the United States, its policies, its people, and the international developments that affect the United States;

''(B) provide accurate, objective, and comprehensive information, with the understanding that these three values provide credibility among global news audiences;

''(C) present the official policies of the United States, and related discussions and opinions about those policies, clearly and effectively; and

''(D) represent the whole of the United States, and shall accordingly work to produce programming and content that presents a balanced and comprehensive projection of the diversity of thought and institutions of the United States.

''SEC. 311. INSPECTOR GENERAL AUTHORITIES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General of the Department of State and the Foreign Service shall exercise the same authorities with respect to the Broadcasting Board of Governors and the International Broadcasting Bureau as the Inspector General exercises under the Inspector General Act of 1978 and section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 with respect to the Department of State.

''(b) RESPECT FOR JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY OF BROADCASTERS.—The Inspector General shall respect the journalistic integrity of all the broadcasters covered by this title and may not evaluate the philosophical or political perspectives reflected in the content of broadcasts.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 36 OFFERED BY MRS. COMSTOCK OF VIRGINIA

At the end of subtitle E of title V (page 153, after line 9), add the following new section:

SEC. 568. REPORT AND GUIDANCE REGARDING JOB TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT SKILLS TRAINING, APPRENTICESHIPS, AND INTERNSHIPS AND SKILLBRIDGE INITIATIVES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO ARE BEING SEPARATED.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and make available to the public, a report evaluating the success of the Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (known as JTEST-AI) and SkillBridge initiatives, under which civilian businesses and companies make available to members of the Armed Forces who are being separated from the Armed Forces training or internship opportunities that offer a high probability of employment for the members after their separation.

(b) ELEMENTS OF REPORT.—In preparing the report required by subsection (a), the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall use the effectiveness metrics described in Enclosure 5 of Department of Defense Instruction No. 1322.29. The report shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) An assessment of the successes of the JTEST-AI and SkillBridge initiatives.

(2) Recommendations by the Under Secretary regarding ways in which the administration of the JTEST-AI and SkillBridge initiatives could be improved.

(3) Recommendations by civilian companies participating in the initiatives regarding ways in which the administration of the JTEST-AI and SkillBridge initiatives could be improved.

(4) Testimony from a sample of members of the Armed Forces who are participating in a JTEST-AI or SkillBridge initiative regarding the effectiveness of the initiatives and the members' support for the initiatives.

(5) Testimony from a sample of recently separated members of the Armed Forces who participated in a JTEST-AI or SkillBridge initiative regarding the effectiveness of the initiatives and the members' support for the initiatives.

(c) ISSUANCE OF GUIDANCE.—Not later than 180 days after the submission of the report required by subsection (a), the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall issue guidance to commanders of units of the Armed Forces for the purpose of encouraging commanders, consistent with unit readiness, to allow members of the Armed Forces under their command who are being separated from the Armed Forces to participate in a JTEST-AI or SkillBridge initiative.

AMENDMENT NO. 37 OFFERED BY MR. FARENTHOLD OF TEXAS

At the end of subtitle E of title V, add the following new section:

SEC. 5___. CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION IN ADVANCE OF APPOINTMENTS TO SERVICE ACADEMIES.

(a) UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY.—Section 4342(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended in the matter after paragraph (10) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''When a nominee of a Senator, Representative, or Delegate is selected for appointment as a cadet, the Senator, Representative, or Delegate shall be notified at least 48 hours before the official notification or announcement of the appointment is made.''.

(b) UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY.—Section 6954(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended in the matter after paragraph (10) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''When a nominee of a Senator, Representative, or Delegate is selected for appointment as a midshipman, the Senator, Representative, or Delegate shall be notified at least 48 hours before the official notification or announcement of the appointment is made.''.

(c) UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY.—Section 9342(a) of title 10, United States

Code, is amended in the matter after paragraph (10) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''When a nominee of a Senator, Representative, or Delegate is selected for appointment as a cadet, the Senator, Representative, or Delegate shall be notified at least 48 hours before the official notification or announcement of the appointment is made.''.

(d) UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY.—Section 51302 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION IN ADVANCE OF APPOINTMENTS.—When a nominee of a Senator, Representative, or Delegate is selected for appointment as a cadet, the Senator, Representative, or Delegate shall be notified at least 48 hours before the official notification or announcement of the appointment is made''.

(e) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to the appointment of cadets and midshipmen to the United States Military Academy, the United States Naval Academy, the United States Air Force Academy, and United States Merchant Marine Academy for classes entering these service academies after January 1, 2018.

AMENDMENT NO. 39 OFFERED BY MR. HUNTER OF CALIFORNIA

Page 173, after line 2, insert the following:

SEC. 599A. SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.

Section 1967(f)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking the second sentence.

AMENDMENT NO. 48 OFFERED BY MS. MENG OF NEW YORK

Page 173, after line 2, insert the following:

SEC. 599A. EXTENSION OF SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESILIENCE PROGRAM.

Section 10219(g) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking ''October 1, 2017'' and inserting ''October 1, 2018''.

AMENDMENT NO. 49 OFFERED BY MS. MAXINE WATERS OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle D of title VIII (page 326, after line 4), insert the following new section:

SEC. 843. STUDY AND REPORT ON CONTRACTS AWARDED TO MINORITY-OWNED AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES.

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall carry out a study on the number and types of contracts for the procurement of goods or services for the Department of Defense awarded to minority-owned and women-owned businesses during fiscal years 2010 through 2015. In conducting the study, the Comptroller General shall identify minority-owned businesses according to the categories identified in the Federal procurement data system (described in section 1122(a)(4)(A) of title 41, United States Code).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the results of the study under subsection (a).

AMENDMENT NO. 52 OFFERED BY MR. SANFORD OF SOUTH CAROLINA

In section 1047(c)(1), strike ''and approvals'' and insert '', approvals, and the total costs of all flyover missions, including the costs of fuel, maintenance, and manpower,''.

AMENDMENT NO. 53 OFFERED BY MR. WALZ OF MINNESOTA

Page 394, after line 5, insert the following new subsection:

(e) STATE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''State'' includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.

AMENDMENT NO. 59 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

Page 423, after line 3, insert the following:

SEC. 1070. REPORT ON CARRIER AIR WING FORCE STRUCTURE.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report on the impact of changes to existing carrier air wing force structure and the impact a potential reduction to 9 carrier air wings would have on overall fleet readiness if aircraft and personnel were to be distributed throughout the remaining 9 air wings.

AMENDMENT NO. 63 OFFERED BY MR. COURTNEY OF CONNECTICUT

Page 462, after line 13, insert the following new section (and conform the table of contents accordingly):

SEC. 1098. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Maritime Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Committee Act''.

SEC. 2. MARITIME OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Section 7 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 656) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) There is established a Maritime Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Committee, which shall be a continuing body and shall provide advice to the Secretary in formulating maritime industry standards and regarding matters pertaining to the administration of this Act related to the maritime industry. The composition of this advisory committee shall be consistent with the advisory committees established under subsection (b), provided that a member of this committee who is otherwise qualified may continue to serve until a successor is appointed. The Secretary may promulgate or amend regulations as necessary to implement this subsection.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOULTON) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

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

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak first about an amendment to be considered in a later en bloc regarding Special Immigrant Visas. I want to call attention to the urgent need to continue the Special Immigrant Visa program for Afghans who worked for U.S. forces.

This bipartisan amendment, backed by several veterans on the committee, would remove the unfortunate narrowing of eligibility requirements included in the mark, which would prevent hundreds of Afghans whose lives are at risk because of their work for our country from even being considered for resettlement in the United States.

The narrowing of eligibility intentionally excludes hundreds of Afghans who worked for the State Department, USAID, and U.S. security contractors in a number of capacities, many of whom face well-documented death threats due to their work with our government, regardless of whether that was with frontline troops or on an American base.

By narrowing eligibility, the program would erode the expectations of hundreds of Afghan staff whose lives remain in danger because of their work for the U.S. mission and also make it more difficult to hire and retain qualified Afghan staff in the future who are essential to achieving our diplomatic and assistance goals.

For that risk and sacrifice, the very least we can do is offer them a chance to stay live, to keep living, rather than abandoning them to the same enemies they united with us to destroy.

One of the things I was most proud of as a Marine infantry officer was that we never let our enemies make us compromise our values. One of those values is a solemn commitment to our allies and to our brothers in arms.

I urge your support on the floor in following through on our commitment to our Afghan partners.

I also want to comment on the fact that the chairman of the committee and I worked to resolve some differences that we had on understanding the concerns of our diplomatic mission in Afghanistan. I appreciate very much his work with me on that to support our troops and mission overseas.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Massachusetts, and he is exactly right. He and other Members are very concerned about this issue. He has talked to me about it a number of times.

I have been concerned that there was abuse of this system. That was gathered from visits I have made to Afghanistan, including last year.

But I very much appreciate the points that the gentleman from Massachusetts has made. I think he and others who have worked on this issue have come up with a good amendment. I support it.

All of us agree that if someone has risked their lives or would be in danger for supporting the United States and our folks in Afghanistan, then that person needs protection. None of us want to see the program abused.

But I am convinced that the changes that the gentleman has been instrumental in working out are helpful. I support it. And I thank him for his efforts on doing this.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. YOUNG).

□ 1730

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Chair, I will be brief.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, our men and women who are defending our Nation and their families are twice as likely to fall victim to

identity theft and fraud. Because they protect us, we need to do more to protect them and their families from scammers who take advantage of their service. My amendment No. 177 simply requires the Department of Defense to report to Congress on its efforts to protect their information.

I thank the chairman for working with me on this amendment, and I look forward to working the committee to better protect those who sacrifice so much to defend our Nation. I also thank my co-chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force to Combat Identity Theft and Fraud, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), for her great work. She has been a great partner in helping to protect taxpayers and now our servicemembers from having their identities stolen.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA).

Ms. SINEMA. I thank Chairman THORNBERRY and Mr. MOULTON for supporting the Young-Sinema amendment. I thank Congressman YOUNG for working with me and others in offering this bipartisan amendment to protect members of the Armed Forces and their families from identity theft.

My home State of Arizona is one of the top 10 States that is affected by identity theft. Military families are among those most targeted and most at risk for these crimes. Our amendment improves the Department of Defense's efforts to protect military families' financial information from identity theft. I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to combat identity theft and financial fraud.

Again, I thank my friend, Congressman YOUNG, for working with me on this important, commonsense amendment.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Among the amendments in this en bloc package is one that I have authored to establish a global engagement center. I thank my cosponsors of this amendment, Mr. WILSON and Mr. LANGEVIN, the chair and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats & Capabilities. I also thank Chairman ROYCE, who has worked with us. Included in this amendment are reforms of the Broadcasting Board of Governors that he and his ranking member have worked on for some time.

Mr. Chair, it has been a source of great frustration for me that our government has seemed to be so inept in the battle of ideas against the terrorists.

I first introduced a bill on this topic in 2005. Today there is a lot of talk not only of the so-called physical caliphate that ISIS claims, but of the virtual caliphate. Unless and until we can be more effective at engaging in the battle of ideas, we will not succeed in defeating terrorism.

It is not just the terrorists we have to worry about. We have seen the Russians lie and use deception for military gain. We have seen similar sorts of tactics by the Chinese in their building these islands out in the South China Sea and elsewhere around the world.

This amendment requires the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and others—the executive branch—to get their act together, coordinate, and more effectively engage in the battle of ideas. I hope it helps. As I say, this is a crucial battlefield, and our country needs to do better in this field.

Mr. Chair, as I have no further speakers at this point, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS).

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I am appreciative to the gentleman from Massachusetts for allowing me to speak on my amendment.

Mr. Chair and Members, a lack of opportunity for Federal contracting is one of the main factors of the widening racial wealth gap. As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government has a critical responsibility to focus on increasing minority and female inclusion in the job market; yet, only a fraction of Federal contracts goes to minority- or female-owned businesses. This is partly why the wealth gap and extreme disparities in racial incomes continue.

Amendment No. 49 ensures that we meet important contracting goals by analyzing a 5-year study by the GAO on how the DOD contracts with minority- and female-owned businesses. While there are many ways the government can address the issue of more equitable contracting, one important and more immediate impact, I believe, the Federal Government can have is by providing more opportunities for minority-owned businesses.

The DOD spends roughly $285 billion a year on contracting, more than all Federal agencies combined. With such large purchasing power, it is imperative that these funds are used not only to provide the best services for the Department of Defense, but also to distribute fairly and wisely in all communities.

The study proposed is the first step toward identifying where those opportunities lie for great inclusion. This amendment further emphasizes and underscores the importance of minorities in both our local and national communities.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding and also for his service to the Nation. I thank the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. SMITH; the chairman of the full committee, Mr. THORNBERRY; and the Rules Committee for accepting this amendment. Let me thank the gentlemen doubly and triply for being kind enough to accept this amendment on a regular basis, and I am going to persist because I believe it is important.

Mr. Chair, let me make a big pronouncement or announcement or breaking news: there are women in the United States military. I want to say that again. There are women in the United States military.

My amendment deals with triple negative breast cancer. It calls for the increased collaboration between the DOD and the National Institutes of Health to combat triple negative breast cancer. This amendment directs the Department of Defense to identify specific genetic and molecular targets and biomarkers for TNBC. ''Triple negative breast cancer'' is a term used to describe breast cancer. Its cells do not have estrogen receptors and progesterone receptors and does not have an excess of HER2 protein on its cell membrane of tumor cells.

I am not in the military. I have had many family members in the military, but I would venture to say this is a case in which you have battalions, and you are on the field, and you have a difficult enemy who keeps moving away from your sight and your target. Though you have used overlapping forces, you can't seem to pinpoint the enemy. Ultimately you are victorious, but that is because you collaborate and you work together. This makes commonly used tests and methods to detect breast cancer not as effective, meaning the ordinary style of fighting does not work for triple negative breast cancer.

Seventy percent of women with metastatic triple negative breast cancer do not live more than 5 years after being diagnosed. It is important to note that TNBC affects women under 50 years of age, and it makes up more than 30 percent of all breast cancer diagnoses, specifically in African American women.

The collaboration between the Department of Defense and the NIH to combat triple negative breast cancer can support the development of multiple targeted therapies for this devastating disease and can help women in the United States military, those who are serving our country. Triple negative breast cancer is a specific strain of breast cancer for which no targeted treatment is available.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MOULTON. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman so very much.

Mr. Chair, it is a disease, however, that can be conquered. Triple negative breast cancer, TNBC, accounts for between 13 percent and 25 percent of all breast cancers in the United States. It is of a higher grade, and it onsets at a

young age. That means these women are in the United States military.

Finally, because it continues, there is a need for research funding for biomarker selection, drug discovery, and clinical trials that will lead to the early detection of TNBC and to the development of multiple targeted therapies to treat this awful disease. My amendment would provide for that.

In coming from Houston, Texas, with MD Anderson Cancer Center, I can tell you that they are looking at major research that can be very helpful between the NIH and the Department of Defense. I hope my amendment will stay in this particular bill, and I hope it will go to the Senate and will be signed by the President.

Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman THORNBERRY, Ranking Member ADAM SMITH and the Rules Committee for making in order and including Jackson Lee Amendment and including it in En Bloc Amendment Number 2 to the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017."

This is the first of 3 Jackson Lee amendments made in order by the House Rules Committee.

Jackson Lee Amendment Number 45, calls for increased collaboration between the DoD and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to combat Triple Negative Breast Cancer.

Jackson Lee Amendment Number 45 directs the DoD and NIH to collaborate to combat Triple Negative Breast Cancer.

This amendment directs the Department of Defense to identify specific genetic and molecular targets and biomarkers for TNBC.

"Triple Negative Breast Cancer" is a term used to describe breast cancers whose cells do not have estrogen receptors and progesterone receptors, and do not have an excess of the "HER2" protein on their cell membrane of tumor cells.

This makes commonly used tests and methods to detect breast cancer not as effective.

This is a serious illness that affects between 10–17% of female breast cancer patients and this condition is more likely to cause death than the most common form of breast cancer.

Seventy percent of women with metastatic triple negative breast cancer do not live more than five years after being diagnosed.

Jackson Lee Amendment Number 45 will help to save lives.

TNBC disproportionately impacts younger women, African American women, Hispanic/Latina women, and women with a "BRCA1 genetic mutation, which is prevalent in Jewish women.

TNBC usually affects women under 50 years of age and makes up more than 30% of all breast cancer diagnoses in African Americans. Black women are far more susceptible to this dangerous subtype than white or Hispanic women.

The collaboration between the Department of Defense and NIH to combat Triple Negative Breast Cancer can support the development of multiple targeted therapies for this devastating disease.

Triple negative breast cancer is a specific strain of breast cancer for which no targeted treatment is available.

The American Cancer Society calls this particular strain of breast cancer "an aggressive subtype associated with lower survival rates."

Triple negative breast cancer is a term used to describe breast cancers whose cells do not have estrogen receptors and progesterone receptors, and do not have an excess of the HER2 protein on their cell membrane of tumor cells

In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control predicted that that year 26,840 black women would be diagnosed with TNBC.

The overall incidence rate of breast cancer is 10% lower in African American women than white women.

African American women have a five year survival rate of 78% after diagnosis as compared to 90% for white women.

The incidence rate of breast cancer among women under 45 is higher for African American women compared to white women.

Triple Negative Breast Cancer cells: TNBC accounts for between 13% and 25% of all breast cancer in the United States; usually of a higher grade and size; onset at a younger age; are more aggressive; are more likely to metastasize.

Currently, 70% of women with metastatic triple negative breast cancer do not live more than five years after being diagnosed.

African American women are 3 times more likely to develop triple-negative breast cancer than White women.

African-American women have prevalence TNBC of 26% versus 16% in non-African-American women.

African-American women are more likely to be diagnosed with larger tumors and more advanced stages of breast cancer.

Currently there is no targeted treatment for TNBC.

Breast cancers with specific, targeted treatment methods, such as hormone and gene based strains, have higher survival rates than the triple negative subtype, highlighting the need for a targeted treatment.

Because there continues to be a need for research funding for biomarker selection, drug discovery, and clinical trial designs that will lead to the early detection of TNBC and to the development of multiple targeted therapies to treat this awful disease Jackson Lee Amendment Number 45 included in En Bloc 2 is essential to paving a way for advancements in these areas.

I thank Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH for including these amendments in the En Bloc Amendment Number 2, and I urge all Members to join me in voting for its adoption.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

Mr. LIPINSKI. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in support of an amendment I offered along with Mrs. COMSTOCK.

It seeks to expand the SkillBridge job training program by directing unit commanders to encourage participation by departing servicemembers. It also directs the DOD to form a comprehensive study so that they can evaluate and improve the program as needed. The SkillBridge initiative helps returning veterans by providing them with job training and apprenticeship programs in areas that span every sector of the workforce.

This program has already trained around 4,500 servicemembers, and the 18 SkillBridge programs claim to have an employment success rate of 100 percent. Encouraging participation will help more of our veterans find employment when they reenter civilian life, which is something we need to do all we can to promote.

I thank Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH for supporting this amendment in this bloc. I urge my colleagues to support the bloc.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chair, I yield myself 2 minutes.

I would like to discuss an amendment to come up in a future en bloc package.

I joined a vast array of foreign policy experts and retired generals—and even Israel's own nuclear commission—in supporting the nuclear deal with Iran because, although it was an imperfect deal, nobody could articulate a better pathway to a better deal to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The nuclear deal, however, is only that—a nuclear deal. As when President Reagan was negotiating nuclear deals with the Soviets, we make these agreements with our enemies, not with our friends, and we must not forget that Iran remains opposed to us in a vast array of other ways. As with the Soviets, enforcement of the deal requires continued vigilance.

My amendment would require the President to notify Congress whenever Iran conducts a ballistic missile launch and inform Congress as to the actions the President will take in response, including diplomatic efforts to pursue additional sanctions and the passage of a United Nations Security Council resolution.

While we have been successful in deterring Iran from building a nuclear weapon with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, we must continue to apply pressure to deter further actions that destabilize this fragile region and threaten our allies.

I urge a "yes" vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I urge the adoption of the en bloc package.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. ZINKE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 10 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chair, I offer amendment No. 10 as the designee of Mrs. LUMMIS from the great State of Wyoming.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle D of title XVI, add the following new section:

SEC. 16___. MATTERS RELATED TO INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES.

(a) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States to maintain and modernize a responsive and alert intercontinental ballistic missile force to ensure robust nuclear deterrence by preventing any adversary from believing it can carry out a small, surprise, first-strike attack on the United States that disarms the strategic forces of the United States.

(b) PROHIBITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by paragraph (2), none of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 shall be obligated or expended for—

(A) reducing, or preparing to reduce, the responsiveness or alert level of the intercontinental ballistic missiles of the United States; or

(B) reducing, or preparing to reduce, the quantity of deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles of the United States to a number less than 400.

(2) EXCEPTION.—The prohibition in paragraph (1) shall not apply to any of the following activities:

(A) The maintenance or sustainment of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

(B) Ensuring the safety, security, or reliability of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

(C) Reduction in the number of deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles that are carried out in compliance with—

(i) the limitations of the New START Treaty (as defined in section 494(a)(2)(D) of title 10, United States Code); and

(ii) section 1644 of the Carl Levin an Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113–291; 128 Stat. 3651; 10 U.S.C. 494 note).

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chairman of the Nuclear Weapons Council shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report regarding efforts to carry out section 1057 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66; 10 U.S.C. 495 note).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report under paragraph (1) shall include the following with respect to the period of the expected lifespan of the Minuteman III system:

(A) The number of nuclear warheads required to support the capability to redeploy multiple independently retargetable reentry vehicles across the full intercontinental ballistic missile fleet.

(B) The current and planned (until 2030) readiness state of nuclear warheads intended to support the capability to redeploy multiple independently retargetable reentry vehicles across the full intercontinental ballistic missile fleet, including which portion of the active or inactive stockpile such warheads are classified within.

(C) The current and planned (until 2030) reserve of components or subsystems required to redeploy multiple independently retargetable reentry vehicles across the full intercontinental ballistic missile fleet, including the plans or industrial capability and capacity to produce more such components or subsystems, if needed.

(D) The current and planned (until 2030) time required to commence redeployment of multiple independently retargetable reentry vehicles across the intercontinental ballistic missile fleet, including the time required to finish deployment across the full fleet.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ZINKE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this amendment to highlight the importance of maintaining our nuclear deterrence. This amendment will ensure that our land-based nuclear ICBMs are ready at a moment's notice and are not placed on a reduced-alert status.

President Reagan had it right. He championed the notion of peace through strength. Those wise words still apply today, even greater. The harsh reality is that we live in an increasingly unstable international environment. Nuclear deterrence provided by the triad has been the backbone of our national security posture for over half a century. Just last fall, the Secretary of Defense stated: ''The nuclear deterrent is a must-have . . . It is the foundation. It's the bedrock and it needs to remain healthy . . . ''

Montana is a proud defender of our triad, and our troops are always ready. Our ICBMs should be, too.

As more nation-states, including Iran, begin to defy international laws and pursue nuclear and ballistic missiles, it is critical that we do not scale back our nuclear deterrence.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this amendment.

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

□ 1745

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Rhode Island is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Having previously served as the chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee for several years, I am intimately familiar with our intercontinental ballistic missile forces and the important role ICBM deterrence plays when it comes to our national defense. While I understand the intent of this amendment, it is fundamentally unnecessary, dramatically overreaching, and lacks meaningful policy reform.

The budget request for FY 2017 contains no funding for reducing the alert level or reducing the number of deployed ICBMs below 400, and there are no plans to do so in the future. Furthermore, the statement of policy with regard to ICBMs, which is legally binding, significantly overreaches. It states that modernization of the ICBMs and retaining an alert ICBM force is necessary to ensure robust nuclear deterrence by preventing any adversary from believing it can carry out a small, surprise, first-strike attack which disarms the strategic forces of the United States.

However, this disregards the crucial and fundamental role of submarines that provide assured, survivable second-strike capability, which would dissuade an adversary from even thinking they could launch a disarming attack against the United States.

If we include any legislation on ICBMs, Mr. Chairman, it should be that we increase accountability and ensure that we are improving the morale and culture inside the Air Force with regard to nuclear weapons. Some of the serious and embarrassing problems that have plagued the ICBM missileers and security forces in recent years unfortunately continues, such as the Air Force base in Wyoming where 14 enlisted airmen in the security forces were being investigated for drug use just several weeks ago. I see nothing in this amendment that addresses that problem, nor do I see anything in the bill that addresses that issue.

If we are going to talk about keeping ICBMs, it should be in a meaningful way, instead of yet another annual amendment driven by what seems like parochial interests in highlighting their role, particularly at the exclusion of other legs of the nuclear triad.

While the committee tried to work with Ms. Lummis, Mr. Chairman, to avail the amendment of some of these concerns, bipartisan negotiations was seemingly rejected.

So, Mr. Chairman, I hope that we are able to make some of these adjustments as we conference with the Senate, but I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment as offered.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the great State of North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Chairman, reducing our ICBM alertness is reducing our readiness, and the whole point of the Defense Authorization Act is to ensure our military readiness.

The ICBMs have been a very effective deterrent to enemy aggression for decades. This amendment is simply a deterrent to those who would try to reduce our readiness by reducing our alertness and reducing the number of ICBMs. This would be a dangerous step, contrary to the longstanding policies of our defense and certainly a bad posture.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the great State of Alabama (Mr. ROGERS).

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, as chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, I understand that the responsiveness and distributed nature of our ICBMs are their most critical feature and their unique contribution to our nuclear triad.

Without ICBMs, an adversary would only need to strike less than 10 targets to disarm our nuclear forces. With ICBMs, an adversary needs to strike hundreds of hardened targets deep in the American homeland. That is a much more difficult proposition and is at the very heart of deterrence.

This is not a parochial issue or a political issue. This is a profound national security issue. De-alerting our

ICBMs or unilaterally cutting their numbers is a terrible idea.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this amendment.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, as I previously stated—and with all due respect to my colleague—this bill contains no funding for reducing the alert level or reducing the number of deployed ICBMs below 400, and there are no plans to do so in the future.

Mr. Chair, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, how much time remains?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Rhode Island has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy and his leadership on this, and I think he laid it out very clearly.

This is an imaginary problem, but it is an area that actually needs to have some attention to it. He referenced recent problems in terms of potential drug abuse. You know they found the cheating earlier because they were investigating drug abuse when they found out that there was cheating on the readiness test.

I would advise my colleagues to read Eric Schlosser's ''Command and Control,'' a fascinating study about the history of American nuclear weapons and problems that we have had, mistakes that were made, and near misses.

There are serious issues that we need to be thinking in terms of the readiness and how it goes forward. We need to think clearly about what we do in the future, what is the right level of deterrence, and how are we going to adequately analyze it.

454 land-based missiles are not necessarily a magic number that we should be freezing on a permanent basis. Looking at what happens going forward with the trillion-dollar commitment with missiles that are submarine based—we have our bombers; we have land based—and being able to have a critical appraisal of how much deterrence is enough and look at problems, such as security lapses, training problems, drug problems, this is not a situation that we should just sort of happily freeze for the next go-around and maintain that any adjustment to this or even evaluating an adjustment is somehow a threat to national security.

The real problems that we face dealing with international terrorism and the potential of nuclear weapons falling into rogue hands, those are very real problems that we need to be doing more. This vast nuclear triad that we will spend a trillion dollars on does not help us with those challenges. Rather than hollow out the military, we ought to be looking at potential changes going forward.

This amendment is ill-advised, unnecessary, and is the wrong direction we should be going.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Chair, this amendment is about ensuring that our nuclear deterrence that has protected this country for over 70 years remains strong and viable.

Yesterday, this body passed a measure to keep our nukes safe. It is now time to ensure they are ready at a moment's notice. There is no reason to have a nuclear force unless they are ready.

To lower the alert posture of our land-based ICBMs would result in a 2-week delay before our ICBMs would be ready to use. This would cripple our ability to respond quickly, which is the entire point of having a nuclear triad.

In the military, we always hope for the best but plan for the worse. While I hope we never have to use our nuclear weapons—and, indeed, I believe everyone in this body does—to lower their posture status of land-based ICBMs would unnecessarily put us at risk.

I encourage all my colleagues to support this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ZINKE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MR. LAMBORN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 11 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of title XXXV add the following:

SEC. ____. GAO REPORT ON MARITIME SECURITY FLEET PROGRAM.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act the Comptroller General of the United States shall study and report to the relevant congressional committees on the following:

(1) The justification for the size of the Maritime Security Fleet established under chapter 531 of title 46, United States Code, given present national defense operational requirements for such fleet, and how the annual per-vessel payment under that chapter corresponds to the costs of operating vessels in such Fleet.

(2) The difference in costs between the Maritime Security Fleet program and other options for achieving the same objectives as that program, such as—

(A) procurement by the United States of a national defense sealift fleet;

(B) contracting for United States-flag vessels and foreign-flag vessels on a temporary basis; and

(C) other potential options.

(3) Instances, examined in detail, in which use of foreign-flag, foreign-crewed vessels for national defense sealift purposes has hindered national security or impeded United States military operations.

(4) Comparison, in detail, of volumes and types of—

(A) Federal cargo that has been carried on foreign-flagged vessels; and

(B) Federal cargo that has been carried on vessels in the Maritime Security Fleet.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Texas and committee staff for their willingness to work with me on this amendment. I fought long and hard to get this museum the recognition it deserves, and I am very pleased that we have a path forward where we can finally achieve that.

My amendment simply recognizes this museum in Colorado Springs as the National Museum of World War II Aviation. This amendment does not authorize any funds. The museum is not seeking Federal funds and does not have plans to do so in the future.

The National Museum of World War II Aviation has taken great care to focus its story line on an aspect of military history that has not been fully explored by other national military museums. The intent is to augment the tremendous work that is being done by those museums, not to duplicate or replace it.

It is the only museum in the United States that exists to exclusively preserve and promote an understanding of the role of aviation in winning World War II. It is dedicated to celebrating the American spirit and to recognizing the teamwork, patriotism, and courage of the men and women who fought, as well as those on the home front who mobilized and supported the national aviation effort.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) for the purpose of engaging in a colloquy.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) has been a strong advocate for this museum, and I certainly appreciate him bringing it to the committee's attention and to the attention of the House.

Many Members share the gentleman's commitment to the preservation of historic aircraft, and I will certainly work with him on this and related issues.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Chairman, based on that reassurance and on that pledge to work together, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MR. SANFORD

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 12 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Strike subsections (b) and (c) of section 2856 and insert the following:

(b) RECOGNITION.—Congress recognizes the National Museum of World War II Aviation in Colorado Springs, Colorado, as America's National World War II Aviation Museum.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I rise with a very simple amendment. It would do nothing more than call for a GAO report of the maritime security fleet. I do so because I think that we would all acknowledge that knowledge is power, and the ability to look very closely at what is happening within that fleet, I think, is important. I would also say that, as a believer that defense is a core function of the Federal Government, we would want to have transparency in the way that we expend those funds in pursuit of our Nation's defense.

I think that this is important in light of the fact that overall funding has risen by about $89 million here over the last, I guess, funding cycle. You have seen the per-ship stipend go from $3.5 million to $5 million.

There has not been a study of what is happening within that fleet of ships for more than 12 years, and so, again, this is not in any way prescriptive in nature as to what should or shouldn't happen or the merits or demerits of the program. It is simply saying might we not learn a little bit more of what is happening within that fleet, and that is it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1800

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

The gentleman from South Carolina is correctly concerned about the expenditure of money. I would suggest to him that this study is a waste of the expenditure of money by the GAO and, hence, the taxpayers of the United States.

Studies about the MSP have been available over many, many years; and in fact, there is now, in the Office of Management and Budget, a comprehensive study that was commissioned by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The gentleman can certainly contact OMB and get that study and, quite probably, get all the information he is going to request in this particular analysis and, furthermore, not have to waste taxpayer money in the process.

I would point out to the gentleman a statement that was made on January 17 of this year concerning the MSP program by General Darren McDew, commander of US TRANSCOM. This is the guy who is responsible for moving men, women, materiel, and equipment around the world.

He said: ''Our overwhelming success was due in large part to the 10,000 U.S. mariners who sped 220 shiploads of decisive U.S. combat power throughout the buildup known as Operation Desert Shield. Without those mariners and vessels, our ability to project decisive force and demonstrate our national resolve would have been a mere fraction of what was required to ensure the swift victory the world witnessed. Simply put, moving an army of decisive size and power can only be accomplished by sea,'' and the MSP is the central part of that.

We don't need this study. What we need is strong support for the MSP.

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

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chair, I would say to my colleague that, again, what we would all recognize is that OMB is different than the Government Accountability Office. The OMB is fundamentally executive branch in nature. I think there is a real value to having a third party independent look at what is happening with the study. Again, it is not prescriptive in nature, but having that third party look, I think, is that much more important in all of our justifications of this program or other programs like it.

I would also say this, in terms of ''waste of money,'' as we know, GAO is funded through the legislative branch. This would not involve an additional expenditure of money. It would be incorporated into the expenditures that currently take place within the legislative branch and, again, GAO, by extension. In that regard, I think it would be a good use of taxpayer money to take a look that has not been taken in more than 12 years.

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, that is the first time I have ever heard that expenditure by the House of Representatives is not taxpayer money, but I guess some people can claim that.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES).

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the gentleman for offering this amendment. I know how committed he is to national defense and to fiscal responsibility in the country. However, one of the things that we haven't talked about in this amendment is it asks us to look at outsourcing this to foreign countries to be able to do, and I think today I rise not just as chairman of the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, but also on behalf of my good friend Mr. COURTNEY, who is the ranking member on that subcommittee and who has given us authority to say that he is opposed to this as well for these reasons.

The sealift, if we lose that sealift, we have lost the lifeblood to our warfighters because that is the vessel, that is the lifeline that keeps them and sustains them. The very question for us is this: If that balloon goes up and the bell rings, are we going to trust a foreign power to hold in their hand that very lifeblood for our men and women and our warfighters?

I want to remind everyone in the House that in World War II, 1 in 26 merchant mariners were actually killed. It was a higher rate of loss than any other service. The rate was so high, in fact, that the merchant marine concealed it because they were afraid they couldn't find enough mariners if the true danger of the services were known.

So our big question here is, even if we came back with a study that said it might be cheaper to outsource it, would anyone in this room dare place that trust in a foreign country? I think very clearly we would not.

Mr. Chairman, also these decisions are probably best made by military transportation command, sealift command, and maritime command, and they have said there is no guarantee whatsoever that a foreign-flagged fleet will sail into harm's way if we need them. They have said a 60-ship capability is extremely important, and they have said that foreign-flagged ships which might be cheaper cannot be relied on for critical national security missions.

Mr. Chairman, I hope we will oppose this amendment, we will reject it.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from South Carolina has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I would say this: in essence, we already have outsourced this. I think the question about the maritime security fleet is that it is currently run by a foreign-flagged fleet of vessels. If I am not mistaken, it is almost exclusively run by Maersk, which is a foreign-flagged vessel.

The question of this amendment is to say: Might not there be other ways of doing it? Maybe this is the best way to do it. Maybe there are other ways to do it. But this notion of not being willing to look, not being willing to have a third party validate or, if you will, take a look and say this makes sense or, no, there is a better way of skinning this cat both for the military and for the taxpayer, I think again warrants, in this case, the study by the GAO.

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In Desert Storm I, back in the 1990s, a ship that was manned by Pakistanis was loaded at the docks, began to sail, and turned around because the crew refused to go into that zone. We cannot

allow that to happen ever again. The MSP was started specifically to provide that kind of sealift power that we need to move our men, materiel, and equipment, wherever they may be needed in the world. It does us little good to spend $680 billion on a Defense appropriation bill and not be able to get where the trouble is. Do away with the MSP, and that is where you are headed with this, moving toward foreign flags and, indeed, Maersk is operated by a foreign country, but it is licensed to operate in the United States with American sailors on American ships for the MSP program.

We don't need to waste money on this. The studies are available dating back to 2006, 2009, and, more recently, with the OMB study. We don't need to waste our money. We need to get on with supporting the MSP program. I ask for a ''no'' vote.

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

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I would again go back to the basics. This stipend goes to Maersk presently. It has been raised from $3.5 million to $5 million. Maybe that is the best thing in the world to do; maybe it is not. But I think it is worthy of study, particularly given the fact that we have raised the stipend by $89 million over the last year, particularly given the fact that we have not looked at this issue from the standpoint of an outside third-party validation from the GAO for more than 12 years.

It is for that reason I simply say, again, in no way prescriptively, it is worth a look. And again, given the fact that the Government Accountability Office does regular studies on a whole host of different issues on a very regular basis, I think this is worthy, given the additional $89 million that was spent last year.

I would ask for a ''yes'' vote.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD).

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

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 18 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 18 printed in House Report 114–571.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Strike section 1045 and insert the following:

SEC. 1045. PROTECTION OF CERTAIN FEDERAL SPECTRUM OPERATIONS.

Section 1004 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–74; 47 U.S.C. 921 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) PROTECTION OF CERTAIN FEDERAL SPECTRUM OPERATIONS.—If the report required by subsection (a) determines that reallocation and auction of the spectrum described in the report would harm national security by impacting existing terrestrial Federal spectrum operations at the Nevada Test and Training Range, the Commission, in coordination with the Secretary shall, prior to the auction described in subsection (c)(1)(B), establish rules for licensees in such spectrum sufficient to mitigate harmful interference to such operations.

''(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect any requirement under section 1062(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (47 U.S.C. 921 note; Public Law 106–65).''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

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

Mr. Chairman, the Spectrum Pipeline Act was included in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 that we passed in December. Now, apparently, there has developed some disagreement among lawyers about whether that had some effect on section 1062(b) of the fiscal year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act related to spectrum.

My amendment simply clarifies what everyone that I know of agrees on, and that is it was never intended to have any effect. We have assurance from the Office of Management and Budget that was their intention. I appreciate Chairman FRED UPTON, who has worked with us on this amendment, saying that was not his intention. Basically, Mr. Chairman, I see this as a technical amendment to resolve some disagreement among lawyers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, the Nation's spectrum is one of our most valuable natural resources. Under the bipartisan oversight of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, one spectrum auction alone last year raised more than $40 billion. It is imperative that we continue our bipartisan management of this valuable national asset, but to do that we must follow regular order through the proper committee of jurisdiction. That is the only way that we can make sure that we continue proper congressional oversight.

This amendment that we are considering today was made public 1 day ago. This process runs counter to our successful bipartisan efforts to manage spectrum well. It does not allow the relevant agencies adequate time to weigh in, and it does not allow interested stakeholders to provide meaningful input.

I appreciate my colleague's efforts to improve this amendment, but these are extremely complicated issues of national importance. They cannot be put together overnight.

Earlier today when the rule for consideration of this bill was debated here on the floor, my Republican colleagues said that they chose to exclude some Democratic amendments because those amendments did not go through the committee process. Well, the same can be said of this amendment as well, Mr. Chairman.

If there are issues of national security underlying this amendment, the Democrats on the Committee on Energy and Commerce stand ready to work on them expeditiously, but we must stand by our commitment to regular order. The consequences of getting this wrong are simply too high.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I have no further speakers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), the ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, this is clearly a problem that we need to work on. The chairman and I have worked together in talking about it and making sure that our military assets are protected as we deal with spectrum auctions.

I look forward to having the conversation in conference committee about how to deal with this, but my concern is this is something that many on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and I as well, have worked on for a number of years. We worked with the Department of Defense for years to try and make sure that their equities were protected. We talked with everyone we could conceivably talk with. This auction was originally set up to make sure that we protected those.

Now we are hearing a slightly new argument. I certainly want to make sure that the Department of Defense's interests are protected, but I also want to make sure that they don't have absolute veto power on auctioning spectrum. That was sort of the law before all of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and others worked on, and it really tied up a very valuable national asset, as Mr. PALLONE points out.

I hope that as we get into conference committee we will figure out how to both protect the interests of national security and the Defense, but also make sure that, if spectrum can be safely made available, it is safely made available.

As I said, this was something that was worked on for a very long time,

and we thought we had it worked out. So right at the eleventh hour here, to have the Department of Defense say ''No, we want to change it'' is something I think we still need to examine more closely.

I thank Mr. PALLONE for the time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time simply to say this amendment, a version of this amendment, was filed last week. Working with the Committee on Energy and Commerce, it has been revised. Again, the purpose of this amendment is—and what I think it clearly does is simply restate what everybody thought was the case—to resolve a disagreement among lawyers. That is the reason I call it, really, a technical amendment. I hope that the House will adopt it.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1815

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 4 consisting of amendment Nos. 23, 43, 44, 46, 47, 50, 51, 54, 64, 65, 66, 67, and 69 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 23 OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF ALABAMA

At the end of subtitle F of title XVI, add the following new section:

SEC. 16___. HARMFUL INTERFERENCE TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM.

(a) FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION CONDITIONS ON COMMERCIAL TERRESTRIAL OPERATIONS.—Part I of title III of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 343. CONDITIONS ON COMMERCIAL TERRESTRIAL OPERATIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall not permit commercial terrestrial operations in the 1525–1559 megahertz band or the 1626.5–1660.5 megahertz band until the date that is 90 days after the Commission resolves concerns of widespread harmful interference by such operations in such band to covered GPS devices.

''(b) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—At the conclusion of the proceeding on such operations in such band, the Commission shall submit to the congressional committees described in paragraph (2) official copies of the documents containing the final decision of the Commission regarding whether to permit such operations in such band. If the decision is to permit such operations in such band, such documents shall contain or be accompanied by an explanation of how the concerns described in subsection (a) have been resolved.

''(2) CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DESCRIBED.—The congressional committees described in this paragraph are the following:

''(A) The Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

''(B) The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

''(c) COVERED GPS DEVICE DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered GPS device' means a Global Position System device of the Department of Defense.''.

(b) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE REVIEW OF HARMFUL INTERFERENCE.—

(1) REVIEW.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 90 days thereafter until the date referred to in paragraph (3), the Secretary of Defense shall conduct a review to—

(A) assess the ability of covered GPS devices to receive signals from Global Positioning System satellites without widespread harmful interference; and

(B) determine if commercial communications services are causing or will cause widespread harmful interference with covered GPS devices.

(2) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—

(A) NOTICE.—If the Secretary of Defense determines during a review under paragraph (1) that commercial communications services are causing or will cause widespread harmful interference with covered GPS devices, the Secretary shall promptly submit to the congressional defense committees notice of such interference.

(B) CONTENTS.—The notice required under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) a list and description of the covered GPS devices that are being or expected to be interfered with by commercial communications services;

(ii) a description of the source of, and the entity causing or expect to cause, the interference with such receivers;

(iii) a description of the manner in which such source or such entity is causing or expected to cause such interference;

(iv) a description of the magnitude of harm caused or expected to be caused by such interference;

(v) a description of the duration of and the conditions and circumstances under which such interference is occurring or expected to occur;

(vi) a description of the impact of such interference on the national security interests of the United States; and

(vii) a description of the plans of the Secretary to address, alleviate, or mitigate such interference, including the cost of such plans.

(C) FORM.—The notice required under subparagraph (A) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(3) TERMINATION DATE.—The date referred to in this paragraph is the earlier of—

(A) the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(B) the date on which the Secretary—

(i) determines that commercial communications services are not causing any widespread harmful interference with covered GPS devices; and

(ii) the Secretary submits to the congressional defense committees notice of the determination made under clause (i).

(c) COVERED GPS DEVICE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered GPS device'' means a Global Position System device of the Department of Defense.

(d) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112–81; 125 Stat. 1534) is repealed.

AMENDMENT NO. 43 OFFERED BY MR. CARTER OF GEORGIA

Page 269, line 7, insert ''including small business pharmacies,'' after ''retail pharmacy,''.

AMENDMENT NO. 44 OFFERED BY MRS. COMSTOCK OF VIRGINIA

At the end of subtitle D of title VII add the following:

SEC. ___. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE STUDIES ON PREVENTING THE DIVERSION OF OPIOID MEDICATIONS.

(a) STUDIES.—With respect to programs of the Department of Defense that dispense drugs to patients, the Secretary of Defense (referred to in this section as the ''Secretary'') shall study the feasibility, the effectiveness in preventing the diversion of opioid medications, and the cost-effectiveness of—

(1) requiring that such programs, in appropriate cases, dispense opioid medications in vials using affordable technologies designed to prevent access to the medications by anyone other than the intended patient, such as a vial with a locking-cap closure mechanism; and

(2) the Secretary providing education on the risks of opioid medications to individuals for whom such medications are prescribed, and to their families, with special consideration given to raising awareness among adolescents on such risks.

(b) FEEDBACK.—In conducting the studies under subsection (a), the Secretary shall seek feedback (on a confidential basis when appropriate) from the individuals and entities involved in the studies.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress a report on the results of the studies conducted under subsection (a).

AMENDMENT NO. 46 OFFERED BY MR. LAMBORN OF COLORADO

At the end of subtitle A of title VIII, add the following new section:

SEC. 810A. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR ENHANCED TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED AT DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE LABORATORIES.

Section 801(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66; 127 Stat. 804; 10 U.S.C. 2514 note) is amended by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2021''.

AMENDMENT NO. 47 OFFERED BY MR. JENKINS OF WEST VIRGINIA

At the end of title III, add the following new section:

SEC. 3___. INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR NATIONAL GUARD COUNTER-DRUG PROGRAMS.

(a) INCREASE.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D, the amount authorized to be appropriated in section 1404 for drug interdiction and counter-drug activities, as specified in the corresponding funding table in section 4501, for drug interdiction and counter-drug activities, Defense-wide is hereby increased by $30,000,000 (to be used in support of the National Guard counter-drug programs).

(b) OFFSET.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D—

(1) the amount authorized to be appropriated for in section 101 for procurement, as specified in the corresponding funding table in section 4101, for Aircraft Procurement, Navy, for Common Ground Equipment (Line 064), is hereby reduced by $20,000,000; and

(2) the amount authorized to be appropriated in section 201 for research, development, test, and evaluation, as specified in the corresponding funding table in section 4201, for advanced component development and prototypes, Advanced Innovative Technologies (Line 095) is hereby reduced by $10,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 50 OFFERED BY MR. GUINTA OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Page 372, after line 8, insert the following:

SEC. 1014. FUNDING FOR COUNTER NARCOTICS OPERATIONS.

(a) INCREASE.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D, the amount authorized to be appropriated for drug interdiction and counterdrug activities, Defense-wide, as specified in the corresponding funding table in section 4501 is hereby increased by $3,000,000.

(b) OFFSET.—Notwithstanding the amounts set forth in the funding tables in division D, the amount authorized to be appropriated for operation and maintenance, as specified in the corresponding funding table in section 4301, for administration and servicewide activities, Defense Logistics Agency (Line 160) is hereby reduced by $3,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 51 OFFERED BY MR. WALBERG OF MICHIGAN

Page 372, after line 8, insert the following:

SEC. 1014. REPORT ON EFFORTS OF UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND OPERATION TO DETECT AND MONITOR DRUG TRAFFICKING.

The Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report on the effectiveness of the United States Southern Command Operation to limit threats to the national security of the United States by detecting and monitoring drug trafficking, specifically heroin and fentanyl.

AMENDMENT NO. 54 OFFERED BY MRS. ELLMERS OF NORTH CAROLINA

At the end of subtitle F of title X (page 423, before line 4), add the following new section:

SEC. 1070. QUARTERLY REPORTS ON PARACHUTE JUMPS CONDUCTED AT FORT BRAGG AND POPE ARMY AIRFIELD AND AIR FORCE SUPPORT FOR SUCH JUMPS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Until January 31, 2020, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate quarterly reports—

(1) specifying the number of parachute jumps conducted at Fort Bragg and Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina, during the three-month period covered by the report; and

(2) describing and evaluating the level of air support provided by the Air Force for those jumps.

(b) JOINT AIRBORNE AIR TRANSPORTABILITY TRAINING CONTRACTS.—As part of each report submitted under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall specifically provide the following:

(1) The number of Joint Airborne Air Transportability Training contracts requested during the three-month period covered by the report by all units located at Fort Bragg and Pope Army Airfield.

(2) The number of Joint Airborne Air Transportability Training contracts validated during the three-month period covered by the report for units located at Fort Bragg and Pope Army Airfield.

(3) The number of Joint Airborne Air Transportability Training contracts not validated during the three-month period covered by the report for units located at Fort Bragg and Pope Army Airfield.

(4) In the case of each Joint Airborne Air Transportability Training contract identified pursuant to paragraph (3), the reason the contract was not validated.

AMENDMENT NO. 64 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

Page 462, after line 13, insert the following new section:

SEC. 1098. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND PREPAREDNESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the United States Northern Command plays a crucial role in providing additional response capability to State and local governments in domestic disaster relief and consequence management operations;

(2) the United States Northern Command must continue to build upon its current efforts to develop command strategies, leadership training, and response plans to effectively work with civil authorities when acting as the lead agency or a supporting agency; and

(3) the United States Northern Command should leverage whenever possible training and management expertise that resides within the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and private sector businesses and academic institutions to enhance—

(A) its defense support to civil authorities and incidence management missions;

(B) relationships with other entities involved in disaster response; and

(C) its ability to respond to unforeseen events.

AMENDMENT NO. 65 OFFERED BY MR. LEWIS OF GEORGIA

At the end of title X, add the following new section:

SEC. 1098. COST OF WARS.

The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service and the Director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, shall post on the public Web site of the Department of Defense the costs, including the relevant legacy costs, to each American taxpayer of each of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

AMENDMENT NO. 66 OFFERED BY MS. BORDALLO OF GUAM

Page 462, after line 13, insert the following:

SEC. 1098. WORKFORCE ISSUES FOR RELOCATION OF MARINES TO GUAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6(b) of the Joint Resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union With the United States of America', and for other purposes'', approved March 24, 1976 (48 U.S.C. 1806(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS FOR NONIMMIGRANT WORKERS.—An alien, if otherwise qualified, may seek admission to Guam or to the Commonwealth during the transition program as a nonimmigrant worker under section 101(a)(15)(H) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)) without counting against the numerical limitations set forth in section 214(g) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(g)). An alien, if otherwise qualified, may, before October 1, 2028, be admitted under section 101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(b) of such Act for a period of up to 3 years (which may be extended by the Secretary of Homeland Security before October 1, 2028, for an additional period or periods not to exceed 3 years each) to perform services or labor on Guam pursuant to any agreement entered into by a prime contractor or subcontractor calling for services or labor required for performance of the contract or subcontract in direct support of all military-funded construction, repairs, renovation, and facilities services, or to perform services or labor on Guam as a health-care worker, notwithstanding the requirement of such section that the service or labor be temporary. This subsection does not apply to any employment to be performed outside of Guam or the Commonwealth.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 67 OFFERED BY MR. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY OF NEW YORK

Page 462, after line 13, insert the following:

SEC. 1098. REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEBT COLLECTION REGULATIONS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall review and update Department of Defense regulations to ensure such regulations comply with Federal consumer protection law with respect to the collection of debt.

AMENDMENT NO. 69 OFFERED BY MR. LANGEVIN OF RHODE ISLAND

Page 480, before line 13, insert the following:

SEC. 1112. PUBLIC-PRIVATE TALENT EXCHANGE.

(a) AUTHORITY.—Chapter 81 of title 10, United States Code, as amended by section 1105 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1599g. Public-private talent exchange

''(a) ASSIGNMENT AUTHORITY.—Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary may, with the agreement of a private-sector organization and the consent of the employee, arrange for the temporary assignment of an employee to such private-sector organization, or from such private-sector organization to a Department of Defense organization under this section.

''(b) AGREEMENTS.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall provide for a written agreement among the Department of Defense, the private-sector organization, and the employee concerned regarding the terms and conditions of the employee's assignment under this section. The agreement—

''(A) shall require that the employee of the Department of Defense, upon completion of the assignment, will serve in the Department of Defense, or elsewhere in the civil service if approved by the Secretary, for a period equal to the length of the assignment; and

''(B) shall provide that if the employee of the Department of Defense or of the private-sector organization (as the case may be) fails to carry out the agreement, such employee shall be liable to the United States for payment of all expenses of the assignment, unless that failure was for good and sufficient reason, as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

''(2) An amount for which an employee is liable under paragraph (1) shall be treated as a debt due the United States.

''(3) The Secretary may waive, in whole or in part, collection of a debt described in paragraph (2) based on a determination that the collection would be against equity and good conscience and not in the best interests of the United States, after taking into account any indication of fraud, misrepresentation, fault, or lack of good faith on the part of the employee.

''(c) TERMINATION.—An assignment under this section may, at any time and for any reason, be terminated by the Department of Defense or the private-sector organization concerned.

''(d) DURATION.—An assignment under this section shall be for a period of not less than 3 months and not more than one year, renewable up to a total of 4 years. No employee of the Department of Defense may be assigned under this section for more than a total of 4 years inclusive of all such assignments.

''(e) STATUS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSIGNED TO PRIVATE-SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS.—An employee of the Department of Defense who is assigned to a private-sector organization under this section shall be considered, during the period of assignment, to be on detail to a regular work assignment in the Department for all purposes. The written agreement established under subsection (b)(1) shall address the specific terms and conditions related to the employee's continued status as a Federal employee.

''(f) TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYEES.—An employee of a private-sector organization who is assigned to a Department of Defense organization under this section—

''(1) shall continue to receive pay and benefits from the private-sector organization from which such employee is assigned and shall not receive pay or benefits from the Department of Defense, except as provided in paragraph (2);

''(2) is deemed to be an employee of the Department of Defense for the purposes of—

''(A) chapters 73 and 81 of title 5;

''(B) sections 201, 203, 205, 207, 208, 209, 603, 606, 607, 643, 654, 1905, and 1913 of title 18;

''(C) sections 1343, 1344, and 1349(b) of title 31;

''(D) the Federal Tort Claims Act and any other Federal tort liability statute;

''(E) the Ethics in Government Act of 1978; and

''(F) chapter 21 of title 41;

''(3) shall not have access to any trade secrets or to any other nonpublic information which is of commercial value to the private-sector organization from which such employee is assigned.

''(g) PROHIBITION AGAINST CHARGING CERTAIN COSTS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.—A private-sector organization may not charge the Department of any other agency of the Federal Government, as direct or indirect costs under a Federal contract, the costs of pay or benefits paid by the organization to an employee assigned to a Department organization under this section for the period of the assignment.

''(h) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary of Defense—

''(1) shall ensure that, of the assignments made under this section each year, at least 20 percent are from small business concerns (as defined by section 3703(e)(2)(A) of title 5);

''(2) shall take into consideration the question of how assignments under this section might best be used to help meet the needs of the Department of Defense with respect to the training of employees; and

''(3) shall take into consideration, where applicable, areas of particular private sector expertise, such as cybersecurity.''.

(b) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter, as amended by section 1105 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''1599g. Public-private talent exchange.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOULTON) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS).

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, this amendment does one thing: it maintains oversight and accountability of the Air Force. This will ensure that the Air Force follows through on their promise of providing adequate air support to ensure there is no negative impact on the readiness of Fort Bragg paratroopers.

I have said this is a terrible decision, and today's amendment is about holding the Air Force accountable. It will require the Secretary of the Army and the Air Force to evaluate and to report the levels of air support provided to Fort Bragg by the Air Force. As the Representative of Fort Bragg, this will allow me to monitor jump numbers and ensure military readiness is not jeopardized in any way, shape, or form.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I want to, first of all, thank my HASC colleague across the aisle, ETC Chairman WILSON from the great State of South Carolina, for working with me on this bipartisan amendment to expand talent exchange authorities within the DOD.

This amendment addresses a key challenge facing the Department, which is competition with the private sector to recruit and retain highly skilled talent.

As we understand right now, it is exceptionally competitive in, for example, the IT and cybersecurity fields. We need to be able to retain, attract, and recruit the best and the brightest in this field, particularly because salaries are very high and it is very difficult in many ways for the DOD to compete in this space.

While we are very grateful, of course, for those who devote their lives to a military career, not everyone will give 20 or 30 years of their lives to the U.S. military. But there is certainly no shortage of patriotism across the private sector, and dedicating several months or years of their lives to our national security is certainly a worthy endeavor.

This also gives DOD employees exposure to cutting-edge operational techniques and best practices across a wide array of disciplines, while giving private sector employees insight into how the Department operates.

Mr. Chairman, we must ensure that we are recruiting the best and the brightest in order to uphold our national defenses.

This amendment has been sought after by the DOD. Again, there is bipartisan support on this amendment. It gives great flexibility to the Department to be able to work to bring in people of great talent from the private sector for a period of time. Again, it also allows the DOD to have our men and women in uniform go to the private sector for a time and learn best practices and what cutting-edge techniques and capabilities are happening in the private sector.

So this is a good, commonsense amendment, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership in this very important endeavor.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this amendment package, which includes my amendment that clarifies that the pilot program for prescription drug acquisition costs regarding TRICARE pharmacy benefits will also include small business pharmacies.

Currently, the pilot program helps extend discounts to TRICARE beneficiaries for prescription drugs filled at retail pharmacies. My amendment simply clarifies that small business pharmacies are retail pharmacies and will be included in this pilot program.

In many cases around the country, people are unlimited when it comes to which pharmacy they can have their preparations filled at. With this amendment, we can ensure all pharmacies, both large and small retailers, will be included in this pilot program.

I encourage all my colleagues to support this amendment package.

Mr MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to refer back to an amendment that was in the previous en bloc that dealt with the special immigrant visas.

I want to express my appreciation to the committee, the chairman, the ranking member, and to the staff. This is a complicated issue. It is in your bill, but it is not entirely within your jurisdiction. And there has been an ebb and flow. It has been something that I have, as you know, been working on for a decade, and that is for the United States to keep faith with the people in Afghanistan who made the mission possible—the people who literally risked their lives as guides, construction workers, interpreters, and truck drivers—the men and women who made it possible for us to succeed.

It isn't just the Department of Defense. There are men and women who worked with the State Department and USAID, which are an important part of our activities in those countries. Those foreign nationals are every bit at risk as somebody who is guiding our troops in the field.

I appreciate your willingness to put in the en bloc amendment a little bit of flexibility. I hope it is not the last word, because we need to think seriously about what we do for the people who work on base, people who work for the State Department, and the people who work for USAID so that we are able to make sure that we have an adequate number of visas and that we don't have an arbitrarily short period of time because the pipeline has been hopelessly complex and flawed.

We have been working with the bureaucracy in trying to make it work better, but that is an ongoing struggle. And the fact is, there are different people with different committees who have different orientations.

I hope that this en bloc amendment is just the start and that we can continue working with the chairman, with the minority party, with the staff, and with the advocates and various people who are committed to making sure that we do right by the people who are at risk now of being killed, murdered, tortured, and having family members killed.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished

gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HUDSON).

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, North Carolina is a proud, strong military State. We are proud of the men and women who answer the call and risk their lives to protect us. I never, ever want them to be in a fair fight. I want them to always have the tools, the equipment, and the training needed to dominate and destroy the enemy. That is why I filed an amendment with my colleague, RENEE ELLMERS, to protect training of paratroopers at Fort Bragg, the epicenter of the universe.

As you may know, the Air Force has moved forward with plans to deactivate the 440th Airlift Wing. This deactivation puts these young paratroopers, and indeed our very national security, at risk, as evidenced by the failure of the Air Force to meet current training requirements.

For the sake of our national security, this amendment is absolutely critical to hold the Air Force accountable and to ensure our rapid reaction forces are prepared for deployment at a moment's notice.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the bipartisan amendment I have co-written with my colleague, Judge TED POE of Texas.

The amendment, which is part of the en bloc amendments, endorses an ongoing effort at the Defense Security Cooperation Agency to develop a comprehensive framework for the assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of security cooperation activities of the Department of Defense. It follows a related monitoring evaluation amendment Judge POE and I offered to the NDAA for FY 2016 and the committee retained, gratefully, in the 2017 bill.

Security cooperation with foreign security forces builds valuable international partnerships and enhances the ability of our partners to carry out joint military operations and enhances American security while it is at it. However, few requirements are placed on these programs to measure the impact of funding provided to our foreign security partners. Looking at efficacy, does it work?

Judge POE and I have led the effort to apply assessment, monitoring, and evaluation leading principles to U.S. foreign assistance administered by the State Department, USAID, and other Federal agencies.

Last year, the House of Representatives passed our bill, the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability, H.R. 3766. We should have a similar expectation of accountability for our security cooperation programs as well.

I welcome the committee's bipartisan efforts to begin to reform, consolidate, and modify the more than 120 security cooperation authorities Congress has provided DOD over the years.

Notably, the underlying bill strengthens country-by-country reporting requirements for security cooperation and begins to reorganize security cooperation authorities into one coherent separate section of title X of the U.S. Code.

Furthermore, the Senate is advancing an NDAA bill that requires DOD to produce an annual budget justification for security cooperation funding.

There is obviously significant demand, Mr. Chairman, for more transparency and accountability in terms of U.S. security cooperation. Our amendment is consistent with that demand, and it builds on the great work done by the committee in this area to define clear objectives and metrics for security cooperation.

I want to thank the chairman, the ranking member, and both committee staffs, minority and majority, for their excellent work and for their bipartisan approach to this and so many other issues in the bill.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. GUINTA).

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, and I want to thank the chairman for including it in the en bloc package.

My amendment increases funding for U.S. NORTHCOM's Joint Task Force North by $3 million to assist with its counternarcotics operations.

As part of my work as the chair of the Task Force to Combat the Heroin Epidemic, I traveled to the Mexican border earlier this spring to investigate sources of illegal fentanyl and heroin coming into the country. There I learned and had the opportunity to meet with the commanding officers at the Joint Task Force North, the joint service command that supports Federal law enforcement agencies with resources to identify and interdict criminal activities conducted within the United States and its borders.

My goal is to ensure that Joint Task Force North receives the funding necessary to continue their counternarcotics efforts.

Again, I want to thank the chairman and the Armed Services Committee for their work on the underlying bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, again, I thank the distinguished gentleman, and I also thank the chairman of the full committee, the ranking member of the full committee, and the subcommittee chairs as well.

I serve on the Homeland Security Committee, and I am constantly aware of the overlapping duties and responsibilities, Mr. Chairman, of the United States military, which has its confinement in certain areas, but also working to secure the homeland.

The Jackson Lee amendment No. 64 in en bloc amendment No. 4 makes an important contribution to the bill by improving the effectiveness of U.S. Northern Command, or NORTHCOM, in fulfilling its critical mission of protecting the U.S. homeland in the event of war and to provide support to local, State, and Federal authorities in times of national emergency.

Specifically, here is what my amendment does. It develops and has in place a leadership strategy that will strengthen and foster necessary institutional and interpersonal relationships with State and local governments. The backbone of securing the homeland is engaging State and local governments. Also, to develop an instructional program to train key personnel how to lead effectively in the event of a disaster when they do not have command authority to dictate actions.

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In addition, NORTHCOM, which was established in 2002 in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, is to bring the capabilities and the resources of the U.S. military to the assistance the American people during a catastrophic disaster like war or a pandemic outbreak of diseases, such as Ebola, Zika, SARS, or influenza; major earthquakes, floods, and natural disasters; or terrorist attacks.

I live in the Gulf Coast, and I am well familiar with hurricanes, enormous rains that we have just experienced, needing to bring to bear moving large numbers of people, housing large numbers of people.

And then this morning I spent time after time of dealing with the Zika virus, which, again, our southern Gulf Coast region may be the epicenter.

Let me quote, for example, a quote from a renowned professor, Leonard Marcus, out of Harvard. What we are trying to do is: ''Effective emergency preparedness and response requires leadership that can accomplish perceptive coordination and communication amongst diverse agencies . . . ''

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. HOLDING). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. The challenge is, as we learned from 9/11, ''operating within their specified scope of authority, preparedness leaders in characteristic bureaucratic fashion often serve to bolster the profile and import of their own organization, thereby creating a silo effect . . . ''

So let me speak as that Homeland Security member and the person who has been engaged in the crises or disasters in my own community. When we collaborate we work better together. When we develop relationships, we work better together.

Let me just offer a moment of personal privilege as someone speaking about relationships. This bill has many good elements in it, and I am propelled

and committed to diversity and respecting all people.

I am saddened by the language that the Russell amendment has dealing with the LGBT, and I am saddened that the Dent amendment was not allowed in. We need to build on collaborating with all people to secure America and to make a better military.

I thank the gentleman for the support of my amendment in the en bloc.

Mr. Chair, I rise in support of En Bloc Amendment Number 4 to H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, offered by Chairman THORNBERRY.

I want to express my thanks and appreciation to Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH, and their colleagues on the Armed Services Committee for their work thank on this bill and their devotion to the men and women of the Armed Forces.

I also thank Chairman SESSIONS and Ranking Member SLAUGHTER of the Rules Committee for making in order Jackson Lee Amendment Number 64, which is included in En Bloc Amendment Number 4.

Jackson Lee Amendment Number 64 makes an important contribution to the bill by improving the effectiveness of the Northern Command (''NORTHCOM'') in fulfilling its critical mission of protecting the U.S. homeland in event of war and to provide support to local, state, and federal authorities in times of national emergency.

Specifically, Jackson Lee Amendment Number 64 encourages NORTHCOM to:

1. Develop and has in place a leadership strategy that will strengthen and foster necessary institutional and interpersonal relationships with state and local governments; and

2. Develop an instructional program to train key personnel how to lead effectively in the event of a disaster when they do not have command authority to dictate actions.

A mission critical function of NORTHCOM, which was established in 2002 in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks is to bring the capabilities and the resources of the U.S. military to the assistance of the American people during a catastrophic disaster like war, a pandemic outbreak of diseases such Ebola, Zika, Sars, or influenza; major earthquakes, floods, and natural disasters; or terrorist attacks like those occurring on September 11, 2001 and at the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013.

NORTHCOM leaders will be much more effective in saving lives, protecting assets, and enhancing resilience after the disaster has occurred if they are trained in the techniques of effective engagement with civilian leadership.

Jackson Lee Amendment Number 64 will help ensure that such training will be available.

Mr. Chair, let me explain why this type of training—commonly referred to as ''Resilience'' training is very important.

As stated in a highly influential journal article by Professor Leonard Marcus and his colleagues at Harvard's National Public Leadership Initiative, ''effective emergency preparedness and response requires leadership that can accomplish perceptive coordination and communication amongst diverse agencies and sectors.'' (Leonard J. Marcus, Barry C. Dorn, and Joseph M. Henderson, Meta-Leadership and National Emergency Preparedness: A Model to Build Government Connectivity, in Biosecurity And Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice, And Science Volume 4, Number 2, 2006).

The challenge is, as we learned from the 9/11 Commission, operating within their specified scope of authority, preparedness leaders in characteristic bureaucratic fashion often serve to bolster the profile and import of their own organization, thereby creating a silo effect that interferes with effective system wide planning and response.

Resilience training seeks to equip preparedness leaders overcome this obstacle of ''traditional silo thinking by teaching ''meta-leadership,'' a new type of overarching leadership that intentionally connects the purposes and work of different organizations or organizational units.

Meta-leadership training enables leaders to provide guidance, direction, and momentum across organizational lines that develop into a shared course of action and a commonality of purpose among people and agencies that are doing what may appear to be very different work.

Meta-leaders have the skill and training to imaginatively and effectively leverage system assets, information, and capacities, which a particularly critical function for organizations with emergency preparedness responsibilities like responding to terrorist attacks, natural disasters, or pandemic outbreaks of infectious diseases like the Ebola and the Zika Virus, which may disproportionately affect persons in the Gulf Coast region, including my congressional district in Houston, Texas.

As a senior and charter member of the Homeland Security Committee, and the Ranking Member of Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, I have spent the better part of the last decade and a half working to craft policies and provide the resources, personnel, equipment, and funding needed to protect the security of our homeland and the American people.

Jackson Lee Amendment Number 64 will help ensure that those responsible for providing leadership in times of national emergency have the skills and training to prevent, mitigate, or recover from any major catastrophe, disaster, or tragedy that could befall our nation.

I urge my colleagues to support En Bloc Amendment Number 64 and thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for including Jackson Lee Amendment Number 64 in this important measure.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of two amendments I offered to this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

The amendment we are currently considering requires the DOD to report on the effectiveness of efforts to detect and monitor drug trafficking, specifically heroin and fentanyl, which is devastating my home State of Michigan and the entire country.

The United States Southern Command is already doing important work to interdict drug runners and provide needed training to counternarcotic teams in Central America.

My amendment would help quantify those efforts and see what more can be done to combat the heroin and fentanyl coming from this region.

The second bipartisan amendment, which we will consider later today, requires DOD to verify it has sufficient access to Afghan accounts to guarantee effective audits.

It is important that our military has access to financial information to protect U.S. funds from waste, fraud, and abuse, and ensure taxpayer resources are being spent effectively.

I appreciate these amendments being included en bloc. I urge the support of my colleagues.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS).

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment, and I thank the chairman for including it in the next en bloc amendment, one that brings accountability to countries granting consent to Russian naval vessels calling into port.

The aggressive posture and actions of the Russian Federation over the last few years has profoundly changed the global landscape. Russia has invaded Crimea, and currently still occupies that region. And Russia directly intervened militarily to shore up the Assad regime in Syria.

The common thread that runs through these two interventions is that of warm water ports for the Russian navy. Crimea's port in Sevastopol and Syria's port of Tartus provide Russia with access to the warm waters of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, waters that are essential to Russia's reach of aggression.

Despite these aggressive actions, some countries are accommodating the Russian navy by allowing warships and submarines to call into their ports.

Spain, although a cherished NATO ally, grants Russia access to the ports in its enclaves across the strategically important Strait of Gibraltar, where the United Kingdom has a Permanent Joint Operating Base that hosts U.S. ships.

Furthermore, Greece and Malta have hosted Russian warships last year. The recent high-profile visits to Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua by Russia's navy in recent years are also cause for concern.

Mr. Chairman, governments across the globe should be isolating the Russian navy, not accommodating it.

The Russian navy must constantly compete with geographic and strategic disadvantages of lacking access to warm blue waters of the world, but these disadvantages are forfeited when we lack a cohesive, unified effort to deny Russian vessels the ability to call into foreign ports.

With the inclusion of this amendment, the Secretary of Defense will have to report to Congress and, thus, the American people on these instances. And I hope governments will think twice before offering up their ports to Putin's navy.

I urge support of the underlying bill as well.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois, (Mr. KINZINGER).

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of amendment No. 74 in the en bloc, the Blumenauer Special Immigrant Visa amendment. I just want to speak to the program broadly and quickly.

In Afghanistan, countless people put their lives on the line to serve as translators, basically being the middle person between American troops and the population we are trying to secure.

Now, we promised them opportunity to come into the United States, but this process has been bogged down by bureaucracy. In fact, many have been in this process for years, and still in the first steps because of the bureaucracy on this.

Unfortunately, today, actually, many Afghans are being killed every day by the Taliban, by ISIS, by al Qaeda, as a result of having worked with us.

I want to thank Representative MOULTON and Representative BLUMENAUER for their work on this. This is a bipartisan issue, and one that I think we ought to take very seriously, keeping our commitment to those that help us, because there will be a war again some day, and we ought to be able to maintain the trust of the population we are there to secure.

So I thank Mr. BLUMENAUER for putting this amendment in, and I thank the chairman for accepting it.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chair, I just think it is important to pause for a second and just think about what has just happened here. We have had a package of amendments that have been discussed, about an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. They have talked about very important issues and contributions that they have made, but if a Member then votes against final passage of the bill, the contributions are nullified.

And I think it is just important to step back and just reiterate that all of us have provisions in this bill we agree with and disagree with. We place different values on different parts of the bill. But what has happened before is that Members have put aside some personal differences and still paid attention to the larger purpose of the bill, which is to support the men and women who serve our country. I hope that can happen again.

However proud Members may be of the various provisions—and there are a lot of good provisions from both sides of the aisle—however proud they may be of those, if you don't support the final bill, you are not accomplishing very much.

I hope Members not only will support this en bloc package, but the final measure.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 5 consisting of amendment Nos. 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 68, 70, 74, 77, and 82 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 55 OFFERED BY MR. GOSAR OF ARIZONA

At the end of subtitle F of title X, add the following new section:

SEC. 1070. BRIEFING ON REAL PROPERTY INVENTORY.

(a) BRIEFING REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall brief the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives on the status of the Installation Geospatial Information and Services of the Department of Defense as it relates to the real property inventory of the Department, and the extent to which the Department has made use of the cadastral geographic information systems-based real property inventory.

(b) MATTERS COVERED.—The briefing required by subsection (a) shall, at a minimum, cover the following:

(1) The status of current policies of the Department governing real property inventories and the use of geospatial information systems, the status of real property inventory in relation to the financial improvement and audit readiness efforts of the Department, and the status of implementation of Department of Defense Instruction 8130.01, Installation Geospatial Information and Services (IGI&S).

(2) The extent to which the Department is coordinating with the Federal Geographic Data Committee, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments, and how existing Department standards and common protocols ensure that the interoperability of geospatial information complies with section 216 of the E-Government Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–347; 44 U.S.C. 3501 note) and Executive Orders 12906 and 13327.

(3) The existing real property inventories systems or any components of any cadastre currently authorized by law or conducted by the Department of Defense, the statutory authorization for such inventories or components, and the amount expended by the Federal Government for each such activity in fiscal year 2015.

(4) A discussion of the Department's ability to make this information publicly available on the Internet in a graphically geo-enabled and searchable format, and how the Department plans to prevent the disclosure of any parcel or parcels of land, any buildings or facilities on any such parcel, or any information related to any such parcel, building, or facility, if such disclosure would impair or jeopardize the national security or homeland defense of the United States.

(5) Any additional topics identified by the Secretary.

AMENDMENT NO. 56 OFFERED BY MR. RUSSELL OF OKLAHOMA

Page 423, after line 3, insert the following:

SEC. 1071. REPORT ON ADJUSTMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION ASSISTANCE.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall provide to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives a briefing on the adjustment and diversification assistance authorized by subsections (b) and (c) of section 2391 of title 10, United States Code. Such briefing shall include each of the following:

(1) A description of the activities and programs currently being conducted under subsections (b)(1) and (c) of such section, including a list of the recipients of grants, and amount received by each recipient, of such activities and programs in each of the five most recent fiscal years.

(2) For each of the five fiscal years preceding the fiscal year during which the briefing is conducted, separate estimates of the funding the Department of Defense has directed to activities under each of clauses (A) through (E) of paragraph (1) of subsection (b) and under subsection (c) of such section and the recipients of such funding.

AMENDMENT NO. 57 OFFERED BY MR. PITTS OF PENNSYLVANIA

Page 542, after line 6, insert before ''Such'' the following: ''The number and type of transient Russian naval vessels that have utilized ports of the country.''.

Page 542, line 8, insert before ''and'' the following: '', including the use of ports of such country by transient Russian naval vessels,''.

AMENDMENT NO. 58 OFFERED BY MR. YOUNG OF IOWA

Insert at the end of subtitle F of title X the following:

SEC. 1070. BRIEFING ON THE PROTECTION OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall provide to the congressional defense committees a briefing on the efforts of the Department of Defense to protect the personally identifiable information of members of the Armed Forces and their families, and of employees of the Department of Defense, which shall include—

(1) current and planned initiatives to protect the personally identifying information of members of the Armed Forces and their families, and employees of the Department of Defense;

(2) the challenges encountered in carrying out the activities described in paragraph (1); and

(3) any trends related to fraudulent activity that targets the personally identifying information of members of the Armed Forces or their families, or employees of the Department of Defense.

AMENDMENT NO. 60 OFFERED BY MR. FITZPATRICK OF PENNSYLVANIA

Page 462, after line 13, insert the following new section:

SEC. 1098. IMPORTANCE OF ROLE PLAYED BY WOMEN IN WORLD WAR II.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) National Rosie the Riveter Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the 16 million women working during World War II.

(2) Americans have chosen to honor female workers who contributed on the home front during World War II.

(3) These women left their homes to work or volunteer full-time in factories, farms, shipyards, airplane factories, banks, and other institutions in support of the military overseas.

(4) These women worked with the USO and Red Cross, drove trucks, riveted airplane parts, collected critical materials, rolled bandages, and served on rationing boards.

(5) It is fitting and proper to recognize and preserve the history and legacy of working women, including volunteer women, during World War II to promote cooperation and fellowship among such women and their descendants.

(6) These women and their descendants wish to further the advancement of patriotic ideas, excellence in the workplace, and loyalty to the United States of America.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Congress acknowledges the important role played by women in World War II.

AMENDMENT NO. 61 OFFERED BY MR. FORBES OF VIRGINIA

At the end of subtitle G of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1098. RECOVERY OF EXCESS RIFLES, AMMUNITION, AND PARTS GRANTED TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND TRANSFER TO CERTAIN PERSONS.

(a) RECOVERY.—Subchapter II of chapter 407 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 40728A the following new section:

"§ 40728B. Recovery of excess rifles, ammunition, and parts granted to foreign countries and transfer to certain persons

''(a) AUTHORITY TO RECOVER.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2) and subsection (b), the Secretary of the Army may acquire from any person any rifle, ammunition, repair parts, or other supplies described in section 40731(a) of this title which were—

''(A) provided to any country on a grant basis under the conditions imposed by section 505 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2314) that became excess to the needs of such country; and

''(B) lawfully acquired by such person.

''(2) The Secretary of the Army may not acquire anything under paragraph (1) except for transfer to a person in the United States under subsection (c).

''(3) The Secretary of the Army may accept rifles, ammunition, repair parts, or other supplies under paragraph (1) notwithstanding section 1342 of title 31.

''(b) COST OF RECOVERY.—The Secretary of the Army may not acquire anything under subsection (a) if the United States would incur any cost for such acquisition.

''(c) AVAILABILITY FOR TRANSFER.—Any rifles, ammunition, repair parts, or supplies acquired under subsection (a) shall be available for transfer in the United States to the person from whom acquired if such person—

''(1) is licensed as a manufacturer, importer, or dealer pursuant to section 923(a) of title 18; and

''(2) uses an ammunition depot of the Army that is an eligible facility for receipt of any rifles, ammunition, repair parts, or supplies under this paragraph.

''(d) CONTRACTS.—Notwithstanding subsection (k) of section 2304 of title 10, the Secretary may enter into such contracts or cooperative agreements on a sole source basis pursuant to paragraphs (4) and (5) of subsection (c) of such section to carry out this section.

''(e) AECA.—Transfers authorized under this section may only be made in accordance with applicable provisions of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778).

''(f) RIFLE DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'rifle' has the meaning given such term in section 921 of title 18.''.

(b) SALE.—Section 40732 of such title is amended—

(1) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) SALES BY OTHER PERSONS.—A person who receives a rifle or any ammunition, repair parts, or supplies under section 40728B(c) of this title may sell, at fair market value, such rifle, ammunition, repair parts, or supplies. With respect to rifles other than caliber .22 rimfire and caliber .30 rifles, the seller shall obtain a license as a dealer in rifles and abide by all requirements imposed on persons licensed under chapter 44 of title 18, including maintaining acquisition and disposition records, and conducting background checks.''; and

(2) in subsection (c), in the heading, by inserting ''BY THE CORPORATION'' after ''LIMITATION ON SALES''.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 407 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 40728A the following new item:

''40728B. Recovery of excess rifles, ammunition, and parts granted to foreign countries and transfer to certain persons.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 62 OFFERED BY MR. YOUNG OF INDIANA

At the end of title X, add the following new section:

SEC. 1098. PROJECT MANAGEMENT.

(a) DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR MANAGEMENT.—

(1) ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS.—Section 503 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT.—

''(1) REQUIREMENT.—Subject to the direction and approval of the Director, the Deputy Director for Management or a designee shall—

''(A) adopt governmentwide standards, policies, and guidelines for program and project management for executive agencies;

''(B) oversee implementation of program and project management for the standards, policies, and guidelines established under subparagraph (A);

''(C) chair the Program Management Policy Council established under section 1126(b);

''(D) establish standards and policies for executive agencies, consistent with widely accepted standards for program and project management planning and delivery;

''(E) engage with the private sector to identify best practices in program and project management that would improve Federal program and project management;

''(F) conduct portfolio reviews to address programs identified as high risk by the Government Accountability Office;

''(G) not less than annually, conduct portfolio reviews of agency programs in coordination with Project Management Improvement Officers designated under section 1126(a)(1) to assess the quality and effectiveness of program management; and

''(H) establish a 5-year strategic plan for program and project management.

''(2) APPLICATION TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the Department of Defense to the extent that the provisions of that paragraph are substantially similar to or duplicative of—

''(A) the provisions of chapter 87 of title 10; or

''(B) policy, guidance, or instruction of the Department related to program management.''.

(2) DEADLINE FOR STANDARDS, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue the standards, policies, and guidelines required under section 503(c) of title 31, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1).

(3) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the standards, policies, and guidelines are issued under paragraph (2), the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Program Management Policy Council established under section 1126(b) of title 31, United States Code, as added by subsection (b)(1), and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall issue any regulations as are necessary to implement the requirements of section 503(c) of title 31, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1).

(b) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT OFFICERS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT POLICY COUNCIL.—

(1) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 11 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 1126. Program Management Improvement Officers and Program Management Policy Council

''(a) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT OFFICERS.—

''(1) DESIGNATION.—The head of each agency described in section 901(b) shall designate a senior executive of the agency as the Program Management Improvement Officer of the agency.

''(2) FUNCTIONS.—The Program Management Improvement Officer of an agency designated under paragraph (1) shall—

''(A) implement program management policies established by the agency under section 503(c); and

''(B) develop a strategy for enhancing the role of program managers within the agency that includes the following:

''(i) Enhanced training and educational opportunities for program managers that shall include—

''(I) training in the relevant competencies encompassed with program and project manager within the private sector for program managers; and

''(II) training that emphasizes cost containment for large projects and programs.

''(ii) Mentoring of current and future program managers by experienced senior executives and program managers within the agency.

''(iii) Improved career paths and career opportunities for program managers.

''(iv) A plan to encourage the recruitment and retention of highly qualified individuals to serve as program managers.

''(v) Improved means of collecting and disseminating best practices and lessons learned to enhance program management across the agency.

''(vi) Common templates and tools to support improved data gathering and analysis for program management and oversight purposes.

''(3) APPLICATION TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—This subsection shall not apply to the Department of Defense to the extent that the provisions of this subsection are substantially similar to or duplicative of the provisions of chapter 87 of title 10. For purposes of paragraph (1), the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (or a designee of the Under Secretary) shall be considered the Program Management Improvement Officer.

''(b) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT POLICY COUNCIL.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Office of Management and Budget a council to be known as the 'Program Management Policy Council' (in this subsection referred to as the 'Council').

''(2) PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS.—The Council shall act as the principal interagency forum for improving agency practices related to program and project management. The Council shall—

''(A) advise and assist the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget;

''(B) review programs identified as high risk by the General Accountability Office and make recommendations for actions to be taken by the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget or a designee;

''(C) discuss topics of importance to the workforce, including—

''(i) career development and workforce development needs;

''(ii) policy to support continuous improvement in program and project management; and

''(iii) major challenges across agencies in managing programs;

''(D) advise on the development and applicability of standards governmentwide for program management transparency; and

''(E) review the information published on the website of the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to section 1122.

''(3) MEMBERSHIP.—

''(A) COMPOSITION.—The Council shall be composed of the following members:

''(i) Five members from the Office of Management and Budget as follows:

''(I) The Deputy Director for Management.

''(II) The Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government.

''(III) The Administrator of Federal Procurement Policy.

''(IV) The Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management.

''(V) The Director of the Office of Performance and Personnel Management.

''(ii) The Program Management Improvement Officer from each agency described in section 901(b).

''(iii) Other individuals as determined appropriate by the Chairperson.

''(B) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget shall be the Chairperson of the Council. A Vice Chairperson shall be elected by the members and shall serve a term of not more than 1 year.

''(ii) DUTIES.—The Chairperson shall preside at the meetings of the Council, determine the agenda of the Council, direct the work of the Council, and establish and direct subgroups of the Council as appropriate.

''(4) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet not less than twice per fiscal year and may meet at the call of the Chairperson or a majority of the members of the Council.

''(5) SUPPORT.—The head of each agency with a Project Management Improvement Officer serving on the Council shall provide administrative support to the Council, as appropriate, at the request of the Chairperson.

''(6) COMMITTEE DURATION.—Section 14(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Council.''.

(2) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with each Program Management Improvement Officer designated under section 1126(a)(1) of title 31, United States Code, shall submit to Congress a report containing the strategy developed under section 1126(a)(2)(B) of such title, as added by paragraph (1).

(c) PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL STANDARDS.—

(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''agency'' means each agency described in section 901(b) of title 31, United States Code, other than the Department of Defense.

(2) REGULATIONS REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the standards, policies, and guidelines are issued under section 503(c) of title 31, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall issue regulations that—

(A) identify key skills and competencies needed for a program and project manager in an agency;

(B) establish a new job series, or update and improve an existing job series, for program and project management within an agency; and

(C) establish a new career path for program and project managers within an agency.

(d) GAO REPORT ON EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICIES ON PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Government Accountability Office shall issue, in conjunction with the High Risk list of the Government Accountability Office, a report examining the effectiveness of the following on improving Federal program and project management:

(1) The standards, policies, and guidelines for program and project management issued under section 503(c) of title 31, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1).

(2) The 5-year strategic plan established under section 503(c)(1)(H) of title 31, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1).

(3) Program Management Improvement Officers designated under section 1126(a)(1) of title 31, United States Code, as added by subsection (b)(1).

(4) The Program Management Policy Council established under section 1126(b)(1) of title 31, United States Code, as added by subsection (b)(1).

AMENDMENT NO. 68 OFFERED BY MR. YOUNG OF ALASKA

In section 1101—

(1) in subsection (a), insert ''or as a military technician (dual status)'' after ''Base''; and

(2) amend subsection (c) to read as follows:

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term ''defense industrial base facility'' means any Department of Defense depot, arsenal, or shipyard located within the United States; and

(2) the term ''military technician (dual status)'' has the meaning given such term in section 10216 of title 10, United States Code.

AMENDMENT NO. 70 OFFERED BY MR. CONNOLLY OF VIRGINIA

At the end of subtitle A of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING AN ASSESSMENT, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR SECURITY COOPERATION.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Secretary of Defense should develop and maintain an assessment, monitoring, and evaluation framework for security cooperation with foreign countries to ensure accountability and foster implementation of best practices; and

(2) such framework—

(A) should be consistent with interagency approaches and existing best practices;

(B) should be sufficiently resourced and appropriately placed within the Department of Defense to enable the rigorous examination and measurement of security cooperation efforts towards meeting stated objectives and outcomes; and

(C) should be used to inform security cooperation planning, policies, and resource decisions as well as ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of security cooperation efforts.

AMENDMENT NO. 74 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER OF OREGON

Beginning on page 503, strike line 16 through page 504, line 11, and insert the following:

(a) ALIENS DESCRIBED.—Section 602(b)(2)(A)(ii)(I) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended to read as follows:

''(I)(aa) by, or on behalf of, the United States Government, in the case of an alien submitting an application for Chief of Mission approval pursuant to subparagraph (D) before the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017; or

''(bb) in the case of an alien submitting an application for Chief of Mission approval pursuant to subparagraph (D) on or after the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, in a capacity that required the alien—

''(AA) to serve as an interpreter or translator for personnel of the Department of State or the United States Agency for International Development in Afghanistan while traveling away from United States embassies or consulates with such personnel;

''(BB) to serve as an interpreter or translator for United States military personnel in Afghanistan while traveling off-base with such personnel; or

''(CC) to perform sensitive and trusted activities for United States military personnel stationed in Afghanistan; or''.

AMENDMENT NO. 77 OFFERED BY MR. WELCH OF VERMONT

At the end of subtitle B of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. MODIFICATION TO SEMIANNUAL REPORT ON ENHANCING SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN.

Subsection (b) of section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113–291; 128 Stat. 3550), as amended by section 1213 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114–92; 129 Stat. 1045), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(8) AFGHAN PERSONNEL AND PAY SYSTEM.—A description of the status of the implementation of the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS) at the Afghan Ministry of Interior and the Afghan Ministry of Defense for personnel funds provided through the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund, including a description of the following:

''(A) The expected completion date of installation and full implementation and utilization of the APPS.

''(B) If installation of the APPS is complete at one, or both, ministries, the extent to which the APPS is being utilized to distribute personnel funds to the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

''(C) If installation of the APPS is not complete at one, or both, ministries, or full implementation and utilization of the APPS has not been achieved at one, or both, ministries, an explanation of any delays, any expected obstacles, and any additional support that may be needed for installation or full implementation and utilization.

''(D) Any examples of intentional delay or obstruction by members of the Government of Afghanistan, to include one, or both, ministries, or any sub-unit thereof, to installing or fully implementing or utilizing the APPS.

''(E) If the APPS is fully implemented at one, or both, ministries, the identified cost savings to date, due to the elimination of waste, fraud, and abuse at the ministry compared to the previous payroll system. If the APPS is not fully implemented at one, or both, ministries, the expected cost savings due to the elimination of waste, fraud, and abuse at the ministry once the APPS is fully implemented.

''(F) If the APPS is not fully implemented, what steps the United States and Afghanistan are taking to mitigate waste, fraud, and abuse in the disbursement of personnel funds

provided through the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 82 OFFERED BY MR. KILMER OF WASHINGTON

Page 545, after line 22, insert the following:

''(22) A description of the People's Republic of China's military and nonmilitary activities in the South China Sea.''.

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. REDESIGNATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SOUTH CHINA SEA INITIATIVE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the United States should continue supporting the efforts to the Southeast Asian nations to strengthen their maritime security capacity, domain awareness, and integration of their capabilities.

(b) REDESIGNATION AS SOUTHEAST ASIA MARITIME SECURITY INITIATIVE.—Subsection (a)(2) of section 1263 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114–92; 129 Stat. 1073; 10 U.S.C. 2282 note) is amended by striking ''the 'South China Sea Initiative' '' and inserting ''the 'Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative' ''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 1263. SOUTHEAST ASIA MARITIME SECURITY INITIATIVE.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOULTON) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), the distinguished chair of our Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. I thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his leadership of peace through strength.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of amendment No. 69, a bipartisan amendment submitted with Ranking Member JIM LANGEVIN.

As we reach to secure cyberspace and protect American families from new and emerging threats while encouraging innovation, we turn to the mutual benefit that public-private partnerships provide industry employees and Department of Defense personnel.

We have seen the success of public-private partnerships already in the IT field. This amendment will provide an opportunity to expand the benefits of the talent exchange to all components of the Department of Defense.

The benefits to the military are clear. These partnerships provide the ability for fresh talent and concepts from outside the government sector.

The private sector benefits as well by having the flexibility to gain a unique insight into how the government operates and engage in public service creating jobs.

This bipartisan amendment promotes choice and opportunity that will benefit America's workers and the defense community. Actually, the collaboration will benefit all American families. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chairman, I rise to support two amendments that we have in the en bloc, the first on veteran hiring, a sense of Congress amendment.

I rise to support a simple, but important effort that everyone in this Chamber can agree on. My amendment adds to this bill a sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should seek ways to maximize the number of veterans employed to build military construction projects.

We are talking about good jobs here that can help our veterans make the transition to civilian life. In places like San Diego, we have already had a number of contractors employing highly skilled veterans to do this work.

Many Members of this Chamber, on both sides of the aisle, champion the cause of hiring veterans. It is a policy we have incentivized the private sector to implement.

I hope Members will support this amendment and join in showing that our military readiness can be built by those who know personally how important that readiness is when fighting for our freedom.

I also want to speak on integrated missile defense. Mr. Chairman, Iran is a chief sponsor of international terrorism, and regularly threatens to obliterate Israel, our most important ally in the region.

Those who supported agreement last year to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon understood that the JCPOA does not eliminate all of Iran's threats to the United States and our partners in the Middle East.

My amendment would take further steps to support our allies in the region and crack down on Iranian aggression.

By vocalizing our support for working with Israel, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jordan, and Egypt, to build an integrated missile defense system, we can build off of the successes of Israel's existing missile defense network.

I support the funding authorizations included in this year's defense budget that will continue to support Israel's missile defense program. Through a smart, targeted approach with our partners, we can continue to counter Iranian aggression and promote security.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this amendment package, which includes my amendment that ensures the safety of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay.

Home to the Atlantic ballistic missile submarine fleet, Kings Bay's contributions to national security and to the nuclear deterrence capabilities of the U.S. fleet cannot be overstated.

Just south of the installation is a low-use general aviation airport called St. Mary's Airport. The flight lines for their airport take civilian aircraft right over the base, raising a number of security concerns for the installation and for the weapons packages stored there.

The dangers this poses to our nuclear stockpile is glaring, and this amendment is the first step in remedying that situation. This amendment would allow for the relocation of the St. Mary's Airport service due to national security concerns posed to Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay.

This amendment has been a major priority for the Navy, and provides much-needed changes to security concerns that have been persistent for a number of years.

With this amendment, we can protect our nuclear submarines while providing new economic opportunities.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this amendment.

MR. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ).

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment, the Counter Iran Maritime Initiative.

□ 1845

Iran is a serious risk to our national security. We must remain vigilant. We must protect our troops and our allies in the Middle East. This amendment will help stop illegal arms shipments from Iran to terrorists and protect our national security. My amendment will help keep American troops and our allies in the region, including Israel, safe.

It authorizes our military to provide training, equipment, supplies, and military construction to nations along the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.

I am glad that there is broad, bipartisan consensus on the need for this amendment so that we can keep our troops safe and shore up the safety of our allies in the region.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM).

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I want to tell you briefly about the Roskam amendment, which requires the President to provide Congress with a comprehensive report on Iran's usage of commercial aircraft for military and terrorist activity. You say to yourself, Mr. Chairman: Why do we need this? Why is this important?

Here is why. There is an important American company that is actively talking to the Iranians about the possibility of selling aircraft to them.

Here is the problem with that. Everybody—everybody—agrees that the Iranians are the world's largest state sponsor of terror; and therefore, it goes that if you give them something that is useful for military purposes—that is, aircraft—it is fungible, and it can be used for any purpose. The notion that the Iranians are going to use Boeing

aircraft, for example, simply to transport people on vacation back and forth within Iran is profoundly naive.

So what this amendment does is it puts the aircraft industry on notice and it puts the Iranians on notice that we are very interested in what they are doing with commercial aircraft, for what purpose.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thanks again to the Armed Services Committee for making in order with the Rules Committee my three amendments that I have discussed today, two that I have already discussed, and this one that I will now bring to my colleagues' attention.

Today, walking out of the bush of Nigeria, it was determined that another Chibok girl has been found, discovered, or fled. The debate is whether or not the military forces of Nigeria helped her out. What we do know is that she was missing for 2 years, along with the 200-plus girls that were taken. Fifty-seven of them escaped in the immediacy of the hours, and six of them died, and this young woman has now come out 2 years later.

Families are suffering, and Boko Haram has become one of the most vile and most vicious terrorist groups in the world. They are affiliated with ISIS, ISIL, but they have, if you will, no conformity to any protocol but killing. They have burned and killed Muslims and Christians alike, schools, homes, mosques, and churches. They have decapitated people. They have sent 8-year-olds with bombs strapped to their bodies to kill.

So my amendment is very straightforward.

As I do this, let me say that a number of you have joined Congresswoman FREDERICA WILSON week after week wearing red to bring the girls home. She joined me, and we traveled together within weeks of the girls being taken in 2014. We confronted families, saw the pain, saw women with slashed throats that had healed, and we saw the leaders of government who then were somewhat, if you will, challenged about this task.

So my amendment is one that deals with collaboration. It is a sense of Congress that provides for condemning the ongoing violence, expresses its support for the Nigerian people, and calls on the President to support Nigeria, Lake Chad Basin, and the international community to ensure accountability for crimes against humanity.

It also asks for the initiative that we can engage the Department of Defense to assist the Government of Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin to develop capacities to deploy and destroy Boko Haram, obviously with the use of possible security forces, recognizing the Leahy amendment, but also with technology.

Lives are still in the midst. Lives are still not being provided for.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. WOMACK). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I am asking that we collaborate with the forces in Nigeria and the forces that have been part of the multinational task force to be able to have a strategy that deals with Boko Haram.

This report can be critical in our efforts to empower and complement the efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force as well as the commitment espoused at the recent Lake Chad Basin Regional Security Summit.

So I would say that we have to recognize that we now have an individual. This young woman can give us the intelligence. I am concerned that these girls cannot be rescued now. This is partly asking President Buhari of Nigeria to join in with this information—this new information, the collaboration that, hopefully, as we move through this legislation, ongoing, right now—to rescue those girls and also support the idea of a special envoy to focus on the dangers in the Lake Chad Basin region.

Let me compliment the African command. I met many of them when I was in Nigeria. I think it is an excellent command among all the other commands. They can be dynamic in their work.

My resolution, my amendment, my sense of Congress, is to give us focus to bring back the girls and save these girls. We have the information. Bring back these girls.

Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman THORNBERRY, Ranking Member ADAM SMITH and the Rules Committee for making in order and including Jackson Lee Amendment Number 99 and including it in En Bloc Amendment Number 8 to the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017."

This is the third of 3 Jackson Lee amendments made in order by the House Rules Committee.

Jackson Lee Amendment Number 99, calls for a report on efforts to combat Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin.

In the wake of the Rules Committee making this Amendment in order, I hold in my hand an article entitled "#BringBackOurGirls: Chibok Victim Found in Nigeria After 2 Years, Activist Says."

Two years after her captivity, we learn that a 19 year Chibok school girl named Ameina Nkeki was found Tuesday by the Civilian JTF vigilante group, which fights alongside the Nigerian military, in a village near the Sambisa Forest.

Nkeki had a baby with her and told the militia members she had escaped from Boko Haram captivity.

Indeed, just last night right before presenting before the Rules Committee on this Amendment, I met with a remarkable couple whose name I do not want to mention in order not to place their lives in danger.

This couple, through their NGO, helped in the rescue, recovery and reintegration of over 10 Chibok girls.

Because of their remarkable work, the girls are now able to continue to pursue their education. Unfortunately, the lives of these good Samaritans are now in jeopardy.

I plan to do everything in my power to make sure that they and the persons they seek to empower are not harmed.

This is why I have introduced the bipartisan measure H. Res. 528—Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the Victims of the Terror Protection Fund.

And this is why I am working on a measure related to a Special Envoy on Boko Haram to the Lake Chad Basin.

Support for this Amendment is timely as it is:

1. Strongly condemns the ongoing violence and the systematic gross human rights violations against the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin carried out by Boko Haram;

2. Expresses support for the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin who wish to live in a peaceful, economically prosperous, and democratic region;

3. Calls on the President to support Nigerian, Lake Chad Basin, and International Community efforts to ensure accountability for crimes against humanity committed by Boko Haram against the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, particularly young girls kidnapped from Chibok and other internally displaced persons affected by the actions of Boko Haram;

Additionally, the Report calls that no later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the Attorney General shall jointly submit to Congress a report on efforts to combat Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin;

Among others, the report shall also include the following elements:

1. A description of initiatives undertaken by the Department of Defense to assist the Government of Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin to develop capacities to deploy special forces to combat Boko Haram;

2. A description of United States' activities to enhance the capacity of Nigeria and the countries in the Lake Chad Basin to investigate and prosecute human rights violations perpetrated against the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin by Boko Haram, al-Qaeda affiliates, and other terrorist organizations to promote respect for rule of law in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin;

3. This report can be critical in our efforts to empower and complement the efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) as well as the commitments espoused at the recent Lake Chad Basin Regional Security Summit.

Mr. Chair, the U.S. war on terror has been waged for over a decade and the lesson is clear that our adversaries adapt very quickly because they are not constrained by geographic limitations.

In the beginning it was only Al Qaeda—now the list includes Al Shabaab, Boko Haram which last year affiliated itself with ISIS/ISIL.

Indeed, the data on persons affected by violent extremism is staggering.

There are now more than 2.2 million Nigerians, and over 450,000 internally-displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

An estimated 4.2 million people in the Lake Chad Basin region face water and food security crises, including 800,000 in Nigeria's

northern Borno and Yobe states, Nigeria, where an estimated 184 children a day risk starvation without the immediate provision of emergency food assistance.

Boko Haram continues to claim responsibility for atrocious and targeted violence ranging from burnings, kidnappings and killings of civilians and school children, such as the Chibok girls and a suicide bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja on August 26, 2011, that killed 21 people and injured dozens more, many of them aid workers supporting development projects across Nigeria.

Half of persons displaced are children.

I continue to commend the tireless efforts of the United Nations, United States officials, Regional Leaders, Civil Society Organizations, Community Groups and good Samaritans who have helped to support efforts of combatting Boko Haram and securing peace and security in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin.

Through this Amendment, we will establish our strong support and commitment for the protection and empowerment of the peoples of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin who continue to face the threat of terrorism and violent extremism from Syria to Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin which covers Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and everywhere in between.

As terrorist craft new strategies to threaten our homeland and harm our allies, it is in the U.S. security interest to double our counterterrorism efforts that identify, engage and empower people who are victimized by terrorist groups like Boko Haram, Al Shabaab, Al Qaeda and ISIS in Africa and Pakistan.

For this reason, our military must adapt as quickly and as seamlessly as our adversaries in empowering our allies.

Our message must be clear: the United States must expand its capacity to meet the terrorist threat where it emerges whether here in the homeland or abroad.

The Nuremberg trials were essential in bringing to justice war criminals who committed acts of barbarism against civilians and military personnel during World War II, but a critical component of bringing war criminals to justice is the gathering and preservation of evidence.

No person whether they travel to a battle field and later return to their native country or live in the region where they commit acts of terrors should rest well because they believe that no one will come to seek justice on behalf of the millions of lives destroyed.

Our message must be clear: terrorism will not thrive on our watch.

I ask for your support of this Amendment.

[May 18, 2016]

#BRINGBACKOURGIRLS: CHIBOK VICTIM FOUND IN NIGERIA AFTER 2 YEARS, ACTIVIST SAYS

(By Alexander Smith)

The mass kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls by Boko Haram from the Nigerian town of Chibok in April 2014 ignited an international outcry. The ensuing#BringBackOurGirls campaign was backed by the likes of Michelle Obama, while the U.S. and other countries sent military assistance.

A handful of the kidnapped girls managed to escape early on but most were never found.

Both Nigeria's military and the #BringBackOurGirls campaign said Wednesday that one of the girls was now in safe hands—but gave conflicting information on the circumstances and her identity.

Bukky Shonibare, one of the strategic team members of the #BringBackOurGirls campaign, told NBC News that a 19-year-old named Ameina Nkeki was found Tuesday by the Civilian JTF vigilante group, which fights alongside the Nigerian military, in a village near the Sambisa Forest.

Nkeki had a baby with her and told the militia members she had escaped from Boko Haram captivity, Shonibare said, noting that the details of the girl's escape were not immediately clear.

This is a major, major breakthrough—this is the breakthrough we've been waiting for,'' she said.

Nkeki was taken to a military base in Damboa before being brought to her mother and her former high-school head teacher—both of whom positively confirmed her identify, according to Shonibare.

The activists are ''100 percent sure that this was one of the Chibok girls,'' Shonibare added.

Col. Sani Usman, a spokesman for the Nigerian Army, confirmed via WhatsApp message that one of the kidnapped Chibok girls had been recovered.

He added in a statement that the girl was ''rescued'' by ''our troops'' near Damboa. It was not immediately clear if he was referring to his soldiers or the JTF.

Usman's statement also identified the girl as Falmata Mbalala—which did not correspond to the name given by Shonibare and the Bring Back Our Girls movement.

Both Usman and Shonibare insisted they had the correct name for the young woman. NBC News was not immediately able to reconcile the differing accounts.

While the Chibok Girls drew the most international attention, an estimated 2,000–plus women and girls have been abducted during Boko Haram's violent campaign in Nigeria. Chibok may not even be the largest group to be kidnapped, with Human Rights Watch reporting that some 400 people were taken from the town of Damasak last year.

The army gave details of a large-scale operation against Boko Haram on Tuesday—the day the young woman was reportedly found—in Sambisa forest.

The military said troops killed 15 Boko Haram fighters after coming under heavy fire in the area of Alafa.

Troops also rescued 41 hostages—mainly women and children the military added in a statement.

While Nigeria's government has publicly touted an aggressive campaign to beat back Boko Haram, its failure to find the girls has drawn criticism.

The news comes one day after the president's wife, Aisha Buhari, presented ''symbolic'' checks to the mothers of the missing girls.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, I very much appreciate Chairman THORNBERRY's acceptance of my amendments No. 100 and No. 125. The first recognizes the heroic efforts of the Pakistani doctor, Dr. Afridi, who helped us bring to justice Osama bin Laden, the prime mover in the massacre of 3,000 Americans on 9/11.

Dr. Afridi is a courageous hero who enabled us to destroy this terrorist monster. He continues to languish in a Pakistani dungeon. This amendment was adopted by the House during consideration of past defense authorization acts but was stripped out during conference negotiations with the Senate. This is a shameful slap in the face to Dr. Afridi and other heroic friends around the world who put themselves at risk to stand up with us.

Who will trust us? Who will stand with us if we betray our friends like this? It is time to end this irrational support that we give to Pakistan. It is only prudent that we increase—which is another one of the amendments I talk about today—certification required to release American military or economic aid to Pakistan.

It behooves us not to finance Pakistan's brutal suppression of ethnic groups and religious minorities like the Baloch and the Sindhis who are under attack today simply for seeking their political and religious freedom.

I would ask my colleagues to join with me and to stand also with the people around the world. Send a message: If you stand with the United States, we will not forget you; we will stand with you. The people of the United States and the United States Congress stand tall with you and appreciate that you have risked your lives in a way that saved American lives.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I have no further speakers, and so I urge adoption of the en bloc amendment.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the bipartisan amendment with Congressman SETH MOULTON, No. 95, that would increase transparency and accountability—in addition to promoting peace through strength.

In the past few months, the Tehran regime has repeatedly pushed the boundaries of the dangerous Iran deal and on United Nations Security Council resolutions. Since January, the Iranian regime has tested at least two intercontinental ballistic missiles, including one that had the writing ''Israel should be wiped off the Earth,'' written in Hebrew. These ICBMs have the ability to reach Israel and other allies in the Middle East from southeastern Europe to India.

Sadly, the American people have not received satisfactory answers about why the actions by Iran are without repercussions. This amendment will require a quick and clear response: Why or why not did the ICBM tests violate international agreements, and what response the administration will take.

This bipartisan amendment will hold the administration accountable and require a timely and thorough report on our response to hostile actions.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote in support.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING).

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Chairman, let me begin by thanking both Chairman THORNBERRY and Chairman ROYCE for

their assistance in helping to craft this amendment, and also let me thank Ranking Member ENGEL and Dr. Bera, who joined Chairman ROYCE as original cosponsors.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment truly is a testament to the broad, bipartisan support for the U.S.-India relationship here in Congress. Our agreement is straightforward. It seeks to promote greater defense trade and encourage additional military cooperation between the United States and India.

I believe that by requiring our government to take actions such as strengthening the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative and encouraging combined military planning with India, we can make certain that the U.S.-India defense relationship endures.

Mr. Chairman, given the dynamic nature of the Indo-Pacific region and its importance to our own national security and future economic growth, now is the time to build on recent successes and propel the U.S.-India strategic partnership forward.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of Amendment Number 70.

I want to thank Representative CONNOLLY for his good work on this amendment.

DOD is one of the last agencies that implement most of our foreign aid to come up with an evaluation policy. USAID has one. The State Department has one. The Millennium Challenge Corporation has one. But not DOD.

Evaluations do not just trace how money is spent. Evaluations help us figure out if the money is achieving its intended outcome. Is it working? Is it making a lasting difference?

The good news is that the DOD is working on an evaluation policy now. But just because they are working on it doesn't mean it will get done. We all know what bureaucrats can do if given the time.

Amendment Number 70 makes it clear that Congress supports a strong evaluation policy.

We should be doing rigorous evaluation on all our foreign aid because Americans deserve to know how their money is being spent. And that's just the way it is.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc consisting of amendment Nos. 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79, 88, 89, 90, 91, and 92 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 71 OFFERED BY MR. ROONEY OF FLORIDA

At the end of subtitle A of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. REPORT ON THE PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR ASSISTANCE TO UNITS OF FOREIGN SECURITY FORCES THAT HAVE COMMITTED A GROSS VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on its implementation of section 294 of title 10, United States Code (relating to prohibition on use of funds for assistance to units of foreign security forces that have committed a gross violation of human rights).

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under subsection (a) shall contain the following:

(1) A detailed description of the policies and procedures governing the manner in which Department of Defense personnel identify and report information on gross violations of human rights and how such information is shared with personnel responsible for implementing the prohibition in subsection (a)(1) of section 294 of title 10, United States Code.

(2) The funding expended in fiscal years 2015 and 2016 for purposes of implementing section 294 of title 10, United States Code, including any relevant training of personnel, and a description of the titles, roles, and responsibilities of the personnel responsible for reviewing credible information relating to human rights violations and the personnel responsible for making decisions regarding the implementation of the prohibition in subsection (a)(1) of such section 294.

(3) An addendum that includes any findings or recommendations included in any report issued by a Federal Inspector General related to the implementation of section 294 of title 10, United States Code, and, as appropriate, the Department of Defense's response to such findings or recommendations.

(4) Any other matters the Secretary determines is appropriate.

(c) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

AMENDMENT NO. 72 OFFERED BY MR. POE OF TEXAS

Page 497, line 11, strike ''and'' at the end.

Page 497, line 16, strike the period and insert ''; and''.

Page 497, after line 16, insert the following:

(4) Pakistan has shown progress in arresting and prosecuting Haqqani network senior leaders and mid-level operatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 73 OFFERED BY MR. ROHRABACHER OF CALIFORNIA

Page 497, line 11, strike ''and''.

Page 497, line 16, strike the period at the end and insert ''; and''.

Page 497, after line 16, insert the following:

(4) Pakistan is not using its military or any funds or equipment provided by the United States to persecute minority groups seeking political or religious freedom, including the Balochi, Sindhi, and Hazara ethnic groups and minority religious groups, including Christian, Hindu, and Ahmadiyya Muslim.

AMENDMENT NO. 75 OFFERED BY MR. ROHRABACHER OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle B of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. SENSE OF CONGRESS RELATING TO DR. SHAKIL AFRIDI.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The attacks of September 11, 2001, killed approximately 3,000 people, most of whom were Americans, but also included hundreds of individuals with foreign citizenships, nearly 350 New York Fire Department personnel, and about 50 law enforcement officers.

(2) Downed United Airlines flight 93 was reportedly intended, under the control of the al-Qaeda high-jackers, to crash into the White House or the Capitol in an attempt to kill the President of the United States or Members of the United States Congress.

(3) The September 11, 2001, attacks were largely planned and carried out by the al-Qaeda terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al Zawahiri, after which Osama bin Laden enjoyed safe haven in Pakistan from where he continued to plot deadly attacks against the United States and the world.

(4) The United States has obligated nearly $30 billion between 2002 and 2014 in United States taxpayer money for security and economic aid to Pakistan.

(5) The United States very generously and swiftly responded to the 2005 Kashmir Earthquake in Pakistan with more than $200 million in emergency aid and the support of several United States military aircraft, approximately 1,000 United States military personnel, including medical specialists, thousands of tents, blankets, water containers and a variety of other emergency equipment.

(6) The United States again generously and swiftly contributed approximately $150 million in emergency aid to Pakistan following the 2010 Pakistan flood, in addition to the service of nearly twenty United States military helicopters, their flight crews, and other resources to assist the Pakistan Army's relief efforts.

(7) The United States continues to work tirelessly to support Pakistan's economic development, including millions of dollars allocated towards the development of Pakistan's energy infrastructure, health services and education system.

(8) The United States and Pakistan continue to have many critical shared interests, both economic and security related, which could be the foundation for a positive and mutually beneficial partnership.

(9) Dr. Shakil Afridi, a Pakistani physician, is a hero to whom the people of the United States, Pakistan and the world owe a debt of gratitude for his help in finally locating Osama bin Laden before more innocent American, Pakistani and other lives were lost to this terrorist leader.

(10) Pakistan, the United States and the international community had failed for nearly 10 years following attacks of September 11, 2001, to locate and bring Osama bin Laden, who continued to kill innocent civilians in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Africa and the United States, to justice without the help of Dr. Afridi.

(11) The Government of Pakistan's imprisonment of Dr. Afridi presents a serious and growing impediment to the United States' bilateral relations with Pakistan.

(12) The Government of Pakistan has leveled and allowed baseless charges against Dr. Afridi in a politically motivated, spurious legal process.

(13) Dr. Afridi is currently imprisoned by the Government of Pakistan, a deplorable and unconscionable situation which calls into question Pakistan's actual commitment to countering terrorism and undermines the notion that Pakistan is a true ally in the struggle against terrorism.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that Dr. Shakil Afridi is an international hero and that the Government of Pakistan should release him immediately from prison.

AMENDMENT NO. 76 OFFERED BY MR. WALBERG OF MICHIGAN

At the end of subtitle B of title XII (page 504, after line 25), add the following:

SEC. 1217. REPORT ON ACCESS TO FINANCIAL RECORDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN TO AUDIT THE USE OF FUNDS FOR ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANISTAN.

Not later than December 31, 2017, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report on the extent to which the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan has adequate access to financial records of the Government of Afghanistan to audit the use of funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for assistance for Afghanistan.

AMENDMENT NO. 78 OFFERED BY MR. FORTENBERRY OF NEBRASKA

Page 507, line 7, strike ''and''.

Page 507, line 11, strike the period and insert ''; and''.

Page 507, after line 11, insert the following:

(4) securing safe areas, including the Nineveh Plain, for purposes of resettling and reintegrating ethnic and religious minorities, including victims of genocide, into their homelands, is a critical component of a safe, secure, and sovereign Iraq.

AMENDMENT NO. 79 OFFERED BY MR. FORTENBERRY OF NEBRASKA

Page 510, line 24, insert ''including ethnic and religious minority groups,'' after ''local security forces,''.

AMENDMENT NO. 88 OFFERED BY MR. CICILLINE OF RHODE ISLAND

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. OPPORTUNITIES TO EQUIP CERTAIN FOREIGN MILITARY ENTITIES.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments and the Secretary of State, shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(1) efforts to make United States manufacturers aware of opportunities to equip foreign military entities that have been approved to receive assistance from the United States; and

(2) any new plans or strategies to raise United States manufacturers' awareness with respect to such opportunities.

AMENDMENT NO. 89 OFFERED BY MR. COOPER OF TENNESSEE

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following new section:

SEC. 12___. REPORTS ON INF TREATY AND OPEN SKIES TREATY.

(a) REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees the following reports:

(1) A report on the Open Skies Treaty containing—

(A) an assessment, conducted by the Chairman jointly with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, of whether and why, the Treaty remains in the national security interest of the United States, including if there are compliance concerns related to implementation by the Russian Federation of the Treaty;

(B) a specific plan by the Chairman jointly with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State on remedying any such compliance concerns; and

(C) a military assessment conducted by the Chairman of such compliance concerns.

(2) A report on the INF Treaty containing—

(A) an assessment, conducted by the Chairman jointly with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, of whether and why, the Treaty remains in the national security interest of the United States, including how any ongoing violation bear on the assessment if such a violation is not resolved in the near-term;

(B) a specific plan by the Chairman jointly with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State to remedy violation by the Russian Federation of the Treaty, and a judgment of whether Russia intends to take the steps required to establish verifiable evidence that Russia has resumed its compliance with the Treaty if such non-compliance and inconsistencies are not resolved by the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(C) a military assessment conducted by the Chairman of the risks posed by Russia's violation of the Treaty.

(b) UPDATE.—Not later than February 15, 2018, the Chairman, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of State shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees an update to each report under subsection (a).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

(2) The term ''INF Treaty'' means the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate- Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, commonly referred to as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed at Washington December 8, 1987, and entered into force June 1, 1988.

(3) The term ''Open Skies Treaty'' means the Treaty on Open Skies, done at Helsinki March 24, 1992, and entered into force January 1, 2002.

AMENDMENT NO. 90 OFFERED BY MS. FRANKEL OF FLORIDA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII add the following:

SEC. 12xx. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION.

It is the sense of Congress that continued United States leadership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is critical to the national security of the United States.

AMENDMENT NO. 91 OFFERED BY MR. HIGGINS OF NEW YORK

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. AUTHORIZATION OF UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to provide assistance to Israel to improve maritime security and maritime domain awareness.

(b) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Activities that may be supported by assistance under subsection (a) include the following:

(1) Procurement, maintenance, and sustainment of the David's Sling Weapon System for purposes of intercepting short-range missiles.

(2) Payment of incremental expenses of Israel that are incurred by Israel as the direct result of participation in a bilateral or multilateral exercise of the United States Navy or Coast Guard.

(3) Visits of United States naval vessels at ports of Israel.

(4) Conduct of joint research and development for advanced maritime domain awareness capabilities.

(c) SUNSET.—This section shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 92 OFFERED BY MR. TED LIEU OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII add the following:

SEC. 12xx. SENSE OF CONGRESS IN SUPPORT OF A DENUCLEARIZED KOREAN PENINSULA.

It is the sense of Congress that United States foreign policy should support a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOULTON) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I have no speakers here at this point, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by thanking the chairman and the ranking member for including my amendment in the en bloc amendment. This amendment will require a report detailing plans to inform American manufacturers about opportunities to equip foreign militaries receiving U.S. assistance.

Each year, our country provides billions of dollars to our international partners in military assistance to foster security relationships and to ensure our national security. This is a worthwhile investment necessary to preserve American interests abroad, but we need to make sure that American businesses, particularly American manufacturers, are given ample opportunity to compete for these taxpayer-funded contracts.

My amendment helps ensure American companies are aware of what opportunities are available to them and to their employees. By ensuring more American companies are aware of these opportunities, we can support job growth among American companies, which in turn will support the overall health of our economy and our Nation's defense industrial base.

Increased competition also helps ensure that our international partners are provided with the highest quality products available, thus helping to better secure their own better future and protecting our own national security interests.

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The amendment simply ensures that American businesses have the opportunity to compete for these contracts so that as we are building up and securing our national security interests around the world, we are also strengthening American jobs, American manufacturing, and growing our economy.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak about a bipartisan amendment that passed the full Committee on Armed Services, and also had to go through the Foreign Affairs Committee to be approved. It calls on the administration to report to Congress on a comprehensive political and military strategy for our fight against ISIS in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, we are sending troops back into Iraq today, just 7 or 8 years after we pulled the last troops out. Many of the battles they are fighting have familiar names—Fallujah, Ramadi, and Haditha—battles that we fought and won a long time ago. But we did not have a strategy to ensure the peace.

Mr. Clausewitz taught us about 200 years ago that war is an extension of politics.

We have to have a political endgame for our fight in Iraq, or we will find ourselves continually going back there again and again. When Iraqi politics fail, a new terrorist group sweeps in; and American troops are left to pick up the mess.

If you think about what happened when ISIS swept in from Syria and entered western, then northern Iraq, the Iraqi army wasn't just defeated by ISIS. The Iraqi Army put their weapons down and went home because they had lost faith in the Iraqi Government.

We must have a long-term, comprehensive political and military strategy. We owe it to the troops to ensure that their efforts will not be in vain.

I am proud of the bipartisan support for this amendment, both on the Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I am especially proud that the chairman worked with me to get it adopted. I am glad that it is included in the bill.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I urge adoption of the amendments en bloc.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Chair, on Sept. 22, 2011, Adm. Mike Mullen, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Haqqani Network was behind the 2011 attack on our embassy and a truck bombing that wounded more than 70 U.S. and NATO troops. Adm. Mullen went on to say, "The Haqqani Network acts as a veritable arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency."

Last year, the Haqqani Network and the Taliban killed more Afghan civilians and troops than in any other year since the Taliban was toppled in 2001.

My amendment adds a fourth condition on the aid to Pakistan. This new condition requires the Administration to certify that Pakistan has shown progress in arresting and prosecuting Haqqani Network senior leaders and mid-level operatives.

This forces Pakistan to make a choice: either go after the Haqqani Network in a public way that it has never done before or lose hundreds of millions of dollars of US aid.

And that's just the way it is.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 7 consisting of amendment Nos. 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 93, 94, 95, 96, and 97 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 80 OFFERED BY MR. PEARCE OF NEW MEXICO

At the end of subtitle C of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON BUSINESS PRACTICES OF THE ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA (ISIS).

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) For nearly two years, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has capitalized on established oil production facilities throughout Iraq and Syria in order to fund its jihadist operations globally.

(2) Oil production and sale represent the largest and most vulnerable income factors for ISIS.

(3) In 2015, ISIS oil sales brought in over $400,000,000 to prop up the terror group's operations world-wide.

(4) ISIS has executed a robust recruitment scheme to staff and operate the oil facilities within the group's control and maintained smuggling routes for the sale of that oil.

(5) Further disrupting ISIS oil production and sale structures would be minimally invasive but would effectively curtail the terror group's ability to self-finance.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should focus all necessary efforts in the Middle East to disrupt the financing of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) through oil production and sale.

AMENDMENT NO. 81 OFFERED BY MR. YOHO OF FLORIDA

At the end of subtitle C of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER OF MANPORTABLE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO ANY ENTITY IN SYRIA.

None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2017 may be obligated or expended to transfer or facilitate the transfer of manportable air defense systems (MANPADS) to any entity in Syria.

AMENDMENT NO. 83 OFFERED BY MR. POE OF TEXAS

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12_. MEASURES AGAINST PERSONS INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES THAT VIOLATE ARMS CONTROL TREATIES OR AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

(a) IMPOSITION OF MEASURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (c), on and after the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall impose the measures described in subsection (b) with respect to—

(A) a person the President determines—

(i)(I) is an individual who is a citizen, national, or permanent resident of a country described in paragraph (2); or

(II) is an entity organized under the laws of a country described in paragraph (2); and

(ii) has engaged in any activity that contributed to or is a significant factor in the President's or the Secretary of State's determination that such country is not in full compliance with its obligations as further described in paragraph (2); and

(B) a person the President determines has provided material support to a person described in subparagraph (A).

(2) COUNTRY DESCRIBED.—A country described in this paragraph is a country that the President or the Secretary of State has determined, in the most recent annual report submitted to Congress pursuant to section 403 of the Arms Control and Disarmament Act (22 U.S.C. 2593a), is not in full compliance with its obligations undertaken in all arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements or commitments to which the United States is a participating state.

(b) MEASURES DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The measures to be imposed with respect to a person under subsection (a) are the head of any executive agency (as defined in section 133 of title 41, United States Code) may not enter into, renew, or extend a contract for the procurement of goods or services with the person.

(2) EXCEPTION FOR MAJOR ROUTES OF SUPPLY.—The requirement to impose measures under paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to any contract for the procurement of goods or services along a major route of supply to a zone of active combat or major contingency operation.

(3) REQUIREMENT TO REVISE REGULATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement, and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards shall be revised to implement paragraph (1)(B).

(B) CERTIFICATIONS.—The revisions to the Federal Acquisition Regulation under subparagraph (A) shall include a requirement for a certification from each person that is a prospective contractor that the person, and any person owned or controlled by the person, does not engage in any activity described in subsection (a)(1)(A)(ii).

(C) REMEDIES.—If the head of an executive agency determines that a person has submitted a false certification under subparagraph (B) on or after the date on which the applicable revision of the Federal Acquisition Regulation required by this paragraph becomes effective—

(i) the head of that executive agency shall terminate a contract with such person or debar or suspend such person from eligibility for Federal contracts for a period of not less than 2 years;

(ii) any such debarment or suspension shall be subject to the procedures that apply to debarment and suspension under the Federal Acquisition Regulation under subpart 9.4 of part 9 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations; and

(iii) the Administrator of General Services shall include on the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs maintained by the Administrator under part 9 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation each person that is debarred, suspended, or proposed for debarment or suspension by the head of an executive agency on the basis of a determination of a false certification under subparagraph (B).

(4) UNITED STATES PERSON DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''United States person'' means—

(A) a natural person who is a citizen or resident of the United States or a national of the United States (as defined in section

101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)); and

(B) an entity that is organized under the laws of the United States or any State.

(c) WAIVER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may waive the application of measures on a case-by-case basis under subsection (a) with respect to a person if the President—

(A) determines that—

(i)(I) in the case of a person described in subsection (a)(1)(A), the person did not knowingly engage in any activity described in such subsection; or

(II) in the case of a person described in subsection (a)(1)(B), the person conducted or facilitated a transaction or transactions with, or provided financial services to, a person described in subsection (a)(1)(A) that did not knowingly engage in any activity described in such subsection; and

(ii) the waiver is in the national security interest of the United States; and

(B) submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the determination and the reasons for the determination.

(2) FORM OF REPORT.—The report required by paragraph (1)(B) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

(d) TERMINATION.—The measures imposed with respect to a person under subsection (a) shall terminate on the date on which the President submits to Congress a subsequent annual report pursuant to section 403 of the Arms Control and Disarmament Act (22 U.S.C. 2593a) that does not contain a determination of the President that the country described in subsection (a)(2) with respect to which the measures were imposed with respect to the person is a country that is not in full compliance with its obligations undertaken in all arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements or commitments to which the United States is a participating state.

AMENDMENT NO. 84 OFFERED BY MR. POMPEO OF KANSAS

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REPORT ON COOPERATION BETWEEN IRAN AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State shall jointly submit to Congress a report on cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation and how and to what extent such cooperation affects United States national security and strategic interests.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) How and to what extent Iran and the Russian Federation cooperate on matters relating to Iran's space program, including how and to what extent such cooperation strengthens Iran's ballistic missile program.

(2) How and to what extent Iran's interests and actions and the Russian Federation's interests and actions overlap with respect to Latin America.

(3) A description and analysis of the intelligence-sharing center established by Iran, the Russian Federation, and Syria in Baghdad, Iraq and whether such center is being used for purposes other than the purposes of the joint mission of such countries in Syria.

(4) A description and analysis of—

(A) naval cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation, including joint naval exercises between the two countries; and

(B) the implications of—

(i) an increased Russian Federation naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean; and

(ii) an Iranian naval presence in the Persian Gulf.

(5) A description of the increased cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation since the start of the current conflict in Syria.

(6) The steps Iran has taken to adopt the Russian Federation model of hybrid warfare against potential targets such as Gulf Cooperation Council states with sizeable Shiite populations.

(7) The extent of Russian Federation cooperation with Hezbollah in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, including cooperation with respect to training and equipping and joint operations.

(8) A description of the weapons that have been provided by the Russian Federation to Iran that have violated relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions imposing an arms embargo on Iran.

(c) SUBMISSION PERIOD.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, for such period of time as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Act remains in effect.

(d) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex.

AMENDMENT NO. 85 OFFERED BY MR. ROSKAM OF ILLINOIS

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, insert the following:

SEC. 12xx. REPORT ON MAINTENANCE BY ISRAEL OF A ROBUST INDEPENDENT CAPABILITY TO REMOVE EXISTENTIAL SECURITY THREATS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8601 et seq.) established the policy of the United States to support the inherent right of Israel to self-defense.

(2) The United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 expresses the sense of Congress that the Government of the United States should transfer to the Government of Israel defense articles and defense services.

(3) The inherent right of Israel to self-defense necessarily includes the ability to defend against threats to its security and defend its vital national interests.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that Israel should be able to defend its vital national interests and protect its territory and population against existential threats.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the specified congressional committees a report that—

(A) identifies defensive capabilities and platforms requested by the Government of Israel that would contribute to maintenance of Israel's defensive capability against threats to its territory and population, including nuclear and ballistic missile facilities in Iran, and defend its vital national interests;

(B) assesses the availability for sale or transfer of items requested by the Government of Israel to maintain the capability described in subparagraph (A), including the legal authorities available for making such transfers; and

(C) describes what steps the President is taking to transfer the items described in subparagraph (B) for Israel to maintain the capability described in subparagraph (A).

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex if necessary.

(3) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''specified congressional committees'' means—

(A) the congressional defense committees; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 86 OFFERED BY MR. ROSKAM OF ILLINOIS

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, insert the following:

SEC. 12xx. REPORT ON USE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN OF COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT AND RELATED SERVICES FOR ILLICIT MILITARY OR OTHER ACTIVITIES.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the President, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, shall submit to the congressional defense committees and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on use by the Government of Iran of commercial aircraft and related services for illicit military or other activities during the 5-year period ending of such date of enactment.

(b) ELEMENTS OF REPORT.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include a description of the extent to which—

(1) the Government of Iran has used commercial aircraft or related services to transport illicit cargo to or from Iran, including military goods, weapons, military personnel, military-related electronic parts and mechanical equipment, and rocket or missile components;

(2) the commercial aviation sector of Iran has provided financial, material, and technological support to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC); and

(3) foreign governments and persons have facilitated the activities described in paragraph (1), including allowing the use of airports, services, or other resources.

AMENDMENT NO. 87 OFFERED BY MR. WALKER OF NORTH CAROLINA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. AUTHORITY TO GRANT OBSERVER STATUS TO THE MILITARY FORCES OF TAIWAN AT RIMPAC EXERCISES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense is authorized to grant observer status to the military forces of Taiwan in any maritime exercise known as the Rim of the Pacific Exercise.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section takes effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and applies with respect to any maritime exercise described in subsection (a) that begins on or after such date of enactment.

AMENDMENT NO. 93 OFFERED BY MR. MENG OF NEW YORK

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. AGREEMENTS WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP LAND-BASED WATER RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF AND IN PREPARATION FOR CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.

The Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, is authorized

to enter into agreements with the governments of foreign countries to develop land-based water resources in support of and in preparation for contingency operations, including water selection, pumping, purification, storage, distribution, cooling, consumption, water reuse, water source intelligence, research and development, training, acquisition of water support equipment, and water support operations.

AMENDMENT NO. 94 OFFERED BY MR. MENG OF NEW YORK

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. EXTENSION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS ON THE USE OF CERTAIN IRANIAN SEAPORTS BY FOREIGN VESSELS AND USE OF FOREIGN AIRPORTS BY SANCTIONED IRANIAN AIR CARRIERS.

Section 1252(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (22 U.S.C. 8808(a)) is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking ''2016'' and inserting ''2019''.

AMENDMENT NO. 95 OFFERED BY MR. MOULTON OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. NOTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF BALLISTIC MISSILE LAUNCH BY IRAN.

(a) NOTIFICATION.—The President shall notify Congress within 48 hours of a suspected ballistic missile launch, including a test, by Iran based on credible information indicating that such a launch took place.

(b) ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall initiate an assessment within 48 hours of providing the notification described in subsection (a) to determine whether a missile launch, including a test, described in subsection (a) took place.

(2) DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 15 days after the date on which an assessment is initiated under paragraph (1), the President shall determine whether Iran engaged in a launch described in subsection (a) and shall notify Congress of the basis for any such determination.

(3) AFFIRMATIVE DETERMINATION.—If the President determines under paragraph (2) that a launch described in subsection (a) took place, the President shall further notify Congress of the following:

(A) An identification of entities involved in the launch.

(B) A description of steps the President will take in response to the launch, including—

(i) imposing unilateral sanctions pursuant to Executive Order 13382 (2005) or other relevant authorities against such entities; or

(ii) carrying out diplomatic efforts to impose multilateral sanctions against such entities, including through adoption of a United Nations Security Council resolution.

AMENDMENT NO. 96 OFFERED BY MR. PETERS OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INTEGRATED BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM FOR GCC PARTNER COUNTRIES, JORDAN, EGYPT, AND ISRAEL.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) Iran has conducted numerous ballistic missile tests; and

(2) such tests are in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 and unnecessarily provoke Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partner countries and threaten Israel.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should encourage and enable as appropriate an integrated ballistic missile defense system that links GCC partner countries, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel in order assist in preventing an attack by Iran against such countries.

AMENDMENT NO. 97 OFFERED BY MR. RUIZ OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following

SEC. 12xx. AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING TO INCREASE MARITIME SECURITY AND DOMAIN AWARENESS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES BORDERING THE PERSIAN GULF, ARABIAN SEA, OR MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to authorize assistance and training to increase maritime security and domain awareness of foreign countries bordering the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, or the Mediterranean Sea in order to deter and counter illicit smuggling and related maritime activity by Iran, including illicit Iranian weapons shipments.

(b) AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out the purpose of this section as described in subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, is authorized—

(A) to provide training to the national military or other security forces of Israel, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar that have among their functional responsibilities maritime security missions; and

(B) to provide training to ministry, agency, and headquarters level organizations for such forces.

(2) DESIGNATION.—The provision of assistance and training under this section may be referred to as the ''Counter Iran Maritime Initiative''.

(c) TYPES OF TRAINING.—

(1) AUTHORIZED ELEMENTS OF TRAINING.—Training provided under subsection (b)(1)(A) may include the provision of de minimis equipment, supplies, and small-scale military construction.

(2) REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF TRAINING.—Training provided under subsection (b) shall include elements that promote the following:

(A) Observance of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

(B) Respect for legitimate civilian authority within the country to which the assistance is provided.

(d) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Of the amount authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2017 by section 301 and available for operation and maintenance for Defense-wide activities as specified in the funding table in section 4301, $50,000,000 shall be available only for the provision of assistance and training under subsection (b).

(e) COST SHARING.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, given income parity among recipient countries, the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, should seek, through appropriate bilateral and multilateral arrangements, payments sufficient in amount to offset any training costs associated with implementation of subsection (b).

(2) COST-SHARING AGREEMENT.—The Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, shall negotiate a cost-sharing agreement with a recipient country regarding the cost of any training provided pursuant to section (b). The agreement shall set forth the terms of cost sharing that the Secretary of Defense determines are necessary and appropriate, but such terms shall not be less than 50 percent of the overall cost of the training.

(3) CREDIT TO APPROPRIATIONS.—The portion of such cost-sharing received by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to this subsection may be credited towards appropriations available for operation and maintenance for Defense-wide activities as specified in the funding table in section 4301.

(f) NOTICE TO CONGRESS ON TRAINING.—Not later than 15 days before exercising the authority under subsection (b) with respect to a recipient country, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a notification containing the following:

(1) An identification of the recipient country.

(2) A detailed justification of the program for the provision of the training concerned, and its relationship to United States security interests.

(3) The budget for the program, including a timetable of planned expenditures of funds to implement the program, an implementation time-line for the program with milestones (including anticipated delivery schedules for any assistance and training under the program), the military department or component responsible for management of the program, and the anticipated completion date for the program.

(4) A description of the arrangements, if any, to support recipient country sustainment of any capability developed pursuant to the program, and the source of funds to support sustainment efforts and performance outcomes to be achieved under the program beyond its completion date, if applicable.

(5) A description of the program objectives and an assessment framework to be used to develop capability and performance metrics associated with operational outcomes for the recipient force.

(6) Such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(g) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(h) TERMINATION.—Assistance and training may not be provided under this section after September 30, 2020.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption of this en bloc package.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to say quickly, in the en bloc package, there was an amendment that was put in there having to do with our development of a new rocket engine and a new launch vehicle. I just want to thank publicly Mr. ROGERS, the subcommittee chairman, who worked very closely with me on developing this language.

We have got a lot of great things going on out there. There are a lot of American companies that are working hard to develop a new engine so we will no longer have to rely on the Russian engine.

The amendment that was included allows those companies to use some of the money that the Air Force is providing for the development of a new engine, to use it also to develop a launch vehicle to go along with that engine. We have got, like I said, great companies like Blue Origin in my district, Aerojet Rocketdyne—a lot of folks working on new vehicles—SpaceX as well. This amendment allows the money that the Air Force is providing not just to go to the engine but for some of it to go to a launch vehicle as well. I think this will greatly reduce the cost of our launch costs for the Air Force, which has been a significantly problem recently.

So I thank Chairman ROGERS for allowing us to offer that amendment and for working with me on it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Chair, I want to thank my good friend Mr. ROGERS from Alabama for his work with me on this amendment.

The Intermediate Nuclear Forces or "INF" Treaty places limits on ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

In 2008, the Russians tested a missile within this prohibited range and were caught red handed.

But it took 3 years for the Administration to report any concern about Russian compliance to Congress. It took a full 6 years for the State Department to officially find the Russians in violation. After eight years, there have been no serious consequences for Russia's violation of the treaty.

My amendment would prohibit government contracts with entities that have contributed to Russia's violation of the INF Treaty.

Russia is not our ally, is not our friend, and we cannot take it at its word. Czar Putin is determined to restore Russia to its glory days. We must respond with strength.

And that's just the way it is.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 8 consisting of amendment Nos. 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, and 110 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 98 OFFERED BY MS. LORETTA SANCHEZ OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States and Vietnam signed a Joint Vision Statement on Defense Relations on June 1, 2015.

(2) In October 2014, the Administration partially relaxed United States restrictions on the transfer of lethal weapons to Vietnam.

(3) In 2014, the United States provided $18,000,000 in maritime security assistance to Vietnam.

(4) According to Reporters Without Borders, Vietnam ranks 175 out of 180 countries in press freedom, as the Government of Vietnam continues to persecute citizens for practicing the freedom of speech and expression.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States Government should review its policy on the transfer of lethal weapons to Vietnam; and

(2) the United States Government should evaluate certain human rights benchmarks when providing military assistance to Vietnam.

AMENDMENT NO. 99 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 12xx. REPORT ON EFFORTS TO COMBAT BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA AND THE LAKE CHAD BASIN.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Congress—

(1) strongly condemns the ongoing violence and the systematic gross human rights violations against the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin carried out by Boko Haram;

(2) expresses its support for the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin who wish to live in a peaceful, economically prosperous, and democratic region; and

(3) calls on the President to support Nigerian, Lake Chad Basin, and International Community efforts to ensure accountability for crimes against humanity committed by Boko Haram against the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, particularly young girls kidnapped from Chibok and other internally displaced persons affected by the actions of Boko Haram.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the Attorney General shall jointly submit to Congress a report on efforts to combat Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following elements:

(A) A description of initiatives undertaken by the Department of Defense to assist the Government of Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin to develop capacities to deploy special forces to combat Boko Haram.

(B) A description of United States' activities to enhance the capacity of Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin to investigate and prosecute human rights violations perpetrated against the people of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin by Boko Haram, al-Qaeda affiliates, and other terrorist organizations to promote respect for rule of law in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin.

AMENDMENT NO. 100 OFFERED BY MR. HOLDING OF NORTH CAROLINA

At the appropriate place in title XII of division A of the bill, insert the following:

SEC. 12xx. ENHANCING DEFENSE AND SECURITY COOPERATION WITH INDIA.

(a) REQUIRED ACTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State shall jointly take such actions as may be necessary to—

(A) recognize India's status as a major defense partner of the United States;

(B) designate an individual within the Executive branch who has experience in defense acquisition and technology—

(i) to reinforce and ensure, through interagency policy coordination, the success of the Framework for the United States-India Defense Relationship; and

(ii) to help resolve remaining issues impeding United States-India defense trade, security cooperation, and co-production and co-development opportunities;

(C) approve and facilitate the transfer of advanced technology, consistent with United States conventional arms transfer policy, to support combined military planning with the Indian military for missions such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter piracy, and maritime domain awareness missions;

(D) strengthen the effectiveness of the DTTI and the durability of the Department of Defense's "India Rapid Reaction Cell";

(E) collaborate with the Government of India to develop mutually agreeable mechanisms to verify the security of defense articles and related technology, such as appropriate cyber security and end use monitoring arrangements, consistent with United States export control laws and policy;

(F) promote policies that will encourage the efficient review and authorization of defense sales and exports to India;

(G) encourage greater government-to-government and commercial military transactions between the United States and India;

(H) support the development and alignment of India's export control and procurement regimes with those of the United States and multilateral control regimes; and

(I) continue to enhance defense and security cooperation with India in order to advance United States interests in the South Asia and greater Indo-Pacific regions.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State shall jointly submit to the congressional defense committees and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on how the United States is supporting its defense relationship with India in relation to the actions described in paragraph (1).

(b) MILITARY PLANNING.—The Secretary of Defense is encouraged to coordinate with the Ministry of Defense for the Government of India to develop combined military plans for missions such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime domain awareness, and other missions in the national security interests of both countries.

(c) ASSESSMENT REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State shall jointly, on an annual basis, conduct an assessment of the extent to which India possesses strategic operational capabilities to support military operations of mutual interest between the United States and India.

(2) USE OF ASSESSMENT.—The President shall ensure that the assessment described in paragraph (1) is used, consistent with United States conventional arms transfer policy, to inform the review by the United States of sales of defense articles and services to the Government of India.

(3) FORM.—The assessment described in paragraph (1) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be in classified form.

AMENDMENT NO. 101 OFFERED BY MR. SMITH OF WASHINGTON

Page 609, line 20, strike "or any fiscal year thereafter".

Page 610, strike lines 8 through 15 and insert the following:

"(3) OTHER PURPOSES.—The Secretary may obligate or expend not more than a total of 31 percent of the funds that are authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for the rocket propulsion

system and launch system investment for activities not authorized by paragraph (1)(A), including for developing a launch vehicle, an upper stage, a strap-on motor, or related infrastructure. The Secretary may exceed such limit in fiscal year 2017 for such purposes if—''.

Page 612, strike lines 4 through 12 and insert the following:

''(3) PLAN TO PROTECT GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT AND ASSURED ACCESS TO SPACE.—

''(A) In developing the rocket propulsion system under paragraph (1), and in any development conducted pursuant to subsection (d)(3), the Secretary shall develop a plan to protect the investment of the United States and the assured access to space, including, consistent with section 2320 of title 10, United States Code, and in accordance with other applicable provisions of law, acquiring the rights, as appropriate, for the purpose of developing alternative sources of supply and manufacture in the event such alternative sources are necessary and in the best interest of the United States, such as in the event that a company goes out of business or the system is otherwise unavailable after the Federal Government has invested significant resources to use and rely on such system for launch services.

''(B) Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees the plan developed under subparagraph (A).''.

Page 612, strike lines 13 through 25.

AMENDMENT NO. 102 OFFERED BY MR. TED LIEU OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle A of title XVI, add the following new section:

SEC. 16____. REPORT ON USE OF SPACECRAFT ASSETS OF THE SPACE-BASED INFRARED SYSTEM WIDE-FIELD-OF-VIEW PROGRAM.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Director of National Intelligence, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the feasibility of using available spacecraft assets of the space-based infrared system wide-field-of-view program to satisfy other mission requirements of the Department of Defense or the intelligence community.

(b) MATTERS COVERED.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) An evaluation of using the space-based infrared system wide-field-of-view spacecraft bus for other urgent national security space priorities.

(2) An evaluation of the cost and schedule impact, if any, to the space-based infrared system wide-field-of-view program if the spacecraft bus is used for another purpose.

(c) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex if necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the congressional defense committees; and

(2) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

AMENDMENT NO. 103 OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF ALABAMA

At the end of subtitle C of title XVI, add the following new section:

SEC. 16____. ASSESSMENT ON SECURITY OF INFORMATION HELD BY CLEARED DEFENSE CONTRACTORS.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall conduct an assessment of the sufficiency of the regulatory mechanisms of the Department of Defense to secure defense information held by cleared defense contractors to determine whether there are any gaps that may undermine the protection of such information.

(2) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the findings of the assessment conducted under paragraph (1).

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prescribe regulations that the Secretary determines appropriate to improve the security of defense information held by cleared defense contractors.

(c) CLEARED DEFENSE CONTRACTOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''cleared defense contractor'' has the meaning given that term in section 393(e) of title 10, United States Code.

AMENDMENT NO. 104 OFFERED BY MR. MEEHAN OF PENNSYLVANIA

At the end of subtitle C of title XVI of division A, add the following new section:

SEC. ____. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON CYBER RESILIENCY OF THE NETWORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Army and Air National Guard personnel need to have situational awareness and reliable communications during any of the following events occurring in the United States:

(A) A terrorist attack.

(B) An intentional or unintentional release of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive materials.

(C) A natural or man-made disaster.

(2) During such an event, it is vital that Army and Air National Guard personnel are able to communicate and coordinate response efforts with their own units and appropriate civilian emergency response forces.

(3) Current networks and communications systems of the National Guard, including commercial wireless solutions (such as mobile wireless kinetic mesh), and other systems that are interoperable with the systems of civilian first responders, should provide the necessary robustness, interoperability, reliability, and resilience to extend needed situational awareness and communications to all users and under all operating conditions, including degraded communications environments where infrastructure is damaged or destroyed or under cyber attack or disruption.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the National Guard should be constantly seeking ways to improve and expand its communications and networking capabilities to provide for enhanced performance and resilience in the face of cyber attacks or disruptions, as well as other instances of degradation.

AMENDMENT NO. 105 OFFERED BY MR. HANNA OF NEW YORK

At the end of subtitle C of title XVI, add the following new section:

SEC. 1635. REQUIREMENT FOR ARMY NATIONAL GUARD STRATEGY TO INCORPORATE CYBER PROTECTION TEAMS INTO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CYBER MISSION FORCE.

(a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army, if the Secretary has not already done so, shall provide a briefing to the congressional defense committees outlining a strategy for incorporating Army National Guard cyber protection teams into the Department of Defense cyber mission force.

(b) ELEMENTS OF STRATEGY.—The strategy required by subsection (a) shall include, at minimum, the following:

(1) A timeline for incorporating Army National Guard cyber protection teams into the Department of Defense cyber mission force, including a timeline for receiving appropriate training.

(2) Identification of specific units to be incorporated.

(3) An assessment of how incorporation of Army National Guard cyber protection teams into the Department of Defense cyber mission force might be used to enhance readiness through improved individual and collective training capabilities.

(4) A status report on the Army's progress in issuing additional guidance that clarifies how Army National Guard cyber protection teams can support State and civil operations in National Guard status under title 32, United States Code.

(5) Other matters as considered appropriate by the Secretary of the Army.

AMENDMENT NO. 106 OFFERED BY MR. PETERS OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle A of title XXVIII (page 872, after line 12), add the following new section:

SEC. 2807. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON MAXIMIZING NUMBER OF VETERANS EMPLOYED ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

It is the sense of Congress that, when practical and cost-effective, the Department of Defense should seek ways to maximize the number of veterans employed on military construction projects (as defined in section 2801 of title 10, United States Code).

AMENDMENT NO. 107 OFFERED BY MR. BRAT OF VIRGINIA

At the end of subtitle B of title XXVIII (page 877, after line 25), add the following

SEC. 2817. IMPROVED PROCESS FOR DISPOSAL OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY LOCATED OVERSEAS.

(a) PETITION TO ACQUIRE SURPLUS PROPERTY.—2687a of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (h); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (f) the following new subsection:

''(g) PETITION PROCESS FOR DISPOSAL OF OVERSEAS SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall establish a process by which a foreign government may request the transfer of surplus real property or improvements under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense in the foreign country.

''(2) Upon the receipt of a petition under this subsection, the Secretary shall determine within 90 days whether the property or improvement subject to the petition is surplus. If surplus, the Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with the foreign government within one year for the disposal of the property.

''(3) If real property or an improvement is determined not to be surplus, the Secretary shall not be obligated to consider another petition involving the same property or improvement for five years beginning on the date on which the initial determination was made.''.

(b) ADDITIONAL USE OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OVERSEAS MILITARY FACILITY INVESTMENT RECOVERY ACCOUNT.—Section 2687a(b) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''property disposal agreement,'' after ''forces agreement,''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (A);

(B) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) military readiness programs.''.

(c) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Section 2687a(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) A report under paragraph (1) also shall specify the following:

''(A) The number of petitions received under subsection (g) from foreign governments requesting the transfer of surplus real property or improvements under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense overseas.

''(B) The status of each petition, including whether reviewed, denied, or granted.

''(C) The implementation status of each granted petition.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 108 OFFERED BY MR. CARTER OF GEORGIA

At the end of subtitle D of title XXVIII, add the following new section:

SEC. ___. CLOSURE OF ST. MARYS AIRPORT.

(a) RELEASE OF RESTRICTIONS.—Subject to subsection (b), the United States, acting through the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, shall release the city of St. Marys, Georgia, from all restrictions, conditions, and limitations on the use, encumbrance, conveyance, and closure of the St. Marys Airport, to the extent such restrictions, conditions, and limitations are enforceable by the Administrator.

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR RELEASE OF RESTRICTIONS.—The Administrator shall execute the release under subsection (a) once all of the following occurs:

(1) The Secretary of the Navy transfers to the Georgia Department of Transportation the amounts described in subsection (c) and requires as an enforceable condition on such transfer that all funds transferred shall be used only for airport development (as defined in section 47102 of title 49, United States Code) of a general aviation airport in Georgia, consistent with planning efforts conducted by the Administrator and the Georgia Department of Transportation.

(2) The city of St. Marys, for consideration as provided for in this section, grants to the United States, under the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary, a restrictive use easement in the real property used for the St. Marys Airport, as determined acceptable by the Secretary, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers necessary to protect the interests of the United States and prohibiting the future use of such property for all aviation-related purposes and any other purposes deemed by the Secretary to be incompatible with the operations, functions, and missions of Naval Submarine Base, Kings Bay, Georgia.

(3) The Secretary obtains an appraisal to determine the fair market value of the real property used for the St. Marys Airport in the manner described in subsection (c)(1).

(4) The Administrator fulfills the obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) in connection with the release under subsection (a). In carrying out such obligations—

(A) the Administrator shall not assume or consider any potential or proposed future redevelopment of the current St. Marys airport property;

(B) any potential new general aviation airport in Georgia shall be deemed to be not connected with the release noted in subsection (a) nor the closure of St. Marys Airport; and

(C) any environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) for a potential general aviation airport in Georgia shall be considered through an environmental review process separate and apart from the environmental review made a condition of release by this section.

(c) TRANSFER OF AMOUNTS DESCRIBED.—The amounts described in this subsection are the following:

(1) An amount equal to the fair market value of the real property of the St. Marys Airport, as determined by the Secretary and concurred in by the Administrator, based on an appraisal report and title documentation that—

(A) is prepared or adopted by the Secretary, and concurred in by the Administrator, not more than 180 days prior to the transfer described in subsection (b)(1); and

(B) meets all requirements of Federal law and the appraisal and documentation standards applicable to the acquisition and disposal of real property interests of the United States.

(2) An amount equal to the unamortized portion of any Federal development grants (including grants available under a State block grant program established pursuant to section 47128 of title 49, United States Code), other than used for the acquisition of land, paid to the city of St. Marys for use as the St. Marys Airport.

(3) An amount equal to the airport revenues remaining in the airport account for the St. Marys Airport as of the date of the enactment of this Act and as otherwise due to or received by the city of St. Marys after such date of enactment pursuant to sections 47107(b) and 47133 of title 49, United States Code.

(d) AUTHORIZATION FOR TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—Using funds available to the Department of the Navy for operation and maintenance, the Secretary may pay the amounts described in subsection (c) to the Georgia Department of Transportation, conditioned as described in subsection (b)(1).

(e) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of St. Marys Airport shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary and concurred in by the Administrator.

(2) PLANNING OF GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT.—Any planning effort for the development of a new general aviation airport in southeast Georgia using the amounts described in subsection (c) shall be conducted in coordination with the Secretary, and shall ensure that any such airport does not encroach on the operations, functions, and missions of Naval Submarine Base, Kings Bay, Georgia.

(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to limit the applicability of—

(1) the requirements and processes under section 46319 of title 49, United States Code;

(2) the requirements and processes under part 157 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations; or

(3) the public notice requirements under section 47107(h)(2) of title 49, United States Code.

AMENDMENT NO. 109 OFFERED BY MR. PEARCE OF NEW MEXICO

At the end of subtitle D of title XXVIII (page 904, after line 22), add the following new section:

SEC. 2839. PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION, PORTION OF ORGAN MOUNTAINS AREA, FILLMORE CANYON, NEW MEXICO.

The Secretary of Defense may not transfer administrative jurisdiction over the parcel of Federal land depicted as ''Parcel D'' on the map entitled ''Organ Mountains Area - Fillmore Canyon'' and dated April 19, 2016 from the Department of Defense to the Secretary of the Interior.

AMENDMENT NO. 110 OFFERED BY MR. CULBERSON OF TEXAS

Page 936, after line 3, insert the following:

SEC. 2857. BATTLESHIP PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established within the Department of the Interior a grant program for the preservation of our nation's most historic battleships.

(b) USE OF GRANTS.—Amounts received through grants under this section shall be used for the preservation of our nation's most historic battleships in a manner that is self-sustaining and has an educational component.

(c) CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, an entity shall—

(1) submit an application under procedures prescribed by the Secretary;

(2) match the amount of the grant, on a 1-to-1 basis, with non-Federal assets from non-Federal sources, which may include cash or durable goods and materials fairly valued as determined by the Secretary;

(3) maintain records as may be reasonably necessary to fully disclose—

(A) the amount and the disposition of the proceeds of the grant;

(B) the total cost of the project for which the grant is made; and

(C) other records as may be required by the Secretary, including such records as will facilitate an effective accounting for project funds; and

(4) provide access to the Secretary for the purposes of any required audit and examination of any books, documents, papers, and records of the entity.

(d) MOST HISTORIC BATTLESHIP DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''most historic battleship'' means a battleship that is—

(1) between 75 and 115 years old;

(2) listed on the National Historic Register; and

(3) located within the State for which it was named.

(e) SAVINGS PROVISION.—The authorities contained in this section shall be in addition to, and shall not be construed to supercede or modify those contained in the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470–470x-6).

(f) PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No Federal funds made available to carry out this section may be used to acquire any real property, or any interest in any real property, without the written consent of the owner (or owners) of that property or interest in property.

(2) NO DESIGNATION.—The authority granted by this section shall not constitute a Federal designation or have any effect on private property ownership.

(g) SUNSET.—The authority to make grants under this section expires on September 30, 2023.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption of the en bloc amendments.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption of the en bloc amendments.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. THORNBERRY OF TEXAS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 735, I offer amendments en bloc.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 9 consisting of amendment Nos. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, and 120 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by Mr. THORNBERRY of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 111 OFFERED BY MR. NEWHOUSE OF WASHINGTON

Add at the end of subtitle G of title XXVIII the following new section:

SEC. 2867. REPORT ON DOCUMENTATION FOR ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN PROPERTIES ALONG COLUMBIA RIVER, WASHINGTON, BY CORPS OF ENGINEERS.

(a) REPORT ON DOCUMENTATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, shall submit a report to Congress on the process by which the Corps of Engineers acquired the properties described in subsection (b), and shall include in the report the specific legal documentation pursuant to which the properties were acquired.

(b) PROPERTIES DESCRIBED.—The properties described in this subsection are each of the properties described in paragraph (2) of section 501(i) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–303; 110 Stat. 3752).

AMENDMENT NO. 112 OFFERED BY MR. BEN RAY LUJÁN OF NEW MEXICO

At the end of subtitle B of title XXXI of division C, insert the following:

SEC. 3126. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ACCOUNTING PRACTICES BY LABORATORY OPERATING CONTRACTORS AND PLANT OR SITE MANAGERS OF NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION FACILITIES.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Energy should ensure that each laboratory operating contractor or plant or site manager of a National Nuclear Security Administration facility adopt generally accepted and consistent accounting practices for laboratory, plant, or site directed research and development.

AMENDMENT NO. 113 OFFERED BY MR. FOSTER OF ILLINOIS

At the end of subtitle C of title XXXI, add the following new section:

SEC. 31___. BRIEFING ON THE INFORMATION-INTERCHANGE OF LOW-ENRICHED URANIUM.

(a) BRIEFING.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Energy, and the Secretary of State shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congressional committees on the feasibility and potential benefits of a dialogue between the United States and France on the use of low-enriched uranium in naval reactors.

(b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the congressional defense committees;

(2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(3) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

(4) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

AMENDMENT NO. 114 OFFERED BY MR. PETERS OF CALIFORNIA

Page 1009, lines 1 through 8, amend paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR.—The term 'advanced nuclear reactor' means—

''(A) a nuclear fission reactor with significant improvements over the most recent generation of nuclear fission reactors, which may include inherent safety features, lower waste yields, greater fuel utilization, superior reliability, resistance to proliferation, and increased thermal efficiency; or

''(B) a nuclear fusion reactor.''

Page 1014, lines 8 and 9, strike ''advanced fission reactor systems, nuclear fusion systems,'' and insert ''advanced nuclear reactor systems''.

Page 1016, lines 12 and 13, strike ''fusion and advanced fission experimental reactors'' and insert ''experimental advanced nuclear reactors''.

Page 1018, lines 3 and 4, strike ''next generation nuclear energy technology'' and insert ''advanced nuclear reactor technologies''.

AMENDMENT NO. 115 OFFERED BY MR. DONOVAN OF NEW YORK

At the end of title XXXV add the following:

SEC. 35____. EXPEDITED PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY CARDS FOR SEPARATING MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 70105 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(r) EXPEDITED ISSUANCE FOR SEPARATING SERVICE MEMBERS.—The Secretary shall, using authority available under other provisions of law—

''(1) seek to expedite processing of applications for transportation security cards under this section for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from active duty service with a discharge other than a dishonorable discharge;

''(2) in consultation with the Secretary of Defense—

''(A) enhance efforts of the Department of Homeland Security in assisting members of the Armed Forces who are separating from active duty service with receiving a transportation security card, including by—

''(i) including under the Transition Assistance Program under section 1144 of title 10—

''(I) applications for such cards; and

''(II) a form by which such a member may grant the member's permission for government agencies to disclose to the Department of Homeland Security findings of background investigations of such member, for consideration by the Department in processing the member's application for a transportation security card;

''(ii) providing opportunities for local officials of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating to partner with military installations for that purpose; and

''(iii) ensuring that such members of the Armed Forces are aware of opportunities to apply for such cards;

''(B) seek to educate members of the Armed Forces with competencies that are transferable to maritime industries regarding—

''(i) opportunities for employment in such industries; and

''(ii) the requirements and qualifications for, and duties associated with, transportation security cards; and

''(C) cooperate with other Federal agencies to expedite the transfer to the Secretary the findings of relevant background investigations and security clearances; and

''(3) issue or deny a transportation security card under this section for a veteran by not later than 13 days after the date of the submission of the application for the card, unless there is a substantial problem with the application that prevents compliance with this paragraph.''.

(b) REPORTS.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for each of the subsequent 2 years, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall submit a report to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate describing and assessing the efforts of such department to implement the amendment made by this section.

SEC. 35____. TRAINING UNDER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATED WITH TRANSPORTATION SECURITY CARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1144(b) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(10) Acting through the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, provide information on career opportunities for employment available to members with transportation security cards issued under section 70105 of title 46.''.

(b) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The program carried out under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code, shall comply with the requirements of subsection (b)(10) of such section, as added by subsection (a), by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 116 OFFERED BY MR. FRANKEL OF FLORIDA

At the end of title XXXV add the following:

SEC. ____. APPLICATION OF LAW.

Section 4301 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) For purposes of any Federal law except the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), any vessel, including a foreign vessel, being repaired or dismantled is deemed to be a recreational vessel, as defined under section 2101(25), during such repair or dismantling, if that vessel—

''(1) shares elements of design and construction of traditional recreational vessels (as so defined); and

''(2) when operating is not normally engaged in a military, commercial, or traditionally commercial undertaking.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 117 OFFERED BY MR. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Page 1081, in the table of section 4102, strike ''JOINT IMPROVISED-THREAT DEFEAT FUND'' both places it appears and insert ''JOINT IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE DEFEAT FUND''.

Page 1085, in the table of section 4103, strike ''JOINT IMPROVISED-THREAT DEFEAT FUND'' both places it appears and insert ''JOINT IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE DEFEAT FUND''.

AMENDMENT NO. 118 OFFERED BY MS. MENG OF NEW YORK

Page 1191, after line 7, insert the following:

''(F) Conspiracy to commit an offense specified in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) that is punishable under section 881 of this title (article 81).''.

AMENDMENT NO. 120 OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF ALABAMA

At the end of subtitle B of title XXXI, add the following new section:

SEC. 31____. PROTECTION OF CERTAIN NUCLEAR FACILITIES FROM UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Atomic Energy Defense Act (50 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 4509 the following new section:

''SEC. 4510. PROTECTION OF CERTAIN NUCLEAR FACILITIES FROM UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.

''(a) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of Energy may take such actions described in subsection (b)(1) that are necessary to mitigate the threat of an unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft that poses an imminent threat (as defined by the Secretary of Energy, in coordination with the Secretary of Transportation) to the safety or security of a covered facility.

''(b) ACTIONS DESCRIBED.—(1) The actions described in this paragraph are the following:

''(A) Disrupt control of the unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft.

''(B) Seize and exercise control of the unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft.

''(C) Seize or otherwise confiscate the unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft.

''(D) Use reasonable force to disable or destroy the unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft.

''(2) The Secretary of Energy shall develop the actions described in paragraph (1) in coordination with the Secretary of Transportation, consistent with the protection of information regarding sensitive defense or national security capabilities.

''(c) FORFEITURE.—(1) Any unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft described in subsection (a) shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture to the United States.

''(2) The Secretary of Energy may prescribe regulations to establish reasonable exceptions to paragraph (1), including in cases where—

''(A) the operator of the unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft obtained the control and possession of such system or aircraft illegally; or

''(B) the operator of the unmanned aircraft system or unmanned aircraft is an employee of a common carrier acting in manner described in subsection (a) without the knowledge of the common carrier.

''(d) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe regulations and issue guidance in the respective areas of each Secretary to carry out this section.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'covered facility' means any facility that—

''(A) is identified by the Secretary of Energy for purposes of this section;

''(B) is located in the United States (including the territories and possessions of the United States); and

''(C) is owned by the United States, or contracted to the United States, to store or use special nuclear material.

''(2) The terms 'unmanned aircraft' and 'unmanned aircraft system' have the meaning given those terms in section 331 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–95; 49 U.S.C. 40101 note).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 4509 the following new item:

''Sec. 4510. Protection of certain nuclear facilities from unmanned aircraft.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 4 minutes.

I just want to thank the chairman, and I want to thank the staff and the Members for putting together this piece of legislation. It is always a long process but I think a good process, in which we pull together a variety of different amendments. And, as the chairman has said many times, it is a bottom-up process. It starts with the Members offering their ideas in putting together the bill. I think, once again, we have done that process fairly well.

The problem and the challenge, as I had mentioned earlier, comes from the budget number and the problems that we face. I know the chairman has said earlier, you know, we can't solve all these problems; so let's help the troops now.

The problem is, it is like you have got a credit card and you say: wow, off in the future there may be problems, but let's just buy whatever we want, put it on the credit card now, and that will help everybody in the long run. But it doesn't. It is not helping the troops to pass a bill that has 6 months worth of funding for a yearlong's worth of overseas contingency operations, and it is not helping them to hope that the Budget Control Act goes away.

The chairman mentioned that last year we had this same problem and we did wind up getting an agreement, and that is true. Part of the reason we got that agreement, however, is because we, on this side, insisted on that agreement and did not merely accept the defense bill that was offered without resolving those issues.

And, once again, we have to insist upon that: that it does not make sense to have the Budget Control Act and continue to insist on spending more money on defense. Essentially, what the majority party wants is they want a Ferrari, but they only want to provide the money to pay for a Honda, and they keep hoping that somehow that extra money is going to appear. That hurts our troops.

We have heard all of these stories about the terrible state of our readiness. Consistently, over the course of the last 4 years, the bill that has been passed in the House and the Senate has put less money into readiness than the President asked for. Why? Because they wanted to pay for a wide variety of programs, including the A–10, an important plane, we have heard.

I am not saying that there is anything in this bill that you can't make an argument for as being important. The problem is it doesn't add up, and it leaves us in a position where the military is continually having to stare at a cliff, knowing that the money is not going to be there and trying to figure out how to plan through that.

I want a more sensible process. We should fully fund the OCO and fund the base budget at the level that it is funded at. If we don't find that sufficient—and I know just about every member of the Armed Services Committee on the Republican side does not find that number sufficient—then provide the money. This isn't a matter of saying, well, what has that got to do with this? That has got everything to do with this.

If you are not willing to provide the money to pay for these programs, starting them, or telling the military that they have to have a fixed number of members of the Army and the Marine Corps, and then knowing that the money isn't going to be there a year from now, is not helpful. We have to bring some sanity to the budget process. This bill, artfully, just imagines that 6 months from now, we will magically make up the extra money in OCO. That is a big problem that, once again, we need to confront.

But just like last year, I am confident that we will come together in conference, we will talk about this, we will work it out, and we will come up with a bill. But I hope that we will start understanding the money a little bit better and making this actually work so that the bill we pass is helping the men and women of the armed services who serve us so well.

So it is not about whether or not you support the troops or not; it is a matter of whether or not you think this bill is the best way to do it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

Mr. LIPINSKI. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I rise to thank Ranking Member SMITH and Chairman THORNBERRY for an amendment that was included in one of the prior en bloc groups of amendments.

The amendment that I joined Mr. POMPEO in offering requires the DOD to report to Congress on the cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation and the extent to which that cooperation affects our national security interests.

Even before the Iran nuclear deal, we watched Tehran and Moscow become

closer partners, as Russia announced it would lift its ban on selling advanced missiles to Iran and began military cooperation with Iran in Syria to prop up the Assad government.

This year, Russia and Iran have worked together to undermine U.N. Security Council ballistic missile resolutions and announced an $800 million missile defense contract.

It is imperative that we fully understand the impact of this alliance on our national security interests because both nations continue to be hostile towards the U.S. and our allies. This amendment will help do just that.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, how much time is remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Washington has 5 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time just to, again, emphasize that this is a very, very important piece of legislation, and it is important that we get it right. This is one step in the process.

At the committee level, we worked together and got the bill out. At the time, I raised the concerns that I am raising now. I voted in favor of the bill, hoping that we would make improvements on the floor. Instead, we went the other way.

We had one amendment that was supported in the committee that the Rules Committee stripped without allowing a vote, a rule that would have women sign up for the Selective Service, an amendment that was supported by my caucus. The Rules Committee didn't even allow us to have a vote on that. They just stripped it.

On another one, on the amendment that we didn't like that was in the bill, they went the other way and didn't allow a vote on that to keep it in place. That is not a fair process.

I will say that there are ultimately two objections to this bill and preface it with one thing. I think the chairman in committee has been very, very fair, has worked very well with Democrats, and I do appreciate that. The Rules Committee, on the other hand, has been the exact opposite. They have been completely and totally partisan in a way that is not in keeping with the tradition of the Armed Services Committee and the way we do business in a fair way: to allow members to have votes on amendments that are important to them. They didn't do that, and that made this bill even worse than it was when it came out of committee. I hope the Rules Committee will do better in the future. I don't think that is likely, but that is certainly one issue.

The second issue is, again, the funding. If we are really going to provide for the troops, we have to realistically look at the next 10 years and begin building a national security strategy that can support them, based on the budget that we are prepared to provide. There is no new revenue coming. Even if the budget caps go away, typically the way the budget caps go away is they are extended for another year, and basically we use 10-year money to pay for 1 year's worth of goods and services, which only puts us in a further hole.

Lastly, I will point out those other portions of the budget. The defense budget has grown as a proportion of the discretionary budget. It is now over 55 percent of it.

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Essentially, what the Republican party is trying to do is to spend all of the money on defense, and then there will be nothing left over for the other priorities. Those other priorities do matter, and it is wrong to ask: Well, what has the defense bill got to do with our crumbling infrastructure? What has the defense bill got to do with long lines at the TSA or at Homeland Security or at the Department of Justice or anywhere else?

It has got everything to do with it in a year when we don't have a budget resolution, so we don't have set amounts of money for each bill. Every dollar that we put into this is taking out of the overall allocation and is taking from all of those other priorities.

Yes, national security is incredibly important, but I think infrastructure is important as well. I think the Department of Homeland Security is important, as is the Department of Justice, as is the Department of the Treasury, which tries to stop terrorists from raising money. What we are doing here is refusing to pass a budget resolution, to put the numbers in place, and then spending all of the money on defense first—sorry. It is an exaggeration as it is not all of the money but more of the money than was agreed upon—and then what is left over goes to everything else. That is not a responsible way to budget. That is not a responsible way to provide for this country.

For those reasons, I am going to oppose the bill. I hope, again, as we did last year, we will work this out in conference, come up with a more sensible approach, and have a bill that we can all support.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I appreciate the gentleman's comments that he believes I have tried to be fair with Members of the minority in constructing this bill. I have tried to be; although I have to say, Mr. Chair, if one leans over backwards to make sure Members of the minority contribute to the bill even to the point at which some of the provisions Members of the minority are interested in are opposed by Members of the majority—if you still try to do that and yet Members of the minority vote against the bill—I have got to ask myself: Why? Why do I do such things?

Just in the past hour and a half, maybe 2 hours, we have spent time with basically equal numbers of Members on the Republican and Democratic sides in their talking about their amendments—discussing very important issues—but none of those issues happen without having the bill pass. Yet I get the feeling that, at least for some Members, there may always be that next bridge that we have got to get to before they can support the bill.

Mr. Chair, the ranking member described my view really better than I did. He said that my opinion is we have to help the troops now, and that is exactly my view. Just think about what the alternative is: no, we are not going to help the troops now because we are not sure where the money is going to come from next year or 5 years from now or the next 10 years. In the meantime, while we are not sure about all of that, we are going to continue to let class A mishaps grow. What that means is more people stand in danger of losing their lives, but we are going to go ahead and allow that to happen because we don't know where the money is going to come from or we object to this provision, et cetera.

It is absolutely true. My view is to help the troops now because now is the time that they are cannibalizing the aircraft, not getting the minimum number of training hours, seeing class A mishaps go up, have only nine B–1s that are available to fly. The statistics go on and on.

Mr. Chair, the other point I would make is that readiness is not just a question of funding the operation and maintenance accounts. That is really what I have thought most of the time I have been here. What I have come to understand, however, is that you can cut end strength, you can cut the number of people in the military, down to the point that you can never get ready. I think that is part of what the Air Force is facing now. They have cut the number of people. We are 700 pilots short, and we are 4,000 maintainers short. It doesn't matter how much money you are putting toward them when you have only so many mechanics. The average experience of a mechanic in the military has dropped significantly just in the last 2 years. People are part of fixing readiness, and procurement is part of fixing readiness.

How many times do I have to explain that you can't fix a 1979 Black Hawk helicopter?

You have to get a new one. You can't replace an early 1980s F/A–18 model. There are no more parts for it. You have to replace it with an F–35. That is what we do in this bill.

Mr. Chair, I continue to be perplexed at how the funding approach that was good and passed by a Democratic majority in 2008, between Bush and Obama, is somehow unacceptable between Obama and whoever is next. None of us knows who is next. We don't

know who is going to be the next President. To fully fund the readiness requirements for the whole year so as to deal with those problems of maintenance and training and people and procurement, to fully fund those and then have the new President take a fresh look at the deployments, seems to make sense. It sure made sense in 2008. I think it makes sense in 2016 as well.

Mr. Chair, the Rules Committee made in order 180 amendments for consideration here on the floor. I understand not everybody's amendment was made in order, but it is a little hard for me to understand how people could complain about the process when 180 amendments were made in order, many by Democrats, many by Republicans. I realize not every amendment was made in order, but, surely, a lot of topics have been discussed.

Finally, Mr. Chair, I just have to take a moment and read one of the amendments that some Members have complained about that was placed into the bill in committee by Mr. RUSSELL of Oklahoma.

It reads:

Any branch or agency of the Federal Government shall provide protections and exemptions consistent with section 702(a) and 703(e)(2) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and section 103(d) of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

That is it. It is one paragraph. That is it. I don't know who is opposed today to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. That is the reason I just get this feeling, personally, that there may be those who are just looking for some excuse to vote against the bill. The price of that is that readiness problems—class A mishaps—will continue on the trend they are on.

Absolutely. Help the troops now. I can't predict the future. I don't know who is going to be elected President. I don't know who is going to be elected to Congress. I don't know what the budget will be in future times, but I know what I can do now. I know what I can do today. I can help the troops now. You bet. Sign me up.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 119 OFFERED BY MS. BORDALLO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 119 printed in House Report 114–571.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

TITLE LXXIII—GUAM WORLD WAR II LOYALTY RECOGNITION ACT

SEC. 7301. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act''.

SEC. 7302. RECOGNITION OF THE SUFFERING AND LOYALTY OF THE RESIDENTS OF GUAM.

(a) RECOGNITION OF THE SUFFERING OF THE RESIDENTS OF GUAM.—The United States recognizes that, as described by the Guam War Claims Review Commission, the residents of Guam, on account of their United States nationality, suffered unspeakable harm as a result of the occupation of Guam by Imperial Japanese military forces during World War II, by being subjected to death, rape, severe personal injury, personal injury, forced labor, forced march, or internment.

(b) RECOGNITION OF THE LOYALTY OF THE RESIDENTS OF GUAM.—The United States forever will be grateful to the residents of Guam for their steadfast loyalty to the United States, as demonstrated by the countless acts of courage they performed despite the threat of death or great bodily harm they faced at the hands of the Imperial Japanese military forces that occupied Guam during World War II.

SEC. 7303. GUAM WORLD WAR II CLAIMS FUND.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall establish in the Treasury of the United States a special fund (in this title referred to as the ''Claims Fund'') for the payment of claims submitted by compensable Guam victims and survivors of compensable Guam decedents in accordance with sections 7304 and 7305.

(b) COMPOSITION OF FUND.—The Claims Fund established under subsection (a) shall be composed of amounts deposited into the Claims Fund under subsection (c) and any other payments made available for the payment of claims under this title.

(c) PAYMENT OF CERTAIN DUTIES, TAXES, AND FEES COLLECTED FROM GUAM DEPOSITED INTO FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 30 of the Organic Act of Guam (48 U.S.C. 1421h), the excess of—

(A) any amount of duties, taxes, and fees collected under such section after fiscal year 2014, over

(B) the amount of duties, taxes, and fees collected under such section during fiscal year 2014,

shall be deposited into the Claims Fund.

(2) APPLICATION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply after the date for which the Secretary of the Treasury determines that all payments required to be made under section 7304 have been made.

(d) LIMITATION ON PAYMENTS MADE FROM FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No payment may be made in a fiscal year under section 7304 until funds are deposited into the Claims Fund in such fiscal year under subsection (c).

(2) AMOUNTS.—For each fiscal year in which funds are deposited into the Claims Fund under subsection (c), the total amount of payments made in a fiscal year under section 7304 may not exceed the amount of funds available in the Claims Fund for such fiscal year.

(e) DEDUCTIONS FROM FUND FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall deduct from any amounts deposited into the Claims Fund an amount equal to 5 percent of such amounts as reimbursement to the Federal Government for expenses incurred by the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission and by the Department of the Treasury in the administration of this title. The amounts so deducted shall be covered into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

SEC. 7304. PAYMENTS FOR GUAM WORLD WAR II CLAIMS.

(a) PAYMENTS FOR DEATH, PERSONAL INJURY, FORCED LABOR, FORCED MARCH, AND INTERNMENT.—After the Secretary of the Treasury receives the certification from the Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission as required under section 7305(b)(8), the Secretary of the Treasury shall make payments, subject to the availably of appropriations, to compensable Guam victims and survivors of a compensable Guam decedents as follows:

(1) COMPENSABLE GUAM VICTIM.—Before making any payments under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall make payments to compensable Guam victims as follows:

(A) In the case of a victim who has suffered an injury described in subsection (c)(2)(A), $15,000.

(B) In the case of a victim who is not described in subparagraph (A), but who has suffered an injury described in subsection (c)(2)(B), $12,000.

(C) In the case of a victim who is not described in subparagraph (A) or (B), but who has suffered an injury described in subsection (c)(2)(C), $10,000.

(2) SURVIVORS OF COMPENSABLE GUAM DECEDENTS.—In the case of a compensable Guam decedent, the Secretary shall pay $25,000 for distribution to survivors of the decedent in accordance with subsection (b). The Secretary shall make payments under this paragraph only after all payments are made under paragraph (1).

(b) DISTRIBUTION OF SURVIVOR PAYMENTS.—A payment made under subsection (a)(2) to the survivors of a compensable Guam decedent shall be distributed as follows:

(1) In the case of a decedent whose spouse is living as of the date of the enactment of this Act, but who had no living children as of such date, the payment shall be made to such spouse.

(2) In the case of a decedent whose spouse is living as of the date of the enactment of this Act and who had one or more living children as of such date, 50 percent of the payment shall be made to the spouse and 50 percent shall be made to such children, to be divided among such children to the greatest extent possible into equal shares.

(3) In the case of a decedent whose spouse is not living as of the date of the enactment of this Act and who had one or more living children as of such date, the payment shall be made to such children, to be divided among such children to the greatest extent possible into equal shares.

(4) In the case of a decedent whose spouse is not living as of the date of the enactment of this Act and who had no living children as of such date, but who—

(A) had a parent who is living as of such date, the payment shall be made to the parent; or

(B) had two parents who are living as of such date, the payment shall be divided equally between the parents.

(5) In the case of a decedent whose spouse is not living as of the date of the enactment of this Act, who had no living children as of such date, and who had no parents who are living as of such date, no payment shall be made.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this title:

(1) COMPENSABLE GUAM DECEDENT.—The term ''compensable Guam decedent'' means an individual determined under section 7305 to have been a resident of Guam who died as a result of the attack and occupation of Guam by Imperial Japanese military forces during World War II, or incident to the liberation of Guam by United States military forces, and whose death would have been compensable under the Guam Meritorious Claims Act of 1945 (Public Law 79–224) if a timely claim had been filed under the terms of such Act.

(2) COMPENSABLE GUAM VICTIM.—The term ''compensable Guam victim'' means an individual who is not deceased as of the date of

the enactment of this Act and who is determined under section 7305 to have suffered, as a result of the attack and occupation of Guam by Imperial Japanese military forces during World War II, or incident to the liberation of Guam by United States military forces, any of the following:

(A) Rape or severe personal injury (such as loss of a limb, dismemberment, or paralysis).

(B) Forced labor or a personal injury not under subparagraph (A) (such as disfigurement, scarring, or burns).

(C) Forced march, internment, or hiding to evade internment.

(3) DEFINITIONS OF SEVERE PERSONAL INJURIES AND PERSONAL INJURIES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall promulgate regulations to specify the injuries that constitute a severe personal injury or a personal injury for purposes of subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, of paragraph (2).

SEC. 7305. ADJUDICATION.

(a) AUTHORITY OF FOREIGN CLAIMS SETTLEMENT COMMISSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall adjudicate claims and determine the eligibility of individuals for payments under section 7304.

(2) RULES AND REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall publish in the Federal Register such rules and regulations as may be necessary to enable the Commission to carry out the functions of the Commission under this title.

(b) CLAIMS SUBMITTED FOR PAYMENTS.—

(1) SUBMITTAL OF CLAIM.—For purposes of subsection (a)(1) and subject to paragraph (2), the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission may not determine an individual is eligible for a payment under section 7304 unless the individual submits to the Commission a claim in such manner and form and containing such information as the Commission specifies.

(2) FILING PERIOD FOR CLAIMS AND NOTICE.—

(A) FILING PERIOD.—An individual filing a claim for a payment under section 7304 shall file such claim not later than one year after the date on which the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission publishes the notice described in subparagraph (B).

(B) NOTICE OF FILING PERIOD.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall publish a notice of the deadline for filing a claim described in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in the Federal Register; and

(ii) in newspaper, radio, and television media in Guam.

(3) ADJUDICATORY DECISIONS.—The decision of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission on each claim filed under this title shall—

(A) be by majority vote;

(B) be in writing;

(C) state the reasons for the approval or denial of the claim; and

(D) if approved, state the amount of the payment awarded and the distribution, if any, to be made of the payment.

(4) DEDUCTIONS IN PAYMENT.—The Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall deduct, from a payment made to a compensable Guam victim or survivors of a compensable Guam decedent under this section, amounts paid to such victim or survivors under the Guam Meritorious Claims Act of 1945 (Public Law 79–224) before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(5) INTEREST.—No interest shall be paid on payments made by the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission under section 7304.

(6) LIMITED COMPENSATION FOR PROVISION OF REPRESENTATIONAL SERVICES.—

(A) LIMIT ON COMPENSATION.—Any agreement under which an individual who provided representational services to an individual who filed a claim for a payment under this title that provides for compensation to the individual who provided such services in an amount that is more than one percent of the total amount of such payment shall be unlawful and void.

(B) PENALTIES.—Whoever demands or receives any compensation in excess of the amount allowed under subparagraph (A) shall be fined not more than $5,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(7) APPEALS AND FINALITY.—Objections and appeals of decisions of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall be to the Commission, and upon rehearing, the decision in each claim shall be final, and not subject to further review by any court or agency.

(8) CERTIFICATIONS FOR PAYMENT.—After a decision approving a claim becomes final, the Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall certify such decision to the Secretary of the Treasury for authorization of a payment under section 7304.

(9) TREATMENT OF AFFIDAVITS.—For purposes of section 7304 and subject to paragraph (2), the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission shall treat a claim that is accompanied by an affidavit of an individual that attests to all of the material facts required for establishing the eligibility of such individual for payment under such section as establishing a prima facie case of the eligibility of the individual for such payment without the need for further documentation, except as the Commission may otherwise require. Such material facts shall include, with respect to a claim for a payment made under section 7304(a), a detailed description of the injury or other circumstance supporting the claim involved, including the level of payment sought.

(10) RELEASE OF RELATED CLAIMS.—Acceptance of a payment under section 7304 by an individual for a claim related to a compensable Guam decedent or a compensable Guam victim shall be in full satisfaction of all claims related to such decedent or victim, respectively, arising under the Guam Meritorious Claims Act of 1945 (Public Law 79–224), the implementing regulations issued by the United States Navy pursuant to such Act (Public Law 79–224), or this title.

SEC. 7306. GRANTS PROGRAM TO MEMORIALIZE THE OCCUPATION OF GUAM DURING WORLD WAR II.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary of the Interior shall establish a grant program under which the Secretary shall award grants for research, educational, and media activities for purposes of appropriately illuminating and interpreting the causes and circumstances of the occupation of Guam during World War II and other similar occupations during the war that—

(1) memorialize the events surrounding such occupation; or

(2) honor the loyalty of the people of Guam during such occupation.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—The Secretary of the Interior may not award a grant under subsection (a) unless the person seeking the grant submits an application to the Secretary for such grant, in such time, manner, and form and containing such information as the Secretary specifies.

SEC. 7307. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) GUAM WORLD WAR II CLAIMS PAYMENTS AND ADJUDICATION.—For the purposes of carrying out sections 7304 and 7305, there is authorized to be appropriated for any fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this act, an amount equal to the amount deposited into the Claims Fund in a fiscal year under section 7303. Not more than 5 percent of funds make available under this subsection shall be used for administrative costs. Amounts appropriated under this section may remain available until expended.

(b) GUAM WORLD WAR II GRANTS PROGRAM.—For purposes of carrying out section 7306, there are authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for each fiscal year beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 735, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Chair, I appreciate this amendment being made in order.

It is time that we bring resolution to the people of Guam and all U.S. citizens who have suffered under enemy occupation during World War II. We found an offset to address its costs, which was one of the problems. I look forward to adopting this amendment and working with the Senate during conference.

Again, I thank very much Chairman THORNBERRY and Ranking Member SMITH and Chairman BISHOP for their support of this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. WOMACK). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the many contributions the gentlewoman from Guam has made to our committee as the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Readiness, among other capacities. I think this is a good amendment, and I certainly hope our Members will support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia) having assumed the chair, Mr. WOMACK, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE STABILIZATION OF IRAQ—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–137)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, is to continue in effect beyond May 22, 2016.

Obstacles to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Accordingly, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 18, 2016*.

ZIKA RESPONSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 736, I call up the bill (H.R. 5243) making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, to strengthen public health activities in response to the Zika virus, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5243

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

CDC-WIDE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for ''CDC-Wide Activities and Program Support'', $170,000,000, which shall become available upon enactment of this Act and remain available until September 30, 2016, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Zika virus, domestically and internationally: *Provided*, That products purchased with such funds may, at the discretion of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, be deposited in the Strategic National Stockpile under section 319F–2 of the Public Health Service (''PHS'') Act: *Provided further*, That such funds may be used for purchase and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries: *Provided further*, That the provisions of section 317S of the PHS Act shall apply to the use of funds appropriated in this paragraph as determined by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (''CDC'') to be appropriate: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated in this paragraph may be transferred by the Director of CDC to other accounts of the CDC for the purposes provided in this paragraph: *Provided further*, That of the funds appropriated under this heading, up to $50,000,000 may be transferred to, and merged with, funds appropriated under the heading ''Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health'' for an additional amount for the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program only for the following activities related to patient care associated with the Zika virus: prenatal care, delivery care, postpartum care, newborn health assessments, and care for infants with special health care needs: *Provided further*, That such transfer authority is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: *Provided further*, That such transferred funds may be awarded notwithstanding section 502 of the Social Security Act: *Provided further*, That such transferred funds may be awarded for special projects of regional and national significance to States, Puerto Rico, other Territories, Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations and Urban Indian Organizations authorized under title V of such Act: *Provided further*, That no funding provided by a grant from funds in the fifth proviso may be used to make a grant to any other organization or individual.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for ''National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases'', $230,000,000, which shall become available upon enactment of this Act and remain available until September 30, 2016, for preclinical and clinical development of vaccines for the Zika virus: *Provided*, That such funds may be transferred by the Director of the National Institutes of Health (''NIH'') to other accounts of the NIH for the purposes provided in this paragraph: *Provided further*, That such transfer authority is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amount shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amount and transmits such designation to the Congress.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES EMERGENCY FUND

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for ''Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund'', $103,000,000, which shall become available upon enactment of this Act and remain available until September 30, 2016, to develop necessary countermeasures and vaccines, including the development and purchase of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, necessary medical supplies, and administrative activities to respond to Zika virus, domestically and internationally: *Provided*, That funds appropriated in this paragraph may be used to procure security countermeasures (as defined in section 319F–2(c)(1)(B) of the PHS Act): *Provided further*, That paragraphs (1) and (7)(C) of subsection (c) of section 319F–2 of the PHS Act, but no other provisions of such section, shall apply to such security countermeasures procured with funds appropriated in this paragraph: *Provided further*, That products purchased with funds appropriated in this paragraph may, at the discretion of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, be deposited in the Strategic National Stockpile under section 319F–2 of the PHS Act: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated in this paragraph may be transferred to the fund authorized by section 319F–4 of the PHS Act: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amount shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amount and transmits such designation to the Congress.

GENERAL PROVISIONS—THIS TITLE

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

SEC. 101. Funds appropriated by this title shall only be available for obligation if the Secretary of Health and Human Services notifies the Committees on Appropriations in writing at least 15 days in advance of such obligation: *Provided*, That the requirement of this section may be waived if failure to do so would pose a substantial risk to human health or welfare: *Provided further*, That in case of any such waiver, notification to such Committees shall be provided as early as practicable, but in no event later than 3 days after taking the action to which such notification requirement was applicable: *Provided further*, That any notification provided pursuant to such a waiver shall contain an explanation of the emergency circumstances.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

SEC. 102. Not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations a consolidated report on the proposed uses of funds appropriated by this title for which the obligation of funds is anticipated: *Provided*, That such report shall be updated and submitted to such Committees every 30 days until all funds have been fully expended.

OVERSIGHT

SEC. 103. Of the funds appropriated by this title under the heading ''Centers for Disease Control and Prevention'', up to—

(1) $500,000 shall be transferred to, and merged with, funds available under the heading ''Office of Inspector General'', and shall remain available until expended, for oversight of activities supported with funds appropriated by this title: *Provided*, That the transfer authority provided by this paragraph is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law; and

(2) $500,000 shall be made available to the Comptroller General of the United States,

and shall remain available until expended, for oversight of activities supported with funds appropriated by the title: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall consult with the Committees on Appropriations prior to obligating such funds.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADMINISTRATION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PROGRAMS

For an additional amount for ''Diplomatic and Consular Programs'', $9,100,000, which shall become available upon enactment of this Act and remain available until September 30, 2016, for necessary expenses to support the cost of medical evacuations and other response efforts related to the Zika virus and health conditions directly associated with the Zika virus: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amount shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amount and transmits such designation to the Congress.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE PRESIDENT

OPERATING EXPENSES

For an additional amount for ''Operating Expenses'', $10,000,000, which shall become available upon enactment of this Act and remain available until September 30, 2016, for necessary expenses to support response efforts related to the Zika virus and health conditions directly associated with the Zika virus: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amount shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amount and transmits such designation to the Congress.

BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE PRESIDENT

GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

For an additional amount for ''Global Health Programs'', $100,000,000, which shall become available upon enactment of this Act and remain available until September 30, 2016, for vector control activities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Zika virus internationally.

GENERAL PROVISIONS—THIS TITLE

TRANSFER AUTHORITIES

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. (a) Of the funds appropriated by this title under the heading ''Diplomatic and Consular Programs'', up to—

(1) $1,350,000 may be made available for medical evacuation costs of any other department or agency of the United States under Chief of Mission authority and may be transferred to any other appropriation of such department or agency for such costs; and

(2) $1,000,000 may be transferred to, and merged with, funds available under the heading ''Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service''.

(b) The transfer authorities provided by this section are in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law.

(c) Any amount transferred pursuant to this section is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amount shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amount and transmits such designation to Congress.

(d) Upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred pursuant to the authorities provided by this section are not necessary for such purposes, such amounts may be transferred back to such appropriation.

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

SEC. 202. Funds appropriated by this title shall only be available for obligation if the Secretary of State or the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, as appropriate, notifies the Committees on Appropriations in writing at least 15 days in advance of such obligation: *Provided*, That the requirement of this section may be waived if failure to do so would pose a substantial risk to human health or welfare: *Provided further*, That in case of any such waiver, notification to such Committees shall be provided as early as practicable, but in no event later than 3 days after taking the action to which such notification requirement was applicable: *Provided further*, That any notification provided pursuant to such a waiver shall contain an explanation of the emergency circumstances.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

SEC. 203. Not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations a consolidated report on the proposed uses of funds appropriated by this title for which the obligation of funds is anticipated: *Provided*, That such report shall be updated and submitted to such Committees every 30 days until all funds have been fully expended.

OVERSIGHT

SEC. 204. Of the funds appropriated by this title under the heading ''Global Health Programs'', up to—

(1) $500,000 shall be transferred to, and merged with, funds available under the heading ''United States Agency for International Development, Funds Appropriated to the President, Office of Inspector General'', and shall remain available until expended, for oversight of activities supported with funds appropriated by this title: *Provided*, That the transfer authority provided by this paragraph is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law; and

(2) $500,000 shall be made available to the Comptroller General of the United States, and shall remain available until expended, for oversight of activities supported with funds appropriated by this title: *Provided*, That the Secretary of State and the Comptroller General shall consult with the Committees on Appropriations prior to obligating such funds.

TITLE III

GENERAL PROVISIONS—THIS ACT

(INCLUDING RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 301. (a) Of the unobligated balances of amounts appropriated under title VI of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division G of Public Law 113–235) and title IX of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (division J of Public Law 113–235), $352,100,000 are rescinded: *Provided*, That after consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Director) shall determine the accounts and amounts from which the rescission is to be derived and apply the rescission made pursuant to this subsection: *Provided further*, That not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the OMB Director shall transmit a report to the Committees on Appropriations detailing the amounts rescinded pursuant to this section by agency, account, program, project, and activity.

(b) Of the unobligated balances available in the Nonrecurring expenses fund established in section 223 of division G of Public Law 110–161 (42 U.S.C. 3514a) from any fiscal year, including amounts transferred to the Nonrecurring expenses fund under that section before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act, $270,000,000 are rescinded.

SEC. 302. Unless otherwise provided for by this Act, the additional amounts appropriated pursuant to this Act for fiscal year 2016 are subject to the requirements for funds contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114–113).

This Act may be cited as the ''Zika Response Appropriations Act, 2016''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the consideration of H.R. 5243 and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise to present H.R. 5243, the Zika Response Appropriations Act.

The Zika virus clearly poses a great threat to public health not only in the United States, but around the globe. It has become increasingly important that we, the Congress, act to protect our most vulnerable, particularly infants and pregnant women, from the risks of this disease. Our response must be urgent, direct, and strategic, targeted at preventing the further spread of this disease.

The bill before you today provides $622.1 million to fight this dangerous virus. It prioritizes critical activities that must begin immediately, such as vaccine development and mosquito control.

I was glad to see that the administration took our committee's advice and redirected $589 million from less urgent needs to fund immediate actions to respond to Zika. This was and is the most immediate source of funding in the fight against Zika.

□ 1930

But given the severity of the crisis, it is clear we must do more. The funds within this legislation will continue the Department of Health and Human Services' and the Department of

State's critical efforts to fight the spread of this harmful disease for the rest of the fiscal year of 2016 and beyond. This means that, in total, Congress will have provided over $1.2 billion so far with this bill to respond to Zika in fiscal year 2016.

I am proud that we have provided this funding in a responsible way. The funding in this bill is entirely offset through rescissions of unobligated infectious disease funds that included Ebola or from whatever leftover administrative balances there exists within HHS.

Importantly, Mr. Speaker, this bill takes a thoughtful, strategic approach to how to address the fight against Zika, directing funds where they are needed most urgently and where they can do the most good.

This legislation provides $170 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support mosquito control efforts, disease surveillance, international response, and public education. These funds can also be used for emergency preparedness grants to State, local, and territorial health departments that may confront reductions to their existing budgets.

Within this total, up to $50 million is available for health programs targeted at prenatal care, delivery and postpartum care, newborn health assessments, and care for infants with special needs related to Zika. These funds are focused on States and territories currently experiencing Zika outbreaks.

The National Institutes of Health received $230 million to help expedite the research and development of Zika vaccines, making sure these treatments can be made available to the public quickly and safely.

For the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, BARDA, $103 million will be directed to development and production activities for Zika, including for new rapid diagnostic tests and vaccines. Our response to Zika must also include cutting off the virus at its source, since mosquitos know no boundaries.

For the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, the bill provides a total of $119.1 million, $100 million of this total directed to mosquito control efforts. This also includes funding for public education efforts aimed at reducing mosquito exposure. The remaining $19.1 million is provided to help manage and oversee these programs.

As I noted earlier, we have taken the fiscally responsible step of offsetting every dollar spent in this bill. To go even further and to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective use of tax dollars, we have included strong oversight requirements.

For instance, the Department of Health and Human Services, the State Department, and USAID are required to submit spending plans to Congress before any funds can be spent. And we have directed $2 million total for GAO and Inspector General oversight. The bill also reiterates current, strong protections against the use of any funds for abortions.

The White House's request earlier on made none of these oversight efforts, allowing broad transfer authorities across the entire Federal Government and creating what I call ''slush'' funds with virtually no limits.

This bill guarantees that every cent goes to address the problem at hand: fighting the Zika virus. This funding is critical to stop the spread of Zika and to protect our most vulnerable people, both here at home and abroad. Every child deserves the chance at a full and healthy life, and every mother deserves to see her child survive. This measure will help make this happen for sure in an effective, efficient, and responsible way.

Mr. Speaker, with this bill and its passage, the Congress will have seen to $1.2 billion just over the next 4½ months, the balance of this fiscal year. The administration request of $1.9 billion was for several years. We, in this bill and the earlier transfer of funds from the Ebola infectious disease fund, see to it that we put money on the problem now, not waiting for further action.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5243.

I reserve the balance of my time.

ZIKA RESPONSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016 (H.R. 5243)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Request	Recommended in the Bill	Bill vs. Request
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES			
Food and Drug Administration			
Salaries and Expenses (emergency)	10,000	---	-10,000
TITLE I			
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES			
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention			
CDC-Wide Activities and Program Support	---	170,000	+170,000
(emergency)	828,000	---	-828,000
National Institutes of Health			
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (emergency)	130,000	230,000	+100,000
Office of the Secretary			
Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (emergency)	295,000	103,000	-192,000
General Provisions			
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: Emergency Increase in Territorial Medicaid FMAP (CBO estimate)1/	157,000	---	-157,000
Total, Title I	1,410,000	503,000	-907,000

ZIKA RESPONSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016 (H.R. 5243)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Request	Recommended in the Bill	Bill vs. Request
TITLE II			
DEPARTMENT OF STATE			
Administration of Foreign Affairs			
Diplomatic and Consular Programs (emergency)	14,594	9,100	-5,494
Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service (emergency)	4,000	---	-4,000
Repatriation Loans Program Account, Direct loans subsidy (emergency)	1,000	---	-1,000
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Funds Appropriated to the President			
Operating Expenses, USAID (emergency)	10,000	10,000	---
BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE			
Funds Appropriated to the President			
Global Health Programs	---	100,000	+100,000
(emergency)	325,000	---	-325,000
International Security Assistance			
Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (emergency)	8,000	---	-8,000
Multilateral Assistance			
International Organizations and Programs (emergency)	13,500	---	-13,500
Total, Title II	376,094	119,100	-256,994
GENERAL PROVISIONS - THIS ACT			
Sec. 301(a) Unobligated balances (PL 113-235) (rescission) (emergency)	---	-352,100	-352,100
Sec. 301(b) Nonrecurring expenses fund unobligated balances (PL 110-161) (rescission)	---	-270,000	-270,000
GRAND TOTAL	1,796,094	---	-1,796,094
Appropriations	---	(270,000)	(+270,000)
Emergency appropriations	(1,796,094)	(352,100)	(-1,443,994)
Rescissions	---	(-270,000)	(-270,000)
Rescissions of Emergency funding	---	(-352,100)	(-352,100)

1/ OMB estimate is $246M. FMAP is Federal Medical Assistance Percentage

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

In February, the World Health Organization declared Zika a public health emergency of international concern, and the President called for $1.9 billion to respond to the impending crisis to prevent the spread in our very own communities.

According to the National Governors Association, the Nation is on the threshold of a public health emergency. In a separate letter, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, National Association of County and City Health Officials wrote to urge Congress to provide emergency supplemental money for Zika, rather than repurpose money from other high-priority programs.

I include in the RECORD both letters.

MAY 10, 2016.

Hon. THAD COCHRAN,
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. ROY BLUNT,
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services & Education, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. BARBARA MIKULSKI,
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services & Education, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMEN COCHRAN AND BLUNT AND SENATORS MIKULSKI AND MURRAY: The U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities and National Association of County and City Health Officials call on you to advance legislation without delay to respond to the Zika virus. Our associations serve people in cities and counties where the burden of Zika will be felt directly.

Emerging infectious disease threats like Zika require ongoing vigilance, but the particular risks from this virus require immediate, additional investments. We urge Congress to provide emergency supplemental funding for Zika rather than repurpose money from other high priority programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal agencies that ensure our health security and public health preparedness. CDC has already diverted more than $44 million from public health emergency preparedness (PHEP) to fund the Zika response. Backfilling this PHEP funding is critical to making sure that communities are ready to respond to all threats.

Although not a new virus, 2015 marked the first widespread transmission of the Zika virus in the Americas. The virus is spread primarily by mosquitoes and usually causes only mild illness or no symptoms. However, in Brazil and other countries affected by Zika there has already been a steep increase in birth defects in infants born to mothers who were infected during pregnancy. In January 2016, CDC warned women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant to avoid travel to regions and countries with widespread Zika transmission or to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes there. With the weather getting warmer and increased numbers of mosquitos in many places in the United States, Congress can no longer wait to act.

In local communities, health departments are engaged in educating the public and health care providers about Zika, conducting prevention activities through mosquito eradication and screening travelers from countries where the outbreak has surfaced. Our associations urge you to act quickly in providing emergency supplemental funding to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the local response to Zika with increased virus readiness and response capacity focused on areas with ongoing Zika transmission; enhanced laboratory, epidemiology and surveillance capacity in at-risk areas and surge capacity through rapid response teams to limit potential clusters of Zika virus in the United States.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. For further information, please contact: Crystal Swann, Assistant Executive Director, at cswann@usmayors.org; Carolyn Coleman, Esq., Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy at coleman@nlc.org. or Eli Briggs, Senior Government Affairs Director at ebriggs@naccho.org.

Sincerely,

TOM COCHRAN,
CEO & Executive Director, United States Conference of Mayors.
CLARENCE E. ANTHONY,
CEO & Executive Director, National League of Cities.
LAMAR HASBROUCK, MD, MPH,
Executive Director, National Association of County and City Health Officials.

MAY 9, 2016.

GOVERNORS ASK FOR SWIFT ACTION ON ZIKA FUNDING

WASHINGTON.—The National Governors Association (NGA) today released the following statement on congressional funding of the Zika virus:

''The nation is on the threshold of a public health emergency as it faces the likely spread of the Zika virus. As with all such emergencies, advance planning and preparation is essential to prevent injury and death.

A key component to averting infectious disease outbreaks is to prevent incidence levels from reaching a critical 'tipping point,' after which there is a rapid increase in the number of infections. This is particularly true of the Zika virus—the most important way we can protect people is to minimize infections and prevent a concentration of cases, which can lead to outbreak and children born with severe, lifelong birth defects such as microcephaly.

As Congress returns from recess today, the nation's governors urge the Administration and Congress to work together to reach agreement on the appropriate funding levels needed to prepare for and combat the Zika virus. We also ask they act as expeditiously as possible to ensure those funds are available to states, territories and the public at large.''

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, as summer approaches, the CDC confirmed 1,204 cases, including more than 100 pregnant women in the continental United States, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories as of May 11. So far all of the continental U.S. cases are associated with travel, but experts expect the first locally transmitted cases in a matter of weeks.

The scientific community has concluded, after careful review, that Zika can cause microcephaly resulting in miscarriage and other severe fetal brain defects, as well as adult neurological disorders.

When the House Republican leadership failed to act, the administration was forced to redirect $589 million, mostly from emergency Ebola balances, to fund immediate efforts to respond to Zika. According to Dr. Fauci at the National Institutes of Health, the redirected funds allowed the United States to start work.

But we cannot finish what we need to do. The Republican bill does not allow us to finish the job either. It provides $622 million, less than a third of what is needed.

The administration requested $743 million for State and local efforts to reduce mosquito populations as well as conduct public health studies of the Zika virus. The House Republican bill provides $120 million, plus an additional $50 million for block grants.

By providing such a small fraction of the requested amount, we would be drastically underfunding State and local public health departments, hampering efforts to expand mosquito control and mitigation, and unnecessarily placing millions of pregnant women at risk.

In addition, the administration requested $246 million in direct assistance for Puerto Rico, an epicenter in the Zika outbreak. The House Republican bill does not provide this direct funding for Puerto Rico, again, placing tens of thousands of pregnant women at risk.

In the past, Congress has come together in a bipartisan manner to address and respond to emergencies from the Ebola and H1N1 viruses to natural disasters and agreed that these emergencies should not be offset. When a tornado strikes, we don't steal money from the unfinished relief efforts for the last hurricane; yet House Republicans would take more Ebola funding, risking that it could reemerge, and give less than it needed to stop the spread of Zika in communities throughout the United States.

Without full funding to replenish Ebola accounts, we won't complete commitments to fortify international public health systems or have health contingency funds in place to respond to outbreaks of either disease or any other unanticipated public health crisis. That is why I introduced H.R. 5044, which would provide the full emergency supplemental to combat Zika and prevent the virus from spreading without risking investments in our public health infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, that is the bill we should be debating today, not the House Republican Zika, which is a day late and a dollar short.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), the chairman of the House Appropriations' Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. He is also a member of the House Rules Committee.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kentucky for yielding me the time I need.

I want to begin my remarks by complimenting our chairman. Quite frankly, I don't know anybody that has spent more time on this issue and devoted more thought to it than Chairman ROGERS.

He took a codel down to the region. Our first stop was in Peru where we stopped at a Naval research station. It has been there for many decades. Their purpose normally is to look at tropical diseases, which they are doing, but they have now switched their efforts primarily to Zika, just as they should. So we were on top of this early.

Then we went to Brazil and, under Chairman ROGERS' leadership, we had the opportunity to meet with the Centers for Disease Control's people on the ground and also talk to our colleagues in the Brazilian Government about the appropriate ways to move forward on this that were done thoughtfully and responsibly.

What Chairman ROGERS has laid before us is essentially a three-part plan that funds all the administration wants to do. The first is the initial $600 million that would not be available had the chairman not directed the administration to immediately use available funds.

Now, when we passed money for Ebola, if you go back and look at the legislation, it was not only for Ebola. It was for Ebola and other infectious diseases. Frankly, the money there may well be more than we need for Ebola. But in any case, it is going to be spread over many years. So because the chairman pushed hard on this, we actually have $600 million available immediately, and the message to the administration was to start spending what you need to do now.

The second piece of this three-part plan is the bill that is in front of us today. It is over $600 million. As the chairman pointed out, this is two-thirds essentially of what the administration has requested and more than they requested in this fiscal year. Remember, this bill is only for this fiscal year.

So the next third will come in the bills that are presented by my subcommittee and by my good friend, Chairman GRANGER's subcommittee, the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

So if you actually look at the total amount provided, it is about what the administration has requested, and it arrives in a timely manner to meet all their needs. The one single critical difference is that what the chairman has provided is fully offset.

Now, my very good friend from New York mentioned that, in emergencies, we don't normally offset. The reality is we do offset when we can. She mentioned tornados. Let me give you an example.

In 2013, my home community of Moore, Oklahoma, was hit by tornados. There was a question of whether or not there would be money available. There was, in fact, money available. That money was in the FEMA disaster relief fund. There was more than enough money in there that had already been appropriated to use. That is what is true here again today.

We have more than enough money in the Ebola funds that we appropriated 2 years ago to actually take care of the initial phase of this action and any other problem that comes up. This is now additional money on top of that.

□ 1945

So the wise thing, it seems to me, is to actually use the funds that you have set aside for these purposes. First, $600 million from the Ebola money and infectious diseases. The next would be this. The next tranche of money would be in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill that I am privileged to be chairman of and will bring to this floor in June, and my friend Ms. GRANGER will also bring forward additional money in her bill to help with the efforts overseas.

So the simple fact is this really isn't an argument about Zika. It is an argument about whether you will pay to take care of the needs that we have. We have more than enough funds in what we have already voted, what we will vote for here, and what we will provide next year to actually take care of the problem. The chairman has made an additional commitment that if we need to backfill that money, if we are short for some other infectious disease that none of us can anticipate or for Ebola, we will take care of that during the regular appropriations process.

So this is, essentially, I think honestly, a solution in search of a problem. The money is here. We have the money. We are appropriating the money. The administration has not failed to do one thing it wanted to do because of lack of money. The money is available. The real question here is: Are you going to offset that money and make sure that we don't add another $1.9 billion to the national debt by using the money you have got available or are you just going to simply charge it to the national credit card? That is what my friends on the other side—with the best of intentions, I am sure—are actually advocating. Let's just put the country $1.9 billion deeper in debt as opposed to using available resources, appropriating additional resources and offsetting them, and then using the normal appropriations process to go forward.

I want to commend the chairman, honestly, for being thoughtful, careful, and prudent with taxpayer dollars. That is what this is all about. If we work together, we can provide all the money that the administration needs without increasing the national debt. If we do what our friends on the other side suggest, we will simply add $1.9 billion more, and at the end of the day, we won't be in any different place than we will be under the chairman's plan.

Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that we pass this legislation, build on top of the $600 million we have already provided, and allow Ms. GRANGER and myself to bring forward to the full Congress the additional funds that they need in the normal appropriations process.

Remember, this $1.9 billion isn't needed today. It is needed over a multiyear period. We are providing it over a number of years, and we are doing it without adding to the national debt. It seems to me pretty clear.

Actually, both sides have the same aim here. We want to take care of an urgent healthcare problem. The difference is the chairman has presented—first, in the $600 million we have already deployed, and in the $622 million that we will deploy in this bill, and the additional money that will come in the normal appropriations process—everything we need. In some sense, this argument is an argument we don't need to have unless your aim is simply to have $1.9 billion more.

I want to thank the chairman for what he has done. I look forward to continuing to work with my friends on the other side of the aisle. At the end of the day, we will have more than enough money. The difference will be we will not have added one cent to the national debt.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), a distinguished member of the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on the Budget.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman LOWEY for yielding and also for her very steady and effective leadership on our committee.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Labor-HHS and State and Foreign Operations subcommittees, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 5243, which is the so-called Zika funding bill.

Earlier this week, the majority finally decided to act on Zika, yet their proposal shows just how unwilling they are to take this crisis seriously. Even now, they have offered barely one-third of the resources needed to fight Zika. Not only are my Republican colleagues' efforts 3 months late, they are also woefully inadequate to address this major public health emergency.

If that weren't enough, Republicans have once again included poison pills that have no place in this legislation. While we are trying to work to protect our Nation's most vulnerable, including pregnant women and their children, the majority is putting politics over public health, and that is just wrong.

The Zika outbreak has already spread to more than 26 countries, including the United States and our territories. Sadly, there have been two Zika deaths in Puerto Rico. This summer, Americans living in Southern States face tremendous risks from the virus.

Not only does this bill underfund our Zika response, it raids vital funding for other dangerous infectious diseases, such as Ebola. Quite frankly, we should

not roll the dice should another Ebola outbreak occur. We know how this appropriations process works. I don't want to chance that. We appropriated Ebola funding for Ebola. This is not the time to rob Peter to pay Paul. The experts are clear. We need the full $1.9 billion request, emergency request, without offsets.

Now, we have seen war funding emergency supplementals fly through this House without many questions raised. This is an emergency, and we need to treat it as such.

Finally, this bill includes Hyde-like language, a dangerous rider that denies access to abortion coverage for women if they are poor, a veteran, in the military, or a Federal Government employee. Let me be clear, politicians have no business denying a woman health coverage based on her income, her employer, or her ZIP Code.

Once again, the majority has decided to put their extremist ideology over public health. Why in the world would they put this rider in this Zika funding bill? It doesn't make any sense, and it is wrong.

It has been 3 months since the World Health Organization declared the Zika virus as a public health emergency. That was February. Three months since the President requested emergency funds, the time to act is now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote to reject this bill and let's instead pass a bill with adequate funding and without ideological antiwomen riders. The American people can't afford to wait much longer for Congress to get this right.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5243, the Zika Response Appropriations Act.

This bill provides $622 million to respond to the Zika virus both at home and abroad. As chair of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, I want to highlight funds in the bill for the international response efforts to stop the virus at its source. This includes mosquito control activities to stop the spread of the virus, public information campaigns to get the message out about Zika, and evacuations of Americans when needed. These efforts will build on work that has already begun.

After my colleagues and I urged swift action, the administration decided to redirect $589 million of funds already in hand to respond to the Zika virus. This funding bill is the next step. It provides our best estimate of what is needed for the remaining months of this fiscal year. As we draft the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bills and information about the threat of Zika becomes more clear, we will address at that time any additional requirements through our regular process.

Unlike the President's request, the activities supported in this bill are targeted and focused. This bill also contains strong oversight provisions and is fully offset. H.R. 5243 provides what is needed now to respond to the Zika virus, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), the ranking member on the Legislative Branch Subcommittee.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank my ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York, for her leadership on this issue.

I join my colleagues in urging Congress to vote down this wholly inadequate legislation and take meaningful action to address the public health crisis the Centers for Disease Control called ''scarier than we originally thought'' and support the President's request.

My home State of Florida leads the Nation in confirmed cases of the Zika virus, with 113 people infected already and counting. Florida health officials declared a state of emergency in February. As we head into mosquito season, as well as high travel season, we know the risk of Zika will rise.

We have seen the heartbreaking images of babies born with microcephaly. As researchers are continuing to learn more about the different ways that Zika can be transmitted, it is critical that Congress provide the funding needed to thoroughly tackle this virus now.

I am proud that we have transcended partisan lines in Florida at least. Senators NELSON and RUBIO as well as Governor Scott have all been outspoken advocates in support of the President's request to fight this disease, which he made nearly 3 months ago.

I have heard many of my House Republican colleagues acknowledge the devastating effects of this disease and the need for serious proposals to combat it. Sadly, the only serious part of the bill before us is how far it is from meeting our Nation's needs in overcoming this public health crisis.

The bill that the Republican leadership has introduced will not provide meaningful support to my constituents or constituents affected by this across the country. Among its many other shortcomings, this bill would raid funds from accounts designated for Ebola, which, as many public health officials have testified already, is still a threat. Robbing Peter to pay Paul is irresponsible.

It also fails to provide any specific resources to Puerto Rico, where Americans are suffering the greatest burden of what Dr. Thomas Frieden, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control, recently called an epidemic. It continues attacks on a woman's ability to make her own reproductive health decisions, and, perhaps most astonishingly of all, this bill only provides these limited and borrowed funds until September 30, when they will then expire. Let me assure you that mosquitoes and diseases do not follow the congressional budget calendar.

I urge the entire House to quickly pass legislation that I have introduced along with my colleagues, Ranking Member LOWEY and Ranking Member ROSA DELAURO, which would support the President's request of $1.9 billion. We cannot simply watch more people get infected with Zika as we dither over how we fund critical investments into vaccine research, prevention strategies, and finding a cure.

This is a mosquito-borne and sexually transmitted virus. Mosquitoes don't know whether they are biting a Republican or a Democrat, and we should not politicize this serious crisis.

The National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Health and Human Services have repeatedly provided plans that clearly detail the need for these funds and how they would be spent.

Our local public health facilities, particularly in Florida, the Gulf States, and Puerto Rico need added resources, as do our local mosquito control programs. We need more investments into vector control and mosquito eradication. We need more public education, and we need more resources to ensure that people are able to protect themselves.

I will quote my colleague from the Senate, Senator MARCO RUBIO, that we must—and I agree with him—we must get out in front of this. We will only have ourselves to blame if we dither and don't do so.

So I say to my colleagues, we must act responsibly, we must respond appropriately, and we must do it quickly. This bill does not come close to doing that, so I will cast my vote against it in hopes we will reach an agreement that actually appropriates the amount of resources that address this burgeoning crisis. My constituents cannot wait and neither can yours.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The gentleman from Kentucky has 13½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from New York has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, the Zika virus does pose a genuine emergency situation and, as in any emergency, requires a calm head, clear thinking, and rational approach to dealing with the problem, absent of emotion. You have got to be careful and thoughtful about these things.

As with any emergency situation, you have got to trust the experts, and the experts in the field have told us that the Ebola virus is no longer as serious a threat as it was. That emergency has passed. We now need to focus

on the Zika virus, which we are beginning to see cases in the United States.

So, in a thoughtful, careful, rational way, the Republican majority has made certain that the money, our constituents' hard-earned tax dollars, is wisely and prudently spent.

□ 2000

When we first recognized it, Chairman ROGERS, Chairman COLE, and Chairman GRANGER made sure there was $5 billion set aside in the current year to fight Ebola and other infectious diseases. Nearly $2 billion is still in that account for other infectious diseases.

And to deal with this Zika crisis, we have in this legislation tonight—which I urge my colleagues to support—added another $622 million that is completely offset. We have made savings and cuts in other areas of the government to make sure that our constituents' hard-earned taxpayers dollars are wisely spent.

We are not increasing spending. We are offsetting this $622 million to fight Zika in a thoughtful, intelligent, rational way, beginning with funding mosquito control and prevention in those States with heavy mosquito populations.

Texas was inundated with rain this past April, and we got the threat of a large mosquito population that is very real. So this funding tonight, which is completely offset and paid for, will help combat that threat.

Chairman ROGERS, Chairman COLE, and Chairman GRANGER have provided $230 million to the National Institutes of Health in addition to—remember—the $2 billion that is still there from the current year to fight Ebola and other infectious diseases.

We have made sure that there is careful oversight of our constituents' hard-earned tax dollars and to make certain that each agency has to report to Congress on how the money is going to be used. They have to submit a spending plan. We have to make certain the dollars are going where they will do the most good. That is our responsibility. That is our duty.

As good stewards of our constituents' hard-earned tax dollars, as guardians of the Treasury, we have a fiduciary duty to make sure that money is not wasted.

Chairman ROGERS also put an expiration date on the funding to make sure that the money is not going to be transferred to other activities. It has got to be spent on fighting this dreaded disease.

The only politicization that has taken place tonight are those who would stand up in front of the people of the United States and try to make it an emotional issue. We have got to approach this, as in any crisis, in a calm, thoughtful, and intelligent way that makes sure that we are targeting our constituents' hard-earned tax dollars where they will do the most good.

Any additional funding that is necessary to fight this outbreak in the next fiscal year can and will be considered as part of the normal appropriations process.

In a thoughtful, considerate way, Chairman ROGERS has given us a bill to help solve this crisis, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), the ranking member of the Small Business Committee.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is the face of Zika: an innocent child harmed with the disease—a disease that we could prevent.

Now, this disease is harming our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico and on the eastern side of the mainland.

Already, because of Washington's decades of neglect, Puerto Rico's health care system is broken. Last year, 500 doctors packed up and left the island, never to return, and physicians are leaving at the rate of one a day.

While Puerto Rico's health infrastructure is vulnerable, we are seeing this terrible disease take hold. More than 570 cases of infection have already been reported in Puerto Rico, including almost 50 pregnant women, and two deaths.

How dare anyone in this Chamber say that this is political. It is not political when we have people that are dying in Puerto Rico.

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

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Now, what are House Republicans doing in response? They are proposing less than one-third of the money needed to respond to Zika. They are providing no—zero—money targeted for Puerto Rico.

Mr. Speaker, look at this face again. Shame on this House for this failure. Look at this face and then look in the mirror.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

This bill specifically mentions Puerto Rico. These moneys go to Puerto Rico, as well as to the rest of the territories and the States. So the money will be there if this bill passes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank Chairman ROGERS for his leadership on ensuring that the United States is able to do everything necessary to combat Zika, and do so immediately.

South Florida is ground zero in the United States for this disease. So the funding that this bill provides is, frankly, critically important to Florida, especially, as we know, because mosquitos are most active during the summer months. This horrible disease has the capability to infect many, and we must focus on stopping it before it continues to spread.

So I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we need to provide every dollar needed for Zika prevention, treatment, and response programs and, I would repeat, not one penny less.

This bill is the second part of a three-pronged effort to combat this disease. First was the almost $600 million in repurposed Ebola funds. Now we are providing an additional $622 million for, again, a total of over $1.2 billion to deal with this disease.

So let's be clear: if more funds are needed, Congress will step up and do what is necessary to make sure that, if those funds were necessary sometime in the future, they would be available.

It is also crucial, Mr. Speaker, that President Obama's administration and the Centers for Disease Control provide Congress with detailed information as to how they plan to spend these proposed funds.

Congress also has a responsibility to protect American taxpayers so that their hard-earned dollars are spent efficiently and effectively, much unlike, Mr. Speaker, the fiasco with those so-called ''shovel-ready'' programs. Let's make sure that we do not repeat that embarrassing fiasco and waste of taxpayers' money.

So I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, as it does provide the funds necessary to fight Zika immediately—immediately, Mr. Speaker—again, while also making sure that we protect the hard-earned American people's tax dollars.

I once again want to thank the chairman for doing this so quickly, so efficiently, because Florida is ground zero.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our distinguished Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I like Mr. DIAZ-BALART. But if I get sick, I hope it doesn't take 90 days for the emergency responders to come to my aid.

February 22 is when the administration said we needed this money. Almost 90 days later, we are talking about one-third of what they said was necessary.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation faces a very real and present danger from Zika. Our people face that crisis. Already, more than 1,200 Americans, including more than 110 pregnant women, have confirmed cases of Zika virus. Would that have been the case if we had acted on February 22? I do not know. But I certainly wouldn't want to rely on this Congress to enact anything in a timely fashion.

We know that there is a link between Zika virus and severe birth defects, including microcephaly, which can be life-threatening and for which there is no cure. We saw a tragic picture of a child.

Puerto Rico, with its 3.5 million American citizens, has been especially

hard-hit and needs help from the Federal Government to prevent and contain the spread of the virus and ensure access to health services for those affected, particularly pregnant women and children.

Last week, Puerto Rico health officials reported the island's first confirmed case of Zika-related microcephaly.

This is a public health crisis. And I guarantee you, if it had been a terrorist who had attacked, we would have responded on February 23.

The President has requested $1.9 billion in emergency funding to combat the Zika outbreak, but that is not what House Republicans brought to the floor today. Instead, they are putting forward legislation that would provide just $662 million—less than a third, as I said.

That means we can't fully fund the development of a vaccine; deployment of diagnostic testing, especially for pregnant women; and vector control to manage mosquito populations.

In addition to its inadequate funding level, the Republican bill offsets the spending by further depleting funds that were appropriated to combat the Ebola virus. I know they are going to say they are going to backfill it. I won't hold my breath.

The administration has already been forced to borrow more than half a billion dollars in Ebola accounts, while Congressional Republicans ignored its Zika supplemental funding request from February 22 to this day. That is no way—no way—to handle public health crises.

I urge my colleagues on the Republican side to join us to respond effectively to the President's request.

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

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

Mr. HOYER. Representative VERN BUCHANAN of Florida, who supports the President's request, said last week—not STENY HOYER, a Democrat—but VERN BUCHANAN, a Republican:

''All Members of Congress should take this virus seriously and put aside partisanship-time is not on our side as the summer months draw near.''

Senator MARCO RUBIO of Florida said in April:

Congress is ''going to have to explain to people why it is that we sat around for weeks and did nothing on something of this magnitude.''

That is MARCO RUBIO.

Let's work together to pass an emergency supplemental.

STEVE WOMACK said this:

''If we fail to deal with the issue and there are hardships that would be posed on society in this country, you wouldn't be able to compute those costs.'' ''It's a dice roll to get into an argument about Zika funding and running the risk in having something catastrophic happen and we own it.''

You will own it if this gets out of hand and we don't have the appropriate resources deployed now. It should have been 30 days ago, 60 days ago, 90 days ago.

Let's not have this become a crisis. Let's act now on the full sum necessary to meet this crisis.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Does the gentleman not realize, the request from the National Institutes of Health for vaccine development, we put in $40 million and the money transferred from the so-called Ebola fund; in this bill, there is another $230 million just for vaccine development at NIH. That is every penny that they asked us for. So they are getting actually more. They asked for $270 million, and we are delivering $270 million.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. YOUNG), a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. I thank Chairman ROGERS for yielding, for his leadership, and for taking this seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Zika Response Appropriations Act. There is no question the Zika crisis presents a serious threat to our Nation's public health and an immediate, impactful response is required. The bill does such.

This important legislation provides funding immediately for the most pressing needs, including care for infants and mothers, vaccine development, and efforts to control the spread of the disease.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: this is not the final word on the fight against Zika. The funding level we are discussing today quickly and effectively funds much-need efforts for the current fiscal year, 2016. It is an immediate response, while making progress on regular order as well. And we will fund fiscal year 2017 expenditures, so there will be more.

As has already been said, this bill is fully offset by using leftover funds to combat the Ebola outbreak and any unused administrative funds at the Department of Health and Humans Services.

□ 2015

It is the responsible and thoughtful approach to an issue and mission we all agree on, right, combating Zika?

Some have argued the bill should fully fund the President's request. The fact that repurposed Ebola funds used to offset this bill remain unspent years later shows it is hard to predict how much it will cost to contain an outbreak, and where funds will be needed.

The House is acting quickly and responsibly, as we make repeated requests of the administration to share a detailed plan. Repeatedly, we have gotten incomplete responses. That is troubling.

The administration has no complete plan, but they want us to fund it. That is simply the wrong approach.

Though we pass this bill today, work will continue tomorrow on fully funding an effective and comprehensive plan to stop the Zika virus. We are doing this. As we gather the information, we need to move forward.

This bill responsibly and effectively provides the needed funding where the government is ready now to help those in need.

Mr. Speaker, we can argue about process in this Chamber all night, but that will do nothing to help the women and children facing very real health dangers caused by the Zika virus.

What will help them is passing this critical, targeted, and responsible legislation now, which provides needed funding now, where it can actually be used.

Subcommittee Chairmen COLE and GRANGER, thank you for your leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the articulate gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, who has been very clear on the need to combat the Zika virus.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, this bill is woefully inadequate. The Zika virus is a public health emergency. It is a crisis.

Last week, 1,204 confirmed cases in the United States and its territories, over 100 of them pregnant women. One person has died.

Temperatures are rising already and reaching high levels in the United States in the areas where these mosquitoes thrive, and we are told that this could spread to 30 States.

The Olympics are less than 80 days away in Brazil. We are going to send our young men and women into harm's way.

The window for us to act on this effort is closing, and the majority's Zika Response Appropriations Act is too little. It is too late. It only provides a third of the President's request.

Without additional funding, the CDC will not be able to protect pregnant women by better understanding the link between Zika and adverse health effects. They will not be able to control and mitigate mosquito populations before the epidemic spreads further.

They lose laboratory capacity, they lose the ability of surveillance as the outbreak is moving on.

The most immediate needs of State and local public health departments are woefully underfunded by the House Republican bill. Our States' and our municipalities' emergency funds have been slashed.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the list of all of the States in this country and the loss of preparedness funds in order to be able to deal with the crisis.

PHEP CUTS FROM ZIKA TRANSFER

Grantee	Cuts (dollars)	Cuts (%)	Grantee	Cuts (dollars)	Cuts (%)
Alabama	−613,733	−6.90	Montana	−139,375	−3.21
Alaska	−194,836	−4.63	N. Mariana Islands	−6,172	−1.72
American Samoa	−6,600	−1,82	Nebraska	−245,839	−4.58
Arizona	−915,853	−7.74	Nevada	−390,223	−5.77
Arkansas	−377,461	−5.70	New Hampshire	−187,880	−3.90
California	−3,979,850	−9.35	New Jersey	−1,303,734	−8.36
Chicago	−530,926	−5.42	New Mexico	−275,903	−4.09
Colorado	−706,343	−7.21	New York	−1,564,792	−7.90
Connecticut	−490,363	−6.35	New York City	−1,158,820	−6.27
Delaware	−143,256	−3.27	North Carolina	−1,240,926	−8.32
District of Columbia	−142,165	−2.23	North Dakota	−194,836	−4.63
Florida	−2,653,185	−9.00	Ohio	−1,548,159	−8.65
Georgia	−1,351,184	−8.44	Oklahoma	−499,358	−6.40
Guam	−19,345	−3,98	Oregon	−522,990	−6.51
Hawaii	−196,065	−4.01	Palau	−2,546	−0.78
Idaho	−211,568	−4.20	Pennsylvania	−1,716,179	−8.79
Illinois	−1,422,463	−8.51	Puerto Rico	−433,740	−6.06
Indiana	−872,687	−7.66	Rhode Island	−155,523	−3.45
Iowa	−393,286	−5.80	South Carolina	−605,876	−6.16
Kansas	−388,911	−5.77	South Dakota	−118,947	−2.87
Kentucky	−568,480	−6.72	Tennessee	−857,750	−7.62
Los Angeles	−1,575,170	−7.98	Texas	−3,598,615	−9.55
Louisiana	−613,015	−6.89	Utah	−380,115	−5.71
Maine	−177,231	−3.77	Vermont	−194,836	−4.63
Marshall Islands	−8,413	−2.21	Virgin Islands (US)	−12,633	−3.00
Maryland	−856,366	−7.60	Virginia	−1,149,940	−7.64
Massachusetts	−937,359	−7.14	Washington	−948,052	−7.81
Michigan	−1,310,210	−7.86	West Virginia	−242,010	−4.54
Micronesia	−12,798	−3.03	Wisconsin	−742,890	−6.41
Minnesota	−744,017	−6.61	Wyoming	−194,836	−4.63
Mississippi	−384,621	−5.74			
Missouri	−818,745	−7.52	TOTAL	44,250,000	7.23

Ms. DELAURO. While the administration requested $743 million for CDC's public health activities, the House bill provides only $120 million, 84 percent below the request.

Who are we kidding?

This is going to put millions of pregnant women in danger. According to the CDC, pregnant women are already facing unacceptably long delays in learning Zika test results.

Physicians are advising women not to get pregnant. Pregnant women are scared to death about what is going to happen to the child that they are carrying. Director Tom Frieden has said that experts estimate a single child with birth defects can cost $10 million to care for.

We need to prevent this. And the amount of money that the majority has talked about is inadequate to prevent it. If each child takes $10 million to care for, and we take a look at $622 million, we are going to look at our ability to take care of 62 children who might be affected with microcephaly. This says nothing about what the child's quality of life is, the delays in learning to speak, to walk.

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. DELAURO. It is a delay in learning to speak, walk, hear and eat. Imagine.

But we can stop this crisis before it gets worse. We have to act now, and we have to fully fund the President's request. It is the responsible thing to do. More importantly, it is the moral thing to do.

Months from now, when the results of our inaction become apparent, we will ask ourselves, why did we delay? Why did we wait?

You know, I do not often quote Senator MARCO RUBIO, but yesterday he said this about the House bill, and I quote: ''Frankly, that's just not going to cut it. If we don't spend more than that on the front end, I think we are going to spend a lot more later because the problem is not going to go away.''

I could not agree more. We need to act now. That is our responsibility.

The President's request was in February. It is now almost the end of May. People are suffering, and we have the power in this body to stop that.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE), a member of our committee.

Mr. JOYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5243, the Zika Response Appropriations Act of 2016. I would like to acknowledge the thoughtful leadership of Chairman ROGERS on this matter.

The bill provides $622.1 million for the Department of Health and Human Services, the State Department, and USAID, to fight and prevent the spread of the Zika virus. This funding will be available immediately. This funding is for this fiscal year only, available September 30, 2016. This funding is entirely offset.

Finally, the bill contains strong oversight measures to ensure responsible and effective use of taxpayer dollars. The resources provided in the bill are in addition to the $589 million the Obama administration has already identified to repurpose to fight Zika. In other words, $1.2 billion will be in place to combat the virus.

Please stand with me today in support of H.R. 5243.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York has 8½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Kentucky has 4 minutes remaining.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from New York and let me thank the chairman of the full committee, and let me thank the health scientists and doctors who have given us the real story of this case.

Mr. Speaker, the first Ebola case was in Texas, the first case in the United States. And the CDC says that we have not extinguished or eliminated Ebola.

The proposal today is not $1.2 billion. It is $600 million because you have taken $600 million or so out of the Ebola. And the doctors indicate that there are about 8 clusters or more of Ebola in Africa, where 85 CDC personnel are there. And if one case breaks out, we will need 1,000 personnel to deal with it.

So what are we doing with the Zika funding if we are not providing the Centers for Disease Control what they need, $10 million to care for a child?

They do not have the tools in order to do it. They cannot. People carrying the Zika virus do not know that they have the Zika virus and, as well, they have asked for $800 million, which you are not giving to them.

This is the epicenter of the potential of the Zika virus in the United States.

The idea that there is sitting water in places like the Gulf region, the idea that people travel, and the person who is traveling has a mosquito that bites them, and then they—that mosquito can transmit it.

Here are the mosquito cesspools in Houston, Texas.

So today I stand in opposition to the underlying proposal. We need the $1.9 billion that the administration has asked for. We cannot rob from Peter to pay Paul.

If you listen to the diagnosis, or you listen to the assessment, the doctors are saying that the Zika virus invades

the brain of the baby and destroys that brain and, therefore, we do not know the long-term effects of a woman or of those who have not yet been assessed of the Zika virus.

This is the wrong way to go. Vote against this bill. Give what the President wants and the CDC wants now.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to H.R. 5243, the "Zika Response Appropriations Act of 2016," because this appropriations measure falls short of what is needed to aggressively address the enormity of the Zika Virus threat to the Americas and the United States, with particular concern for Puerto Rico.

I thank President Obama for his leadership in requesting $1.9 billion to address the threat of the Zika Virus, and facing congressional delay he took funds from Ebola response to prepare the nation to face the Zika Virus threat.

Let us not forget—Ebola was on our doorstep last year before Congress acted and there are still Ebola hot spots that are occurring, which have to be addressed, but we now lack the resources to deal with that ever present threat.

I am committed to doing everything I can to address the threat of Zika Virus, but I am not supportive of tricks or misguided strategies to get legislation to the House floor in the name of Zika prevention that will do too little; and funding that will abruptly end on September 30, 2016.

As the founder and Chair of the Children's Caucus and a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I am acutely aware of how dangerous the Zika Virus is to women who may be pregnant or may become pregnant should they be exposed to the Caribbean.

Houston, Texas, like many cities, towns, and parishes along the Gulf Coast, has a tropical climate hospitable to mosquitoes that carry the Zika Virus like parts of Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean.

For this reason, I am sympathetic to those members who have districts along the Gulf Coast.

These Gulf Coast areas, which include Houston, the third largest city in the nation, are known to have both types of the Zika Virus carrying mosquitoes: the Aedes Aegypti the Asian Tiger Mosquito; which is why I held a meeting in Houston on March 10, 2016 about this evolving health threat.

I convened this meeting with Houston, Harris County and State officials at every level of responsibility to combat the Zika Virus and to discuss preparations that would mitigate its.

The participants included Dr. Peter Hotez, Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Dubboun, Director of the Harris County Public Health Environmental Services Mosquito Control Division who gave strong input on the critical need to address the threat on a multi-pronged approach.

The potential for the Zika Virus outbreaks in the United States if we do not act is real, and the people on the front lines are state and local governments who must prepare for mosquito season, establish community oriented education campaigns, provide Zika Virus prevent resources to women who live in areas where poverty is present, and environmental remediation of mosquito breeding near where people live.

The assumption that everyone has air conditioning; window and door screens that are in good repair or present at all; does not take into consideration the pockets of poverty that are present in every major city including many towns, counties, parishes, and cities along the Gulf Coast.

The 18th Congressional District of Texas, which I represent, has a tropical climate and is very likely to confront the challenge of Zika Virus carrying mosquitoes before mosquito season ends in the fall.

Mr. Dubboun, Director of the Harris County Public Health Environmental Services Mosquito Control Division stressed that we cannot spray our way out of the Zika Virus threat.

He was particularly cautious about the over use of spraying because of its collateral threat to the environment and people.

We should not forget that Flint, Michigan was an example of short-sighted thinking on the part of government decision makers, which resulted in the contamination of that city's water supply.

The participants in the meeting I held in Houston represented the senior persons at every state and local agency with responsibility for Zika Virus response.

The expert view of those present was that we need a unity of effort plan to address the Zika Virus in the Houston and Harris County area that will include every aspect of the community.

The collective wisdom of these experts revealed that we should not let the fear of the Zika Virus control public policy.

Instead we should get in front of the problem then we can control the Zika Virus from its source—targeting mosquito breeding environments.

The real fight against the Zika Virus will be fought neighborhood by neighborhood and will rely upon the resources and expertise of local government working closely with State governments supported by federal government agencies.

The consensus of Texas, Houston, and Harris County experts is that we make significant strides to stay ahead of the arrival of mosquito transmission of Zika Virus if we act now.

The CDC said that for the period January 1, 2015 to May 11, 2016, the number of cases are as follows:

THE UNITED STATES

Travel-associated cases reported: 503

Locally acquired through mosquito bites reported: 0

Total: 503

Pregnant: 48

Sexually transmitted: 10

Guillain-Barré syndrome: 1

US TERRITORIES

Travel-associated cases reported: 3

Mosquito acquired cases reported: 698

Total: 701

Pregnant: 65

Guillain-Barré syndrome: 5

There are 49 countries and territories in our hemisphere where mosquito borne transmission of the Zika Virus is the primary way the virus is spread include:

American Samoa; Aruba; Belize; Barbados; Bolivia; Brazil; Bonaire; Cape Verde; Central America; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Curaçao; Dominica; Dominican Republic; El Salvador; Ecuador; Fiji; French Guiana; Grenada; the Grenadines; Guatemala; Guadeloupe; Haiti; Honduras; Islands Guyana; Jamaica; Martinique; Kosrae (Federated States of Micronesia); Marshall Islands; Mexico; Nicaragua; New Caledonia; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Panama; Papua New Guinea, Paraguay; Peru; Samoa, a US territory; Saint Barthelemy; Saint Lucia; Saint Martin; Saint Vincent; Saint Maarten; Suriname; Tonga; Trinidad and Tobago; US Virgin Islands, Venezuela and particular note is made by the CDC by listing the 2016 Summer Olympics (Rio 2016) separately.

As of May 11, 2016, there were more than 1,200 confirmed Zika cases in the continental United States and U.S. Territories, including over 110 pregnant women with confirmed cases of the Zika virus.

The Zika virus is spreading in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and abroad, and there will likely be mosquito-borne transmission within the continental United States in the coming summer months.

The most important approach to control the spread of Zika Virus is poverty and the conditions that may exist in poor communities can be of greatest risk for the Zika Virus breeding habitats for vector mosquitoes.

The spread of disease is opportunistic—Zika Virus is an opportunistic disease that is spread by 2 mosquitoes out of the 57 verities.

We should be planning to fight those 2 mosquitoes in a multi-pronged way with every resource we can bring to the battle.

SOURCES OF ZIKA VIRUS SPREAD

Poverty is where the mosquito will find places to breed in great numbers, but these mosquitoes will not be limited to low income areas nor does the disease does not care how much someone earns.

The Aedes Aegypti or Yellow Fever mosquito has evolved to feed on people for the blood needed to lay its eggs.

This mosquito can breed in as little as a cap of dirty water; it will breed in aquariums in homes; pant water catching dishes; the well of discarded tires; puddles or pools of water; ditches; and children's wading pools;

Although water may evaporate mosquito eggs will remain viable and when it rains again or water is placed where they are the process for mosquitos development resumes.

Our enemies are those who illegal dump tires; open ditches, torn screens, or no screens; tropical climates that create heat and humidity that force people without air conditioning to open windows or face heat exhaustion.

THE BATTLE AGAINST THE ZIKA VIRUS

It might be hard for people who do not live in the tropical climates along the Gulf Coast to understand what a heat index is—it is a combination of temperature and humidity, which can mean that temperatures in summer are over 100 degrees.

Zika Virus Prevention Kits like those being distributed in Puerto Rico, which are vital to the effort there to protect women, will be essential to the fight against Zika Virus along the Gulf Coast.

These kits should include mosquito nets for beds.

Bed nets have proven to be essential in the battle to reduce malaria by providing protection and reducing the ability of biting insects to come in contact with people.

Mosquito netting has fine holes that are big enough to allow breezes to easily pass through, but small enough to keep mosquitoes and other biting insects out.

The kits should also include DEET mosquito replant products that can be sprayed on clothing to protect against mosquito bites.

Mr. Speaker, we should be preparing aggressively so that this nation does not have a reoccurrence of what happened during the Ebola crisis—when the Federal government seemed unprepared because this Congress was unmoved by the science, until domestic transmission of the disease were recorded.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE ZIKA VIRUS

The Zika Virus is a neurogenic virus that can attack the brain tissue of children in their mother's womb.

The Zika Virus will be difficult to detect and track in all cases because 4 in 5 people who get the disease will have no symptoms.

We know that 33 states have one or both of the vector mosquitoes.

Dr. Peter Hotez said that we can anticipate that the Americas including the United States can expect 4 million the Zika Virus cases in the next four months and to date there are over a million cases in Brazil.

The virus has been transmitted through sexual contact.

We know that evidence of the Zika Virus in newborns in the United States may not become apparent until we are in the late fall or winter of next year.

The most serious outcome the Zika Virus exposure is birth defects that can occur during pregnancy if the mother is exposed to the Zika Virus.

Infections of pregnant women can result in:

Still births;

The rate of Microcephaly based on Zika Virus exposure far exceeds that number.

Microcephaly is brain underdevelopment either at birth or the brain failing to develop properly after birth, which can cause:

Difficulty walking;

Difficulty hearing; and

Difficulty with speech.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

Researchers and scientists at the CDC; NIH and HHS do not know how the disease attacks the nervous system of developing babies.

They cannot answer what the long term health prospects are for children born with such a severe brain birth defect.

They have not discovered the right vaccine to fight the disease—which requires care to be sure that it is safe and effective especially in pregnant women or women who may become pregnant.

They do not know what plan will work and to what degree if any a tight network of mosquito control established in areas most likely to have the Zika Virus carrying mosquitoes will work as well.

How the Zika Virus may evolve over time and what they may mean for human health.

I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 5243, and support the President's request for $1.9 billion to fight the Zika Virus threat.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS), a member of our committee and a medical physician.

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentlewoman from Texas. We should be thankful for the scientists we have, whether it is at the CDC, whether it is at the NIH, those public health officials who are going to make sure that the mosquito control occurs that is necessary, to those who are at BARDA and other agencies where we develop the vaccines that are necessary, and do the necessary research.

This House bill, in distinction to the President's request, is targeted and well thought out. This bill deals just with Zika. The President's request didn't. It dealt with whatever other infectious disease comes down the road. Yet, Zika is what is in front of us now.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to take 2 to 3 years to complete the necessary research and to complete the vaccine development and bring it to market.

This bill deals with the needs over the next 6 months. The administration requested a total of about $1.6 billion in research, because there is about $300 million that has nothing to do, really, with researching and curing Zika. So it is $1.6 billion over 3 years.

The House took the position we actually need to front-load that. We need to deal with this fiscal year, so we put together a package of $1.2 billion to be spent over the next 6 months to make sure that we start the necessary research, we start the vaccine development, and deal with those outyears through the normal appropriations process which is going to take place over the next 2 years.

So our approach is actually a much more valid approach, targeted, well thought out, will provide all the necessary funds to the CDC, NIH, for the vaccine development and the mosquito control over the next 6 months, when we need it most, and then add additional funds as necessary, as science learns more about what we need.

We can't possibly know what we need now. The administration put a request without possibly knowing what we need 2 or 3 years in the future. We will find out what we need and we will add those.

Mr. Speaker, this is the right approach. This is actually more money up front than the administration has asked for, which is exactly the correct approach to deal with this imminent threat to the health of U.S. citizens here and in Puerto Rico.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ).

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, as an emergency medicine physician and a public health expert myself, I rise today to strongly oppose this inadequate Zika funding bill, and to urge my colleagues to fully fund our Nation's efforts to fight the Zika virus.

In the emergency department, you don't just partially treat a patient. This is called negligence. You don't just take out a third of the cancer. You don't just give a third of the antibiotic dose for a severe pneumonia.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is less than a third of what is needed to treat and protect women and their children from the Zika virus. It is less than a third of the prescription from the CDC and the experts needed to protect American families from Zika.

Tomorrow I am voting ''no'' because I demand that we fully fund efforts to protect families, pregnant women and their children from Zika.

Mr. Speaker, time is past due for you to do your job and address the Zika virus threat. We must completely fund efforts to protect American families from Zika. The American people deserve no less.

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

□ 2030

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GRAHAM).

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, more than 120 Members and every Democrat of the Florida delegation have asked for a vote on fully funding the fight against Zika.

In Florida, we have had more than 100 recorded cases of Zika. There is no doubt we are in the midst of a public health emergency. There are pregnant women who are afraid to go out at night. As a mom myself, I am worried about my own daughter and her future. Our State's tourism industry counts on thousands and thousands of people traveling to Florida. Those provide thousands of jobs, and millions of dollars flow into our economy. All of that is at risk.

We can't wait, and we shouldn't be forced to fight this virus with one hand tied behind our back.

Scientists and our public health officials have asked for $1.9 billion. We should stop playing games, Mr. Speaker, and fulfill the request.

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

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

I would like to repeat again, as a Member who has been in this House and has had the privilege of being part of many responses to emergencies, this is an emergency.

In last year's omnibus, Congress used emergency funding without offsets to pay for wildland fire suppression mostly in the West. Congress provided emergency funding to respond to two hurricanes and flooding in the Carolinas and Texas, again without offsets.

When those disasters struck, my colleagues, we didn't steal money from prior disaster response like the emergency funding provided for hurricane damage in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, storms in West Virginia, and tornadoes in Oklahoma and Kentucky. We paid for those emergencies. We did not steal from any other account, my colleagues.

In fact, after the 2013 Oklahoma tornadoes, my friend, Chairman ROGERS, told reporters: ''I don't think disasters of this type should be offset. We have an obligation to help these people.''

So, my friends, I just want to emphasize again, we have a crisis. We have

people suffering. The potential is enormous. These are Americans. These are citizens. Whether it is here or in Puerto Rico, we have a responsibility to respond.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, for those who are concerned that this is not an adequate amount of money at the right time, let me just say this. The money that the President requested of us, the $1.9 billion, was for the balance of this year and all of next year—17½ months, $1.9 billion.

In this bill, plus what we earlier forced them to put into these matters, almost $600 million, that $600 million, this $622 million is just for 4½ months, from now until the end of the fiscal year. I say that is more than adequate. If there is more needed, when the regular appropriations bills come up for fiscal year 2017, you heard Chairman COLE and Chairman GRANGER say we will put in the hopper whatever is needed at that time. So this is wholly adequate. It is more than adequate in terms of money.

Now, for those who are concerned about whether or not we are taking too much money away from Ebola, in the first place, that fund is not just for Ebola. When it was created 2 years ago, it was for Ebola and other infectious diseases. That is what we are dealing with here. We are asking the administration to use that money. This is an infectious disease. You have got over $2 billion laying there unused left over from what was not spent in eradicating Ebola.

By the way, the World Health Organization now says that Ebola is no longer an international emergency.

So the money in the so-called Ebola—I call it the infectious disease account—that money is available and needs to be spent now. That is what we told the President shortly after he said he was going to send us a supplemental request. We said to use the money you have.

Finally, they did spend $589 million of that. Now we are adding to that with some $622 million. So there is plenty of money there. There is plenty of money left in the till of the infectious disease account if it is needed for Ebola or anything else. There is upwards of $2 billion laying there unused.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I am opposed to the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Castor of Florida moves to recommit H.R. 5243 to the Committee on Appropriations and Committee on the Budget with instructions to report the same to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for ''Salaries and Expenses'', $10,000,000, to remain available until expended, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Zika virus, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases and related health outcomes, domestically and internationally, and to develop necessary medical countermeasures and vaccines, including the review, regulation, and post market surveillance of vaccines and therapies, and administrative activities: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

CDC-WIDE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for ''CDC-Wide Activities and Program Support'', $743,000,000, to remain available until expended, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Zika virus, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases and related health outcomes, domestically and internationally; and to carry out titles II, III, and XVII of the Public Health Service (''PHS'') Act with respect to domestic preparedness and global health: *Provided*, That products purchased with these funds may, at the discretion of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, be deposited in the Strategic National Stockpile under section 319F-2 of the PHS Act: *Provided further*, That funds may be used for purchase and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries: *Provided further*, That the provisions in section 317S of the PHS Act shall apply to the use of funds appropriated under this heading as determined by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (`CDC') to be appropriate: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this heading may be used for grants for the construction, alteration, or renovation of nonfederally owned facilities to improve preparedness and response capability at the State and local level: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this heading may be used for acquisition of real property (including long-term ground leases) and equipment, and construction, demolition, or renovation of facilities, including construction on leased land: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this heading may be transferred by the Director of CDC to other accounts of the CDC for the purposes provided under this heading: *Provided further*, That such transfer authority is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: *Provided further*, That, upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

For an additional amount for ''National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases'', $277,000,000, to remain available until expended, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Zika virus, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases and related health outcomes, domestically and internationally, including expenses related to carrying out section 301 and title IV of the PHS Act: *Provided*, That such funds may be transferred by the Director of the National Institutes of Health (''NIH'') to other accounts of the NIH for the purposes provided under this heading: *Provided further*, That such transfer authority is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: *Provided further*, That, upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES EMERGENCY FUND

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for ''Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund'', $233,000,000, to remain available until expended, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Zika virus, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases and related health outcomes, domestically and internationally; to develop necessary countermeasures and vaccines, including the development and purchase of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, necessary medical supplies, and administrative activities; for carrying out titles II, III, and XVII of the PHS Act with respect to domestic preparedness and global health; and for carrying out title III of the PHS Act and title V of the Social Security Act to provide health care and related services in areas affected by Zika virus: *Provided*, That funds appropriated under this heading may be used to procure security countermeasures (as defined in section 319F-2(c)(1)(B) of the PHS Act, as amended by this Act): *Provided further*, That paragraphs (1) and (7)(C) of subsection (c) of section 319F–2 of the PHS Act, but no other provisions of such section, shall apply to such security countermeasures procured with funds appropriated under this heading: *Provided further*, That products purchased with funds appropriated under this heading

may, at the discretion of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, be deposited in the Strategic National Stockpile under section 319F–2 of the PHS Act: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this heading may be transferred to the Covered Countermeasure Process Fund established under section 319F–4 of the PHS Act: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this heading may, for purposes of providing primary health services in areas affected by Zika virus, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases, be used to assign National Health Service Corps (''NHSC'') members to Puerto Rico and other territories, notwithstanding the assignment priorities and limitations in or under sections 333(a)(1)(D), 333(b), or 333A(a) of the PHS Act, and to make National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program awards under section 338B of such Act: *Provided further*, That funds may be awarded for projects of regional and national significance in Puerto Rico and other territories authorized under section 501 of the Social Security Act, notwithstanding section 502 of such Act: *Provided further*, That funds may be used for the alteration or renovation of nonfederally owned facilities to improve preparedness and response capability at the State and local level: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this heading may be transferred to other appropriations of the Department of Health and Human Services, as determined by the Secretary to be appropriate, to be used for the purposes specified under this heading: *Provided further*, That any transfers of these funds shall be made in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget: *Provided further*, That the transfer authority provided under this heading is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: *Provided further*, That, upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 101. For purposes of preventing, preparing for, and responding to Zika virus, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases and related health outcomes domestically and internationally, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may use funds provided in this Act—

(1) to acquire, lease, construct, alter, renovate, equip, furnish, or manage facilities outside of the United States, as necessary to conduct such programs, in consultation with the Secretary of State, either directly for the use of the United States Government or for the use, pursuant to grants, direct assistance, or cooperative agreements, of public or nonprofit private institutions or agencies in participating foreign countries; and

(2) to enter into contracts with individuals for the provision of personal services (as described in section 37.104 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations) within the United States and abroad: *Provided*, That such individuals may not be deemed employees of the United States for the purpose of any law administered by the Office of Personnel Management.

SEC. 102. Section 3304 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) The heads of the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of State, and the Agency for International Development may appoint, without regard to the provisions of sections 3309 through 3319, candidates needed for positions to perform critical work in direct response to a public health threat requiring an immediate response for which—

''(1) public notice has been given; and

''(2) the Secretary of Health and Human Services has determined that such a public health threat exists.''.

SEC. 103. Funds appropriated by this Act may be used to reimburse accounts administered by the Department of Health and Human Services for obligations incurred for Zika virus response prior to the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. Funds appropriated to the Department of Health and Human Services in this Act may be transferred to and merged with other Federal accounts for purposes specified in this Act following consultation with the Office of Management and Budget: *Provided*, That such transfer authority shall be in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: *Provided further*, That, upon a determination that all or part of funds so transferred from an account are not necessary, such amounts may be transferred back to that account.

SEC. 105. Section 319F–2(c)(1)(B) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d–6b(c)(1)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i)(III)(bb), by striking ''; or'' and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in clause (ii), by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iii)(I) the Secretary determines to be a necessary countermeasure to diagnose, mitigate, prevent, or treat harm from any infectious disease that may pose a threat to the public health; and

''(II)(aa) is approved or cleared under chapter V of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, or licensed under section 351 of this Act; or

''(bb) is a countermeasure for which the Secretary determines that sufficient and satisfactory clinical experience or research data (including data, if available, from pre-clinical and clinical trials) support a reasonable conclusion that the countermeasure will qualify for approval or licensing within 10 years after the date of a determination under subclause (I).''.

SEC. 106. (a)(1) For purposes of title XIX of the Social Security Act, for the one-year period beginning with the first day of the first full fiscal quarter following the date of the enactment of this section, the Federal medical assistance percentage (''FMAP'') under section 1905(b) of such Act for the territories specified in paragraph (2) shall be increased from 55 percent to 65 percent. Any net increase in payment to such a territory under section 1903(a) of such Act, which is attributable to such increased FMAP, shall be disregarded in applying sections 1108(f) and 1108(g) of such Act to the territory.

(2) The territories specified in this paragraph are the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

(b) With respect to the amount needed for purposes of implementing the increased FMAP under subsection (a) for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017, such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADMINISTRATION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PROGRAMS

For an additional amount for ''Diplomatic and Consular Programs'', $14,594,000, to remain available until September 30, 2017, for necessary expenses to support response efforts related to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases: *Provided*, That up to $2,419,000 may be made available for medical evacuation costs of any other Department or agency of the United States under the chief of mission authority, and may be transferred to any other appropriation of such Department or agency for such costs: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

EMERGENCIES IN THE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR SERVICE

For an additional amount for ''Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Services'', $4,000,000 for necessary expenses to support response efforts related to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

REPATRIATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For an additional amount for ''Repatriation Loans Program Account'' for the cost of direct loans, $1,000,000, to support the response efforts related to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That such funds are available to subsidize an additional amount of gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed $1,880,406: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE PRESIDENT

OPERATING EXPENSES

For an additional amount for ''Operating Expenses'', $10,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2017, for necessary expenses to support response efforts related to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases: *Provided*, That such amounts are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section

251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE PRESIDENT

GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

For an additional amount for ''Global Health Programs'', $325,000,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses for assistance or research to prevent, treat, or otherwise respond to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases: *Provided*, That funds appropriated under this heading may be made available for multi-year funding commitments to incentivize the development of global health technologies: *Provided further*, That such amounts are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NONPROLIFERATION, ANTI-TERRORISM, DEMINING AND RELATED PROGRAMS

For an additional amount for ''Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs'', $8,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2017, for necessary expenses to support response and research efforts related to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases: *Provided*, That such amounts are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE

FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE PRESIDENT

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

For an additional amount for ''International Organizations and Programs'', $13,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2017, for necessary expenses to support response and research efforts related to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases: *Provided*, That such amounts are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to Congress.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

USE OF EBOLA BALANCES FOR OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

SEC. 201. Unobligated balances of amounts appropriated under title IX of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (division J of Public Law 113–235) shall also be available for necessary expenses for operations, assistance, or research to prevent, treat, or otherwise respond to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases: *Provided*, That amounts repurposed pursuant to this section are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

TRANSFER AUTHORITY

SEC. 202. (a) Funds appropriated by this title under the headings ''Global Health Programs'', ''Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs'', ''International Organizations and Programs'', and ''Operating Expenses'' may be transferred to, and merged with, funds appropriated by this title under such headings to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(b) Funds appropriated by this title under the headings ''Diplomatic and Consular Programs'', ''Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service'', and ''Repatriation Loans Program Account'' may be transferred to, and merged with, funds appropriated by this title under such headings to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(c) The transfer authorities provided by this section are in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law.

(d) Upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred pursuant to the authorities provided by this section are not necessary for such purposes, such amounts may be transferred back to such appropriations

REIMBURSEMENT AUTHORITY

SEC. 203. Funds appropriated by this Act may be used to reimburse accounts administered by the United States Agency for International Development and the Department of State for obligations incurred for Zika virus response prior to the date of the enactment of this Act.

AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

SEC. 204. Section 307(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 shall not apply to funds appropriated by this Act.

NOTWITHSTANDING AUTHORITY

SEC. 205. Funds appropriated or otherwise made available under this Act and prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs that are made available to support Zika virus response and related activities may be made available notwithstanding any other provision of law.

PERSONAL SERVICE CONTRACTORS

SEC. 206. Funds available in this Act to support response efforts related to the Zika virus and related health outcomes, other vector-borne diseases, or other infectious diseases may be used to enter into contracts with individuals for the provision of personal services (as described in section 37.104 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations) in the United States or abroad: *Provided*, That such individuals may not be deemed employees of the United States for the purpose of any law administered by the Office of Personnel Management.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order on the gentlewoman's motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved.

Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes in support of her motion.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker and Members, this is the final amendment to the bill. It will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. We don't have time for that. If it is adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, America has a public health emergency at its doorstep, and it requires a robust and urgent response. Yet the Republican bill utterly fails to deal with the emergency posed by the rapidly spreading Zika virus, and it leaves our neighbors and our communities at risk.

So the amendment I am offering today provides the resources requested by our public health experts and researchers to combat Zika, the $1.9 billion to help prevent, detect, and respond to Zika in contrast to the paltry $622 million in the Republican bill.

I would like to thank Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. RUIZ, and everyone. I would like to thank the March of Dimes, which is advocating for full funding, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Why? Microcephaly. Microcephaly is a severe brain abnormality that is now linked to the Zika virus, as are other anomalies where brain and skull development are affected.

We are talking about a lifetime of seizures and developmental delays, such as problems sitting, standing, walking, seeing, hearing, and feeding problems. Currently, there is no vaccine or treatment for the Zika infection.

Brazil has reported the highest incidence of microcephaly, with over 4,000 suspected cases tied to Zika.

Microcephaly has also been detected among women who contracted Zika in Colombia, Panama, and U.S. territories. In fact, in the U.S. and U.S. territories alone, we have 1,200 cases. Thirty-two of these are pregnant women, two cases of microcephaly. The Florida Department of Health says we have 120 Floridians diagnosed with Zika, including pregnant women.

Because there is no cure for the Zika virus, Congress must act to do everything we can to prevent it. We need the diagnostic tests, we need the vaccines, we need research, and we need tools for our communities back home. We have got to educate our neighbors.

This Republican bill is woefully inadequate. It puts our neighbors back home at risk and could subject us to huge economic risks as well.

Let's get specific. The GOP's Zika bill provides less than one-third of the funds requested by public health experts. I heard the Republican appropriators say they intend to do more next year. The mosquitos don't know that, do they? The mosquitos are not going to wait until next year.

That is unconscionable. It is unconscionable that such underfunding does

not allow the development of vaccines, the diagnostics, and the research in birth defects. The most immediate needs are woefully underfunded in the Republican bill.

The CDC requested $740 million for public health activities like mosquito control. The House bill provides $120 million, 84 percent below the request. That means the CDC is not going to have adequate funding to assist our local communities. The House bill cuts the request by the National Institutes of Health for research and development of vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics by $132 million, or 28 percent.

The House bill completely neglects immediate needs of American citizens in Puerto Rico. The administration asked for $256 million. What does the Republican bill provide? Zero. Furthermore, the State Department and USAID will only get $119 million.

Now, if we learned anything from Ebola, it is that addressing the health threat overseas can be extremely effective, but you give it short shrift here.

Colleagues, this is a public health emergency, but it is not the only one. It is not the first one, and it will not be the last. It requires a serious, thoughtful response, one with adequate funding, not a feeble attempt to demonstrate you are trying to do something.

Now, not only will the GOP obstruction likely prove dire to the health of our neighbors, but there is going to be a huge economic impact as well. Currently, pregnant women and men who hope to have a baby are advised by CDC to avoid traveling to Brazil and other areas. What if there is a similar traveling advisory for the State of Florida, the Texas coast, New Orleans, Charleston, and Mobile, Alabama, all communities that rely on the tourism dollar, from small businesses to large? So you are asking not only for a public health emergency, but for an economic emergency as well.

Members, this call to action requires actual action. This call to action was made months ago. Your answer needs to be equal to our challenge. Please pass my amendment so that we can fully fund the Zika response. Don't give the short shrift Republican bill a hearing. Vote ''no'' on the bill vote and ''yes'' on the MTR.

I yield back the balance of my time.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I insist on my point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order against the motion because the proposed amendment contains an emergency designation which constitutes a change to existing law within the meaning of clause 2 of rule XXI. Accordingly, it violates the longstanding prohibition on legislating on a general appropriations measure, and I must insist upon my point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does any other Member wish to be heard on the point of order?

If not, the Chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman from Kentucky makes a point of order that the instructions in the motion to recommit contain legislation in violation of clause 2 of rule XXI.

The instructions, in pertinent part, designate certain appropriated funds as an emergency requirement pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

The Chair has ruled on numerous occasions, as recorded in section 1052 of the House Rules and Manual, that a proposal to designate an appropriation as an ''emergency requirement'' within the meaning of the budget-enforcement laws is fundamentally legislative in character.

On these premises, the Chair holds that the instructions contained in the motion to recommit offered by the gentlewoman from Florida, by including a proposal to designate an appropriation as an ''emergency requirement'' within the meaning of the budget-enforcement laws, constitutes legislation in violation of clause 2 of rule XXI.

The point of order is sustained. The motion is not in order.

□ 2045

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is: Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I move to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table.

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. 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, this 15-minute vote on the motion to table will be followed by a 5-minute vote on passage of the bill, if arising without further proceedings in recommittal.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 240, nays 183, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 206]

YEAS—240

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

NAYS—183

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
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
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin

Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
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—10

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Reed
Rooney (FL)
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

□ 2105

Messrs. CRAWFORD, SMITH of Missouri, BARR, ROE of Tennessee, SHIMKUS, ROSKAM, and WITTMAN changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to table was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 241, nays 184, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 207]

YEAS—241

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
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)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
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
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
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—184

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
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—8

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 2113

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 735 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 4909.

Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) kindly resume the chair.

□ 2114

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, with Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, amendment No. 119 printed in House Report 114–571, offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO), had been disposed of.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in House Report 114–571 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 1 by Mr. BUCK of Colorado.

Amendment No. 2 by Mr. FLEMING of Louisiana.

Amendment No. 5 by Ms. LEE of California.

Amendment No. 6 by Mr. POLIS of Colorado.

Amendment No. 7 by Mr. ELLISON of Minnesota.

Amendment No. 9 by Mr. ELLISON of Minnesota.

Amendment No. 12 by Mr. SANFORD of South Carolina.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the time for any electronic vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BUCK

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 159, noes 266, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 208]

AYES—159

Abraham
Allen
Amash
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Buck
Burgess
Calvert
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Collins (GA)
Conaway
Crawford
Culberson
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (LA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hardy
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roe (TN)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Russell
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (TX)
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Tipton
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Zeldin

NOES—266

Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Amodei
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fitzpatrick
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gibbs
Gibson
Graham
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Harper
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
McSally
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Miller (MI)
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Poliquin
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woodall
Yarmuth
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zinke

NOT VOTING—8

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 2118

Mr. FLEISCHMAN changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. FLEMING

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 227, noes 198, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 209]

AYES—227

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
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
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce

Russell
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
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 (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—198

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
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gibson
Graham
Graves (LA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meehan
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
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
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
Young (IA)

NOT VOTING—8

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 2122

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MS. LEE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 138, noes 285, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 210]

AYES—138

Adams
Amash
Bass
Becerra
Benishek
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Burgess
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
Courtney
Cummings
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Foster
Fudge
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Harris
Hastings
Himes
Honda
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Jones
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Labrador
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Moore
Mulvaney
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Perlmutter
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rigell
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sires
Slaughter
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woodall
Yarmuth

NOES—285

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Beatty
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Dold
Donovan
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Holding
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Keating
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Latta
Levin
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Torres
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Veasey
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—10

Crowley
Fattah
Goodlatte
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 2125

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chair, on rollcall No. 210, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 63, noes 360, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 211]

AYES—63

Bass
Becerra
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Burgess
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Cohen
Conyers
DeFazio
DeSaulnier
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (TN)
Ellison
Eshoo
Fudge
Grayson
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Honda
Huffman
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kildee
Lee
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowenthal
McDermott
McGovern
Moore
Nadler
Napolitano
Nolan
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Rangel
Rokita
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Schakowsky
Speier
Takano
Tonko
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—360

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Beatty
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Carney
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cicilline
Clawson (FL)
Clyburn
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Levin
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Edwards

NOT VOTING—9

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 2128

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 131, noes 292, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 212]

AYES—131

Adams
Amash
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Burgess
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Courtney
Cummings
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Jones
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
Labrador
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maloney, Carolyn
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Slaughter
Speier
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—292

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Cárdenas
Carney
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper

Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Esty
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Scalise
Schiff
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Edwards

NOT VOTING—9

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 2132

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 132, noes 289, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 213]

AYES—132

Adams
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cummings
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gallego
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hahn
Hastings
Higgins
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maloney, Carolyn
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Serrano
Sherman
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woodall
Yarmuth

NOES—289

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Carney
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
DeLauro
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Esty
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Edwards

NOT VOTING—11

Bishop (UT)
Crowley
Fattah
Gutiérrez
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 2136

Mr. SMITH of Washington changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Chair, during rollcall Vote No. 213 on H.R. 4909, I mistakenly recorded my vote as "yea" when I should have voted "nay."

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MR. SANFORD

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 41, noes 383, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 214]

AYES—41

Amash
Blum
Brat
Buck
Burgess
Chabot
Clawson (FL)
DesJarlais
Dold
Foxx
Griffith
Hensarling
Holding
Huelskamp
Jordan
Labrador
Loudermilk
Love
Lummis
Massie
McClintock
McGovern
Mulvaney
Palmer
Paulsen
Perry
Pitts
Polis
Pompeo
Price, Tom
Rice (SC)
Rohrabacher
Rooney (FL)
Rouzer
Royce
Sanford
Sessions
Stutzman
Woodall
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—383

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McCollum
McDermott
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—9

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 2139

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. There being no further amendments, under the rule the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) having assumed the chair, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 735, he reported the bill, as amended by House Resolution 732, back to the House with sundry further amendments adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any further amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. CLYBURN. I am opposed in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Clyburn moves to recommit the bill H.R. 4909 to the Committee on Armed Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendments:

In section 567 (relating to a prohibition on the establishment, maintenance, or support of Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps units at educational institutions that display the Confederate battle flag), strike subsection (c) (which provides an exception to such prohibition).

Strike section 1094.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

This amendment would fight discrimination in the military, which

erodes obedience, unity, commitment, and esprit de corps. The Supreme Court highlighted these four essential attributes in explaining the military deference doctrine, under which this amendment is constitutionally sound.

The first section of the amendment would prohibit senior ROTC programs in any institution that displays the Confederate battle flag. This objectionable banner, which has never been the official flag of the Confederacy, is a symbol of hate, racial oppression, resistance to the rule of law, and White supremacy.

Any doubt as to this flag's meaning was erased by the perpetrator of last summer's horrific shootings at Emanuel AME Church. Regrettably, the Confederate battle flag still flies at the Citadel, just 2 miles away from Mother Emanuel. I happen to disagree with the Citadel's board members' belief that they are barred from removing the flag until the South Carolina State Legislature acts to revise or repeal the so-called Heritage Act. But it is clear that this hateful symbol will not be removed until pressure is brought to bear on those with the authority to remove it.

□ 2145

In recent days, Citadel alumni have reached out to me to express their support for this effort. One of these alumni, Dr. Larry Ferguson, was a member of The Citadel class of 1973, the first class with more than one African American. Dr. Ferguson desegregated the band, but was subsequently kicked out of the band for refusing to wave the Confederate battle flag and play the song ''Dixie'' at sporting events.

I received another letter from a group of 17 alumni. They write that the Confederate battle flag ''is representative of an ideology of hate and privilege, and is an abuse of power that still persists in the life of the school and in the State's halls of power and influence.

''The fact that, in 2016, the Confederate Naval Jack flag hangs in a public place of worship, on the campus of a public college, and is protected by an unjust law is clear evidence of this reality.''

These letters make abundantly clear how the glorification of such an odious symbol at a military college undermines obedience, unity, commitment, and esprit de corps in our future military officers.

I will include in the RECORD both letters, and I urge my colleagues to heed the voice of these Citadel alumni so that no more cadets will have to struggle in the shadow of this oppressive banner.

MAY 16, 2016.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN JAMES CLYBURN, I am writing to inform you of my support of your efforts to limit ROTC funding to The Citadel because of the displaying of the Confederate flag in the Summerall Chapel.

I am Dr. Larry J Ferguson a 1973 African-American graduate of The Citadel. When I entered The Citadel in the summer of 1969 our class was the fourth year of desegregation at The Citadel. But the class of 1973 is the first class that had more than one African-American in it. Nine of us entered The Citadel in 1969 and six of us graduated in 1973. I was the first African-American to desegregate The Citadel's Regimental Band Company. In 1970 as a young 18 year old sophomore I informed the administration that I would not play the song ''Dixie'' or participate in the celebratory waving of the Confederate flag at our sporting events. I was subsequently removed from the band and the administration threatened to take away my academic scholarship despite my having good grades. Thanks to my parents and attorney Daniel Martin, Sr. they successfully argued for me to keep my scholarship. Thanks also to Maj Clarence Richardson U.S. Army (Ret), I was able to transfer to C Co. where he was the tactical officer. I had a bitter/sweet 4 years at The Citadel. There were a few of my white class mates who went against the grain and let me know that I could count on them to be my friend. But the overwhelming tension always present around me was that I was only tolerated at The Citadel because of my race and because I stood up for racial justice.

One of the beginning ways to establish racial justice is to repudiate all symbols of racial oppression. The majority of African-Americans and many other people of various ethnicities find the Confederate flag and the song ''Dixie'' offensive because the flag and the song have long been associated with hate groups. These hate groups used the Confederate flag and the song ''Dixie'' as symbols directly connected to their culture of terrorism and hatred for African-Americans and for anyone who supported racial integration.

These Confederate symbols cannot de divorced from the hate groups that created a system of racial oppression and bigotry in these United States of America and as such they should only remain in places of historical reference—not public platforms of adulation. Let us teach our future generations that bigotry and racism are vigorously opposed in our society and that symbols that are directly connected to bigotry and racism are not to be celebrated in any form or fashion.

As a lifetime member of The Citadel Alumni Association and as a past member of The Citadel Board of Visitors I want to thank you Congressman Clyburn for addressing this issue. Recent history teaches us that 50 years ago it took external pressure to make The Citadel desegregate its Corps of Cadets. This legislation will exert appropriate pressure on state authorities so that the Confederate flag will be removed from Summerall Chapel thus allowing everyone who enters to be able to worship in dignity and solemnity.

Yours Truly,

LARRY J FERGUSON,
DMD.

MAY 16, 2016.

Congressman JIM CLYBURN,
Assistant Democratic Leader, 6th Congressional District of South Carolina, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN CLYBURN: Since 1939, the Confederate Flag, a historic emblem of racial intolerance flown by pro-slavery rebels both before and after the Civil War, is still currently being displayed in The Citadel's Summerall Chapel. The flag's presence in the most hallowed place on the entire campus, where cadets gather to worship, is an assault on the sensibilities of those who understand The Citadel's history, but do not share the values the flag has come to represent.

As black alumni of The Citadel, we acknowledge the school's efforts to remove this divisive symbol from our house of worship. We agree that a museum is a more appropriate place for the flag. Its current location in the school's chapel stands as an affront to those of us whose ancestors suffered racial violence, hatred, and bigotry under the shadow of that flag and its ideology.

As you know, the school's administration continues to suggest that it is constrained from removing the flag as a consequence of the Heritage Act. As we have stated in previous correspondence to the school, the Heritage Act is an unjust piece of legislation. We further contend that the Citadel's decision to ''follow the law'' (the Heritage Act) is a tactic to delay the flag's removal from the Chapel; it is an attempt to redirect responsibility for this matter to the South Carolina House of Representatives, whose Speaker, James Lucas, vowed to deny a vote on the issue. As a consequence, we hold both the school and the legislature equally responsible for the fact that the Confederate Flag still flies in the Chapel on campus. Also, it is not lost on us that the school's decision to ''follow the law'' (Heritage Act) in this moment is a bit disingenuous, particularly since the school, as a public institution, for years defied anti-discrimination laws related to the admission of Black people and women to the school. The Citadel cannot in one moment of history defy the law in order to preserve white and male privilege, while now representing itself as an abider of the law (the Heritage Act) while the flag still hangs in Summerall Chapel.

From the beginning of our fight to have the flag removed, we suspected that the school and the state would fail to muster the political will and moral courage to have the flag immediately removed from the chapel. For this reason, we are grateful and in solidarity with you and your colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives as you introduce measures to withhold federal funding for Reserve Officer's Training Corps programs from all colleges and universities displaying the Confederate flag.

In closing, our position reaches far beyond the issue of the Confederate flag. We believe that the school's ability to fulfill its obligation to develop principled leaders and to model the virtues of duty, honor, and respect are undermined by the continued veneration of a relic from a tragic chapter of America's history. For many of us, the flag is more than a symbol; it is representative of an ideology of hate, privilege and an abuse of power that still persists in the life of the school and in the state's halls of power and influence. The fact that in 2016 the Confederate Naval Jack Flag hangs in a public space of worship, on the campus of a public college, and is protected by an unjust law is clear evidence of this reality. While we continue to work energetically to have the flag removed immediately from the chapel premises, we remain in support of your efforts to address this at the federal level of government.

Thank you for your leadership on this matter. As graduates of the school and allies in this fight, we stand firmly in solidarity with you.

Sincerely,

Hillery Douglas '82; Fr. W. Reginald Simmons '87; James Stevens '89; Garrick Benson '89; Johnny Orr '89; Ken Williams '89; Anthony Terrell '89 C. Gene Brown '89 Ronald Galvin '90; Oscar Douglas '90; Thomas Turnage '90; Jon Thomas '90; Gus Olalere '90; Morris Robinson '91; Lamont Melvin '91; Torrence Forney '93; Jamie Jenkins '98.

Mr. CLYBURN. Make no mistake about it: a vote against this motion is a vote to continue flying the Confederate battle flag and allow discrimination at a military college.

I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY), my good friend.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I have never voted against the defense bill, and I never thought I would.

My dad was a veteran who was nearly killed serving his country. He taught me to respect those who serve and to speak plainly about right and wrong. So let me speak plainly now.

This bill writes antigay bias into Federal law. It strips LGBT Americans of basic workplace protections by reversing the President's anti-discrimination orders, saying it is once again legal for your LGBT neighbors and family members to be fired because of who they are. This is wrong.

This is not about supporting our troops. It is not about fighting ISIS. It is not about religious protections. We can do all that, and we should. This is about bigotry, plain and simple.

But we can fix it by embracing the bipartisan effort, denied by the Rules Committee, to remove this hateful language and keep everything else.

Mr. Speaker, this is not some procedural vote to be waived away; this is about whether we will reaffirm equal rights or rationalize discrimination.

When my husband and I got married, after waiting 22 years, so many of you expressed your support. Will you now look me in the eye and say that it would be okay for me to lose my job over it?

Just today, a Member of this House, refusing to help strike this antigay language, said to me: But you know where I am on your issues.

I said: No. This is where you are on my issues. Your vote is where you are on my issues. And this is where your children and where history will remember you are standing on our issues.

You have the opportunity here and now to strike this antigay language and, in doing so, strike a blow for equality.

Mr. Speaker, we are told that we are to make America great again. Well, you cannot make America great by making America hate.

Vote against discrimination. Vote for this motion to recommit.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the 63 members of the Armed Services Committee not only for all of their work in putting this bill together, but for the seriousness with which they take our duties under the Constitution to help provide for the common defense.

Our members don't always agree, but we are able to work our way through our differences most of the time and think about the larger cause. You might say we sacrifice some of our individual differences or preferences in order to support the men and women who sacrifice so much for us.

I want to thank all the Members of the House. We have had a lot of Members over the last 2 days who have come down to the floor and talked about their amendments, and all of those amendments have helped make this bill a better bill.

That is the way that, for 54 straight years, Congresses with majorities of both parties and Presidents of both parties have signed into law a defense authorization bill. Last year, it was a little iffy, but that is the way it has happened.

I just want to suggest to our colleagues that it is especially important we do that this year. There is a lot of uncertainty out there. Some of that uncertainty is because of President Obama. Part of that uncertainty is because of us. Part of the uncertainty is because of the political campaign. Part of the uncertainty is because of the turmoil in the world.

My suggestion to you is that, with all this uncertainty going on out there, it is particularly important this year that we send a message to friends and adversaries that the United States is willing to stand up and defend ourselves. And it is even more important, I would suggest, that we send a message to our troops that, whatever uncertainty is out there, we are going to support them.

Mr. Speaker, to support our troops, we have to vote ''yes'' and pass this bill.

Now, I realize that if one wants to oppose this bill, there are lots of reasons to do that. The bill takes the same budget approach as Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader HARRY REID used in 2008, the last time we had a change of administration.

The bill includes a provision that reaffirms the protections of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. I really hope if anybody has a question about that, come read the amendment. I have got it here. Please read this provision so you can judge for yourself.

But before any Member votes ''no,'' I hope they ask themselves whether they really want to send a message to our troops that, yes, that Member would be supportive of the troops, if only; or, I would really support the troops, but for; or, I would really support the troops maybe when. I don't think that is the right way to go.

Let me just finish with a fact and a story. One fact is that today, of the 271 strike aircraft across the Marine Corps, 46 are available for flight operations. That is 46 out of 271 are available today.

But let me make it personal for just a second. Over the past week, I have encountered two marines. On Sunday, I was privileged to attend the commissioning of a young man who is just entering the Marine Corps. He hopes to be a Marine aviator. He is full of promise and enthusiasm.

Earlier in the week, I learned that an experienced Marine aviator has decided to leave the Marine Corps because he doesn't think the aircraft he is flying are safe, and he has got two young kids at home.

Now, earlier in the debate, the ranking member said my philosophy in this bill was to help the troops now and worry about other problems later. Well, there is some truth in that. I want to help the troops now. I worry about aviators who don't think their aircraft are safe now.

I can't solve budget problems in the future. I don't know who is going to be elected President. I don't know what problems the world is going to face. I can do something now, and that is to vote for this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was 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 passage.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 181, noes 243, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 215]

AYES—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
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
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted

Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—243

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lipinski
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)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—9

Crowley
Fattah
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Salmon
Swalwell (CA)
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 2200

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 277, noes 147, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 216]

AYES—277

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Esty
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Veasey
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—147

Adams
Amash
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cummings
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Higgins
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
Labrador
Larsen (WA)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Velázquez
Visclosky

Wasserman Schultz	Watson Coleman	Yarmuth
Waters, Maxine	Welch	
	Wilson (FL)	

NOT VOTING—9

Crowley	Hinojosa	Salmon
Fattah	Johnson, E. B.	Swalwell (CA)
Herrera Beutler	Johnson, Sam	Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 2206

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 4909, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 4909, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section and title numbering, cross-referencing, conforming amendments to the table of contents and short titles, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

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

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

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

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

There was no objection.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4974, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 736 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4974.

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

□ 2209

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, with Mr. COLLINS of Georgia in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 2210

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

Today, it is my honor and privilege to bring H.R. 4974, the fiscal year 2017 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act to the House for consideration.

I present this bill alongside my very good friend and ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), who has been an essential partner all along the way. I greatly appreciate the participation and support of our committee members on both sides of the aisle as we considered priorities and funding levels for the important programs in our bill.

We analyzed the budget request, developed questions, and held oversight hearings to get direct feedback from members of all the services, the Department of Defense leadership, the Secretary of the VA, and the VA inspector general. We received over 1,000 requests from Members, again, from both sides of the aisle, and we gave them full and fair consideration.

The bill is also the product of actively listening to the concerns of our veterans and veteran advocates, servicemembers, spouses, caregivers, military family members, and healthcare providers both within and outside the VA over the past year.

As we consider this bill, I can't proceed further without noting that this subcommittee has a formidable level of support from the chair and ranking member of the full committee. So I thank Chairman ROGERS and the ranking member, Mrs. LOWEY. Their attention, oversight, and genuine care for the military and veterans has been inspiring.

To round out the team, we have some great support from our professional staff: Maureen Holohan, Sue Quantius, Sarah Young, Tracey Russell, and Matt Washington on the committee staff; and Sean Snyder, Drew Kent, and Heather Smith on my personal staff. I would also like to note Michael Reed and Michael Calcagni with Mr. BISHOP of Georgia's office. We couldn't do it without them.

I would also like to note the retirement of the senior member of our subcommittee, SAM FARR. He has been on this subcommittee since 1999. In our full committee meeting, we went into detail about Sam's accomplishments on this subcommittee, including being the architect of the Monterey model, which is now the benchmark for successful public-private partnership in a community with a base closure. Sam, wherever you may be, your commitment, passion, and good humor will be missed. All the best to you in your pending retirement.

H.R. 4974 demonstrates our firm commitment to fully supporting our Nation's veterans and servicemembers. Our investment of $81.6 billion for military construction, VA, and related agencies, $1.2 billion over last year's level, is unprecedented. The bill addresses issues to help veterans in every part of the country—every congressional district—and our troops around the world.

This bill provides comprehensive support for servicemembers, military families, and veterans. It supports our troops with the facilities and services necessary to maintain readiness and morale at bases here in the States and overseas. It provides for Defense Department schools and health clinics that take care of our military families.

The bill funds our veteran healthcare systems to ensure that our promise to care for those who sacrificed in defense of this great Nation continues as those men and women return home. We owe this to our veterans and are committed to sustained oversight so that programs deliver what they promise and taxpayers are well served by the investments we make.

On the military construction side, the bill provides a total of $7.9 billion for military construction projects and family housing, including base and overseas contingency operations funding, OCO funding—an increase of $250 million over the President's request.

This funding meets DOD's most critical needs, including priority projects for combatant commanders and funding new mission requirements.

It provides $304 million for military medical facilities. It provides $246 million for Department of Defense educational facilities, for construction or renovation of four schools. It supports our Guard and Reserve through $673 million for facilities in 21 States.

It includes $514 million for projects from the Department of Defense's unfunded priority list, benefiting the most critical projects—as identified by the services—that were not included in the budget request.

It fully funds military family housing at $1.3 million. It provides $178 million for the NATO Security Investment Program, which is $43 million over last year's level, to deal with increasing threats and necessary investments overseas.

On Veterans Affairs, this legislation includes a total of $176 billion in combined discretionary and mandatory funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Discretionary funding alone for Veterans programs in the bill is $73.5 billion. Total fiscal year 2017 discretionary funding is $2 billion above fiscal year 2016, which is a 3 percent increase, and $1.5 billion below the budget request. Within that total, VA medical care is provided with $64 billion, a 5 percent increase over last year—again, a 5 percent increase over last year for VA medical care.

Again, on VA medical services, the bill funds VA medical services at $52.5 billion. That includes $850 million that VA came back and asked for this year, on top of the advanced funding provided last year.

Many Members expressed concerns about medical services, and we were able to fully fund the budget request for hepatitis C at $1.5 billion. We are paying for treatments for so many of our veterans who are being cured from this horrible disease of hepatitis C. The drugs are very expensive. They have come down in price a bit, and that has helped us serve more veterans.

Veterans homelessness is at $1.6 billion, long-term care at $8.6 billion, caregiver stipends at $725 million, and Office of Inspector General is at $160 million.

For disability claims, we provide the full request for the Veterans Benefits Administration, which is a $118 million increase over fiscal year 2016, and the full budget request for the Board of Veterans Appeals, which is a $46 million increase.

The bill will enhance transparency and accountability at the VA through further oversight and an increase for the VA Office of Inspector General's independent audits and investigations.

The legislation also contains $260 million for the modernization of the VA electronic health record and includes restricting all of the funding until the VA meets milestones and certifies interoperability to meet statutory requirements.

Major construction, we continue to focus on major construction oversight. The bill includes language that will hold back 100 percent of the funding for the largest construction projects until VA contracts for outside Federal management, and we maintain strict restrictions on transfers, use of bid savings, and scope changes.

The bill provides $528 million for major construction projects in Reno, Nevada; Long Beach, California; as well as cemeteries in Florida, New York, and Colorado.

We include bill language regarding improved standards for the suicide hotline and certification of mental health therapists to expand access for veterans who need their care. I don't need to explain to anybody in this body this great need here to help with the mental health needs of so many of our veterans.

□ 2220

VA performance awards. The bill prohibits all performance awards for VA senior executives. This was in response to multiple Member requests to restrict bonuses of various types at the VA. I understand this is controversial. But given the horrendous mismanagement that we have seen at many of the VA facilities across the country, we were compelled to send a strong message about accountability. The prohibition we included has passed as a floor amendment several years in a row, so that is why it is included in the base bill this year.

I will tell you that we have, obviously, many great and wonderful employees at the VA who are doing their best every day to provide for our veterans, whether it is through benefits or through the health system or on their educational needs, so I wanted to make sure that we make that point. But there is a need for some accountability, and that is why we had to insert this particular provision.

We have received some unfounded criticism from the administration for the actions that we have taken. The administration may not be happy with any change to its budget proposal. But this bill provides very generous funding that adheres to the law and our responsibility to practice fiscal responsibility.

Overall, with this bill and the funds that were provided in advance last year, for fiscal year 2017, the VA will have available 98 percent of what it asked for—98 percent of what they asked for is provided. I would wager that there won't be another Department in that enviable position. This shows the level of commitment we have to our veterans and their families. I think that should be noted. So despite any criticism, we should all be proud of this bill and what we have done in it.

Let me tell you, I can say with absolute certainty, the VA's problems stem from poor management and not too little money. We continue to push for better management, and the Secretary has replaced most of the senior managers at headquarters and in the field.

So many VA employees, as I mentioned earlier, are deeply committed—overwhelmingly, they are committed—to the veteran. They are talented, and they work very hard. I have met these folks, and I appreciate them very much. I visit with them in eastern Pennsylvania on a regular basis and in south central Pennsylvania.

But the ''corrosive culture'' that has been cited at the VA remains the root of VA's problem.

I want to briefly discuss the Choice Act or, as we call it, the VACAA, a little bit. I, and probably all of you, fully support the Choice Act, and want veterans to have access to quality health care at a convenient location for them. Veterans want to be served. They want to be taken care of in the communities where they live. It is better for the veteran. It is better for the family. And we want to make sure our veterans have access to some of the finest health care institutions in the world that may not be part of the VA system. We need to do that.

The Choice Act was so popular that it brought a lot of demand to the VA, and the VA has been spending both Choice Act funds and discretionary funds to meet the increased demand.

The Choice Act expires at the end of fiscal year 2017, and its funding is being depleted sooner than that. Some of the Choice programs are already out of money, and others will be out of money halfway through the year.

For example, the Choice Act hires of medical professionals to cut the backlog of appointments runs out of funds to pay those people halfway through the year. We—and when I say we, that is discretionary appropriations—are picking up a $600 million tab to pay them through the end of fiscal year 2017. It is the right thing to do, but it is not something that we had planned for.

There will be unprecedented and massive demands on the discretionary side to continue programs started with a $15 billion surge of emergency funding a few years ago through the VACAA. That is a huge issue for fiscal year 2018. Right now, it is incumbent on Congress to reform VA health care with a responsible plan that meets the needs of veterans in a sustainable manner, and I hope that we can take that matter very seriously. It will be a huge issue next year, and it is an issue already this year.

With respect to the related agencies, we fund the American Battle Monuments Commission, the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Arlington National Cemetery, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans at the requested funding levels, which total $241 million.

In closing, this is a very solid, bipartisan bill that is focused on the needs of servicemembers, veterans, and, most especially, all their families. We are $1.8 billion over the fiscal year 2016 level. That is more than a 2 percent increase. We have provided for our military and veterans to the very best level we can in a manner that is fiscally responsible and consistent with the budget agreement we enacted into law last year.

Did we fund every last dime requested? No. But not every idea has merit, and not every project is mission critical. We did not fund some projects, we cut some requested increases, and we rescinded funds. These were fair decisions and part of our responsibility, as appropriators.

We will do a lot of good with this bill. It is fair. It is balanced. It is generous.

And on behalf of our servicemembers, military families, and veterans, I urge support for this legislation. Let's take care of those who have sacrificed for our country.

Again, I would like to thank everybody for their help and support along the way with this bill, both all of the Members and staff.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 2017 (H.R. 4974)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE I - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE					
Military Construction, Army	663,245	503,459	503,459	-159,786	---
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps	1,669,239	1,027,763	1,021,580	-647,659	-6,183
Military Construction, Air Force	1,389,185	1,481,058	1,398,758	+9,573	-82,300
Military Construction, Defense-Wide	2,242,867	2,056,091	2,024,643	-218,224	-31,448
Total, Active components	5,964,536	5,068,371	4,948,440	-1,016,096	-119,931
Military Construction, Army National Guard	197,237	232,930	232,930	+35,693	---
Military Construction, Air National Guard	138,738	143,957	143,957	+5,219	---
Military Construction, Army Reserve	113,595	68,230	68,230	-45,365	---
Military Construction, Navy Reserve	36,078	38,597	38,597	+2,519	---
Military Construction, Air Force Reserve	65,021	188,950	188,950	+123,929	---
Total, Reserve components	550,669	672,664	672,664	+121,995	---
Total, Military Construction	6,515,205	5,741,035	5,621,104	-894,101	-119,931
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program	135,000	177,932	177,932	+42,932	---
Family Housing Construction, Army	108,695	200,735	200,735	+92,040	---
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Army	375,611	325,995	325,995	-49,616	---
Family Housing Construction, Navy and Marine Corps	16,541	94,011	94,011	+77,470	---
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps	353,036	300,915	300,915	-52,121	---
Family Housing Construction, Air Force	160,498	61,352	61,352	-99,146	---
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Air Force	331,232	274,429	274,429	-56,803	---
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide	58,668	59,157	59,157	+489	---
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund	---	3,258	3,258	+3,258	---
Total, Family Housing	1,404,281	1,319,852	1,319,852	-84,429	---
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense-Wide	---	---	---	---	---
Department of Defense Base Closure Account	266,334	205,237	230,237	-36,097	+25,000
ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS					
Military Construction - fiscal year 2014	---	---	---	---	---
Military Construction - fiscal year 2015	---	---	---	---	---
Military Construction, Army (Sec. 125)	-86,420	---	-25,000	+61,420	-25,000
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec. 126)	---	---	-51,848	-51,848	-51,848
Defense Access Roads (Sec. 132)	30,000	---	---	-30,000	---
Military Construction, Air Force	---	---	---	---	---
Military Construction, Defense-Wide (Sec. 127)	-134,000	---	-37,377	+96,623	-37,377
Military Construction, Army (Sec. 128)	34,500	---	40,500	+6,000	+40,500
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec. 129)	34,500	---	293,600	+259,100	+293,600
Military Construction, Army National Guard (Sec. 130)	51,300	---	67,500	+16,200	+67,500
Military Construction, Army Reserve (Sec. 131)	34,200	---	86,500	+52,300	+86,500
NATO Security Investment Program (Sec. 135)	---	---	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000
Military Construction, Air Force (rescission)	-46,400	---	---	+46,400	---
42 USC 3374 (Sec. 133)	-105,000	---	-25,000	+80,000	-25,000
Military Construction, Air Force (Sec. 132)	21,000	---	26,000	+5,000	+26,000
Military Construction, Air National Guard	6,100	---	---	-6,100	---

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 2017 (H.R. 4974)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Military Construction, Air Force Reserve	10,400	---	---	-10,400	---
Total, Administrative Provisions	-149,820	---	344,875	+494,695	+344,875
Appropriations	(222,000)	---	(514,100)	(+292,100)	(+514,100)
Rescissions	(-371,820)	---	(-169,225)	(+202,595)	(-169,225)
Total, title I, Department of Defense	8,171,000	7,444,056	7,694,000	-477,000	+249,944
Appropriations	(8,542,820)	(7,444,056)	(7,863,225)	(-679,595)	(+419,169)
Rescissions	(-371,820)	---	(-169,225)	(+202,595)	(-169,225)
TITLE II - DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS					
Veterans Benefits Administration					
Compensation and pensions:					
Advance from prior year	---	(86,083,128)	(86,083,128)	(+86,083,128)	---
Current year request	76,865,545	---	---	-76,865,545	---
Subtotal, current year	76,865,545	86,083,128	86,083,128	+9,217,583	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2018	86,083,128	90,119,449	90,119,449	+4,036,321	---
Readjustment benefits:					
Advance from prior year	---	(16,340,828)	(16,340,828)	(+16,340,828)	---
Current year request	14,313,357	---	---	-14,313,357	---
Subtotal	14,313,357	16,340,828	16,340,828	+2,027,471	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2018	16,340,828	13,708,648	13,708,648	-2,632,180	---
Veterans insurance and indemnities:					
Advance from prior year	---	(91,920)	(91,920)	(+91,920)	---
Current year request	77,160	16,605	16,605	-60,555	---
Subtotal	77,160	108,525	108,525	+31,365	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2018	91,920	107,899	107,899	+15,979	---
Veterans housing benefit program fund:					
(indefinite)	---	---	---	---	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(500)	(500)	(500)	---	---
Administrative expenses	164,558	198,856	167,612	+3,054	-31,244
Vocational rehabilitation loans program account	31	36	36	+5	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(2,952)	(2,517)	(2,517)	(-435)	---
Administrative expenses	367	389	389	+22	---
Native American veteran housing loan program account	1,134	1,163	1,163	+29	---
Total, Veterans Benefits Administration	193,938,028	104,153,045	104,121,801	-89,816,227	-31,244
Appropriations	(91,422,152)	(217,049)	(185,805)	(-91,236,347)	(-31,244)
Advance appropriations, FY 2018	(102,515,876)	(103,935,996)	(103,935,996)	(+1,420,120)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	---	(102,515,876)	(102,515,876)	(+102,515,876)	---
Veterans Health Administration					
Medical services:					
Advance from prior year	(47,603,202)	(51,673,000)	(51,673,000)	(+4,069,798)	---
Current year request	2,369,158	1,078,993	850,000	-1,519,158	-228,993
Subtotal	49,972,360	52,751,993	52,523,000	+2,550,640	-228,993
Advance appropriation, FY 2018	51,673,000	44,886,554	44,886,554	-6,786,446	---

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 2017 (H.R. 4974)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Medical community care:					
Advance appropriation, FY 2018	---	9,409,118	9,409,118	+9,409,118	---
Transfer from medical care accounts	---	(7,246,181)	(7,246,181)	(+7,246,181)	---
Medical support and compliance:					
Advance from prior year	(6,144,000)	(6,524,000)	(6,524,000)	(+380,000)	---
Current year request	---	---	---	---	---
Subtotal	6,144,000	6,524,000	6,524,000	+380,000	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2018	6,524,000	6,654,480	6,654,480	+130,480	---
Medical facilities:					
Advance from prior year	(4,915,000)	(5,074,000)	(5,074,000)	(+159,000)	---
Current year request	105,132	649,000	---	-105,132	-649,000
Subtotal	5,020,132	5,723,000	5,074,000	+53,868	-649,000
Advance appropriation, FY 2018	5,074,000	5,434,880	5,434,880	+360,880	---
Medical and prosthetic research	630,735	663,366	663,366	+32,631	---
Medical care cost recovery collections:					
Offsetting collections	-2,445,000	-2,637,000	-2,637,000	-192,000	---
Appropriations (indefinite)	2,445,000	2,637,000	2,637,000	+192,000	---
Subtotal	---	---	---	---	---
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (transfers out)	(-286,000)	(-274,731)	(-274,731)	(+11,269)	---
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (by transfer)	(286,000)	(274,731)	(274,731)	(-11,269)	---
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (Transfer out)	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	---	---
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (by transfer)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	---	---
Total, Veterans Health Administration	66,376,025	68,776,391	67,898,398	+1,522,373	-877,993
Appropriations	(3,105,025)	(2,391,359)	(1,513,366)	(-1,591,659)	(-877,993)
(By transfer)	(301,000)	(7,535,912)	(7,535,912)	(+7,234,912)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2018	(63,271,000)	(66,385,032)	(66,385,032)	(+3,114,032)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(58,662,202)	(63,271,000)	(63,271,000)	(+4,608,798)	---
National Cemetery Administration					
National Cemetery Administration	271,220	286,193	271,220	---	-14,973
Departmental Administration					
General administration	336,659	417,959	336,659	---	-81,300
Board of Veterans Appeals	109,884	156,096	156,096	+46,212	---
General operating expenses, VBA	2,707,734	2,826,160	2,826,160	+118,426	---
Information technology systems	4,133,363	4,278,259	4,220,869	+87,506	-57,390
Office of Inspector General	136,766	160,106	160,106	+23,340	---
Construction, major projects	1,243,800	528,110	528,110	-715,690	---
Construction, minor projects	406,200	372,069	372,069	-34,131	---
Grants for construction of State extended care facilities	120,000	80,000	80,000	-40,000	---
Grants for the construction of veterans cemeteries	46,000	45,000	45,000	-1,000	---
Total, Departmental Administration	9,240,406	8,863,759	8,725,069	-515,337	-138,690
Administrative Provisions					
Section 226 (FY16)					
Medical services	1,400,000	---	---	-1,400,000	---
(Rescission)	-1,400,000	---	---	+1,400,000	---
Medical support and compliance	100,000	---	---	-100,000	---
(Rescission)	-100,000	---	---	+100,000	---

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 2017 (H.R. 4974)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Medical facilities	250,000	---	---	-250,000	---
(Rescission)	-250,000	---	---	+250,000	---
JIF rescission (Sec. 232)	-30,000	---	-30,000	---	-30,000
Payraise absorption rescission (Sec. 233)	---	---	-337,382	-337,382	-337,382
Payraise absorption reduction (Sec. 234)	---	---	-46,618	-46,618	-46,618
Total. Administrative Provisions	-30,000	---	-414,000	-384,000	-414,000
Total, title II	269,795,679	182,079,388	180,602,488	-89,193,191	-1,476,900
Appropriations	(105,788,803)	(11,758,360)	(10,648,842)	(-95,139,961)	(-1,109,518)
Rescissions	(-1,780,000)	---	(-367,382)	(+1,412,618)	(-367,382)
(By transfer)	(301,000)	(7,535,912)	(7,535,912)	(+7,234,912)	---
Advance Appropriations, FY 2018:					
Mandatory	(102,515,876)	(103,935,996)	(103,935,996)	(+1,420,120)	---
Discretionary	(63,271,000)	(66,385,032)	(66,385,032)	(+3,114,032)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations:					
Mandatory	---	(102,515,876)	(102,515,876)	(+102,515,876)	---
Discretionary	(58,662,202)	(63,271,000)	(63,271,000)	(+4,608,798)	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3,452)	(3,017)	(3,017)	(-435)	---
Discretionary	(76,023,741)	(78,126,787)	(76,649,887)	(+626,146)	(-1,476,900)
Advances from prior year less FY 2018 advances	(-4,608,798)	(-3,114,032)	(-3,114,032)	(+1,494,766)	---
Net discretionary	(71,414,943)	(75,012,755)	(73,535,855)	(+2,120,912)	(-1,476,900)
Mandatory	(193,771,938)	(103,952,601)	(103,952,601)	(-89,819,337)	---
Advances from prior year less FY 2018 advances	(-102,515,876)	(-1,420,120)	(-1,420,120)	(+101,095,756)	---
Net mandatory	(91,256,062)	(102,532,481)	(102,532,481)	(+11,276,419)	---
Total mandatory and discretionary	162,671,005	177,545,236	176,068,336	+13,397,331	-1,476,900
TITLE III - RELATED AGENCIES					
American Battle Monuments Commission					
Salaries and expenses	105,100	75,100	75,100	-30,000	---
Foreign currency fluctuations account	2,000	---	---	-2,000	---
Total, American Battle Monuments Commission	107,100	75,100	75,100	-32,000	---
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims					
Salaries and expenses	32,141	30,945	30,945	-1,196	---
Department of Defense - Civil					
Cemeterial Expenses, Army					
Salaries and expenses	79,516	70,800	70,800	-8,716	---
Armed Forces Retirement Home - Trust Fund					
Operation and maintenance	43,300	63,300	41,300	-2,000	-22,000
Capital program	1,000	1,000	1,000	---	---
Payment from General Fund	20,000	---	22,000	+2,000	+22,000
Total, Armed Forces Retirement Home	64,300	64,300	64,300	---	---
Total, title III	283,057	241,145	241,145	-41,912	---

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 2017 (H.R. 4974)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE IV - OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS					
Overseas Contingency Operations					
Navy	---	38,409	38,409	+38,409	---
Air Force	---	11,440	11,440	+11,440	---
Subtotal	---	49,849	49,849	+49,849	---
European Reassurance Initiative					
Army	---	18,900	18,900	+18,900	---
Navy	---	21,400	21,400	+21,400	---
Air Force	---	68,300	68,300	+68,300	---
Defense-Wide	---	5,000	5,000	+5,000	---
Subtotal	---	113,600	113,600	+113,600	---
Counter Terrorism Support					
Air Force	---	9,000	8,551	+8,551	-449
Total, title IV	---	172,449	172,000	+172,000	-449
Grand total	278,249,736	189,937,038	188,709,633	-89,540,103	-1,227,405
Appropriations	(114,614,680)	(19,443,561)	(18,753,212)	(-95,861,468)	(-690,349)
Rescissions	(-2,151,820)	---	(-536,607)	(+1,615,213)	(-536,607)
Advance appropriations, FY 2018	(165,786,876)	(170,321,028)	(170,321,028)	(+4,534,152)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(58,662,202)	(165,786,876)	(165,786,876)	(+107,124,674)	---
(By transfer)	(301,000)	(7,535,912)	(7,535,912)	(+7,234,912)	---
(Transfer out)	(-301,000)	(-289,731)	(-289,731)	(+11,269)	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3,452)	(3,017)	(3,017)	(-435)	---

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to begin by thanking Mrs. LOWEY and Mr. ROGERS, who serve as the distinguished ranking member and chairman of the full committee, and, of course, Chairman DENT, my colleague, on the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. I couldn't have a better, more collaborative partner in support of our military and our veterans, and I really appreciate the collegiality.

And certainly I want to thank our staff. From the minority staff, I would like to thank Matt Washington, as well as Mike Reed and Mike Calcagni from my personal office. From the majority committee staff, I would like to thank Maureen Holohan, Sue Quantius, Sarah Young, Tracey Russell, and Sean Snyder from Chairman DENT's office.

As you all know, this bill has a strong history.

Before I begin, I really also want to share the comments and the accolades and salutations for our colleague from California, SAM FARR, who is retiring from the committee; and this, of course, will be his last MILCON/VA bill. He has been a longstanding member of this committee, very insightful, compassionate, and pragmatic. We are certainly going to miss Sam with his valuable, valuable contributions.

I would like to point out that this bill has a strong history of finding common ground and bipartisan support across the aisle to provide resources for our men and women in uniform who have chosen to serve and to protect our great Nation's way of life and our individual freedoms.

With this bill, we fund military construction projects in the Department of Veterans Affairs to the benefit of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, both past and present.

For those who have given so much of themselves, we owe a great deal. So let me start our consideration of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill by recognizing those in our military who cannot be with us here tonight as they serve across the globe. Thank you for your service.

The account taking care of the construction of military facilities is provided $7.7 billion, an increase of $250 million above the fiscal year 2017 budget request. Overall, the Department of Veterans Affairs is funded at $73.5 billion, which is $2.5 billion above the FY16-enacted level, and $1.4 billion below the FY17 request.

I am pleased with several aspects of the bill. As we saw throughout the markup process, the bill provides robust funding for our military construction and provides adequate funding for both active and reserve military forces.

I was pleased that the bill provides $25 million above the FY17 budget request to help speed up the cleanup of former Department of Defense sites.

For too long, we have been waiting for an end to the tunnel for the electronic health records integration between the Department of Defense and the VA. To strengthen oversight on the issue, I am pleased to see the bill maintains tough, but fair, reporting requirements for the electronic health records endeavor. To better serve those veterans shortchanged for too long, the bill continues to prioritize the elimination of the VA's claims backlog and includes healthy funding for the Board of Veterans' Appeals, though I am concerned with the proposed reforms to the BVA.

□ 2230

Nonetheless, I believe these are positive steps that are necessary to ensure that the VA continues to improve its service for our veterans.

Mr. Chair, while the MILCON-VA bill has many positive attributes, one item I am not particularly pleased about is the inclusion of bill language that limits performance awards. As I have stated for the past 3 years, this language will not provide a short-term solution and, in fact, may have long-term consequences, compounding the very problem that it attempts to address. All this language will do is make the VA a less attractive option than other agencies when it comes to recruiting and retaining quality executive leaders, resulting in the Department's not having the very talent that it needs to solve the problems it faces today. This is an issue that must be addressed as we move through this process.

Turning away from the bill for a second, our committee was off to a very fast start. However, because of the budget resolution impasse, we have had to wait a month for the MILCON-VA bill to be able to come to the floor. As a result, we will not be able to get back to regular order this year, and with roughly 45 days left in the legislative calendar, it will be nearly impossible to fulfill our obligation to the American people and pass all 12 bills through the House. We are in this situation because an upset, small minority of the House wants to revisit issues that were already decided and acted upon by a bipartisan majority of both Houses and signed into law by the President.

That being said, I applaud Chairman ROGERS for honoring the allocation the bipartisan budget agreement set for fiscal year 2017. The BBA will have to suffice until we can get past these unrealistic beliefs that we can cut our way to prosperity.

As we are all aware of our level of discretionary resources this year, it will be tough, especially tough for this subcommittee, because our bill advances funds to the medical services account. While we start out in the hole every year, the VA's annual second bite of the apple makes balancing the needs of nonmedical VA services with other Federal agencies that much more difficult. As I have said numerous times, we must be more strategic about how we handle our Federal budget.

Mr. Chair, would I have done some things differently? Of course, but here we are.

Nevertheless, with reservations, I urge my colleagues to defeat any poison pill amendments and move to support this bill to fund the construction of military facilities and strive to improve the quality of life and the care afforded to current servicemembers, to our veterans, and to our military families.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS), the distinguished chairman of the full committee.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. I thank the chairman for yielding the time.

Mr. Chair, I rise tonight to support this first bill of the 2017 appropriations cycle. Shepherding through appropriations legislation is the constitutional duty of the Congress, and so here we go.

The passage of these bills in a timely fashion is in the best interest of the Nation. It will help provide for our national security, the stability of our economy, and give certainty to all Americans who count on the Federal Government's programs and services. I believe this bill, in particular, starts off this process on the right foot.

H.R. 4974 is a balanced, bipartisan piece of legislation that provides critical funding for our troops, their families, and our veterans. We have made a commitment to our servicemen and -women that we will care for them during and after their service, and this bill helps fulfill that promise.

In total, as you have heard, the bill provides $81.6 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Defense infrastructure and quality-of-life programs as well as for the Department of Veterans Affairs. This represents a $1.8 billion increase above current levels. This increase is directed to Veterans Affairs programs, which receive a 3 percent bump above fiscal year 2016 levels.

Of the total $73.5 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, $52.5 billion will support the VA's medical services, which is funding that will treat some 7 million patients this year. In particular, I want to highlight funding increases that will address mental health care, suicide prevention, hepatitis C treatment, and homelessness. The increase will also help the VA tackle some of its greatest challenges—reducing the disability claims backlog and continuing the modernization of the electronic health records system to ensure no gaps in care occur as our current troops become veterans.

This bill also provides funding to support our Active Duty military and their families whether they are at home or abroad. Funding for hospitals, educational facilities, and housing tells our servicemembers that they have the full backing of their government as they lay their lives on the lines for this

Nation. Beyond these quality-of-life programs, military construction funding is prioritized to respond to threats around the globe, including Russia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

While overall funding is increased in the bill, the committee took many steps to ensure that every cent of taxpayers' money is spent responsibly and with good purpose. We made difficult decisions to find savings wherever possible. The bill also includes good-government provisions that increase oversight for the VA, helping to stop waste and improve service for our veterans.

Mr. Chair, this is a very good bill, one I am proud to support. I want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, Congressman DENT, for his leadership. I want to thank the ranking member, Mr. BISHOP, and the rest of the subcommittee for their teamwork and their effort in bringing the bill to the floor today.

Lastly, I join the chair and ranking member in thanking the staff for the many hours they put in helping to usher this bill to the floor today. Caring for our troops and veterans is a great responsibility, and the subcommittee and our staff have not taken that responsibility lightly.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. It is balanced; it is responsible; and it needs to be passed.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mrs. LOWEY. I thank the distinguished ranking member of this committee, Mr. SANFORD BISHOP, for that very generous introduction.

I would like to thank my good friend on the other side of the aisle, Chairman DENT from the neighboring State of Pennsylvania, for his good work and the partnership that he has made to make this an excellent bill. I also want to thank Chairman ROGERS for his leadership and, of course, for the hard work of the committee members on both sides of the aisle who are so critical to this process.

Mr. Chair, the fiscal year 2017 Military Construction-Veterans Affairs bill would allocate $81.6 billion in discretionary funding—$1.2 billion less than the fiscal year 2017 budget request and a $1.8 billion increase above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level—and allow for several critical improvements, including: the further reduction of the veterans' claims backlog, which has dropped from 600,000 to 74,000 in the past 2 years; $7.8 billion to support outreach, prevention, and awareness to reduce unacceptably high levels of suicide and other mental health challenges among our veterans; a greater focus on the gender-specific needs of female veterans, including prosthetics designed for women and enhancing access to both medical health services; a $32 million increase for medical and prosthetic research; $1.3 billion for family housing construction; and strong oversight of the electronic health records system, requiring that the VA meet key benchmarks throughout the fiscal year and improve interoperability with the Department of Defense.

□ 2240

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I want to again congratulate Chairman DENT and Ranking Member BISHOP for you are truly outstanding in making this a good, bipartisan bill.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill. Over the past few years, we have seen mismanagement, cost overruns, and project delays at our Veterans Affairs facilities and hospitals across this country.

While the biggest construction failures are the ones that have gathered the headlines, such as the billion-dollar cost overrun in Colorado, the VA has a knack for dropping the ball on simple and smaller projects as well. One of these is an $8 million ongoing solar panel project at the VA Medical Center in Little Rock. It has been 3 years since the planned activation of the system. However, engineering changes and the relocation of the panels to make way for a new parking garage, which was even known in advance of the award, has cost valuable taxpayer resources.

Last year, I sent a letter, along with Senator JOHN BOOZMAN, to the VA Office of the Inspector General calling for an investigation into this solar panel project, which resulted in the VA Inspector General conducting a national review of all the solar panel projects across the VA.

While this review is being finalized, many questions remain unanswered about these solar projects. Currently, the VA lists 34 key renewable energy projects dating back to 2010 that remain nonoperational.

Today's bill contains an important provision in the report language that will protect the taxpayer dollars by prohibiting funding for solar projects at the VA due to these concerns about the mismanagement in these projects.

I am pleased that the committee has included this essential language as we await the results from the VA Inspector General's investigation into these costly projects.

This small piece is an important part of the overall reevaluation of the VA's construction oversight and implementation that Congress has developed and that taxpayers deserve.

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

With reservations, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I think it is a bipartisan bill. It is a good bill. I think it is a good product for what we had to work with.

I would like to urge my colleagues to support it, to fund the construction of newer facilities, to strive to improve the quality of life and the care that we give to our military, to our veterans, and to our military families.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would like to conclude by saying that I want to thank everyone again for their full cooperation on both sides of the aisle: Mr. BISHOP, Mrs. LOWEY, and the entire team on their side, and Mr. ROGERS on our side, and all the members of the subcommittee on both sides.

This bill does provide for our veterans, our military, our servicemembers, and their families. It is a very good bill. I urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

During consideration of the bill for amendment, each amendment shall be debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent. No pro forma amendment shall be in order except that the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate. The chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD designated for that purpose. Amendments so printed shall be considered read.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4974

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, $503,459,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That, of this amount, not to exceed $98,159,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, $1,021,580,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That, of this amount, not to exceed $88,230,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Air Force as currently authorized by law, $1,398,758,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $143,582,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Air Force determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: *Provided further*, That none of the funds made available under this heading shall be for construction of the Joint Intelligence Analysis Complex Consolidation, Phase 3, at Royal Air Force Croughton, United Kingdom, unless authorized in an Act authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military construction.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, $2,024,643,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $201,422,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MRS. WAGNER

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 4, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $801,000) (increased by $801,000)''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentlewoman from Missouri and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman DENT for letting me offer this very important amendment. I thank my colleagues from the entire Missouri delegation—Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GRAVES, Ms. Hartzler, Mr. LONG, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, and Mr. SMITH—for their steadfast support and bipartisan cosponsorship.

This amendment is critical to meeting the current and future mission requirements of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and its replacement West headquarters in north St. Louis.

This amendment allocates $801,000 for land and transfer acquisition activities associated with acquiring the land for the headquarters, conforming with the Senate's MILCON–VA bill.

After an exhaustive process, the NGA identified the north St. Louis city site as a superior location because of its ability to provide the most technological, academic, and professional environment for the agency to develop the capabilities and solutions necessary to solve the country's most vital intelligence and national security challenges.

Mr. Chair, the City of St. Louis is providing the land for this project at no cost to the Federal Government. Its selection ensures that NGA West's 70-year history in St. Louis continues and that the 2,000 NGA West employees who live in Missouri remain in close proximity to the headquarters.

The St. Louis region has a proven track record in national defense and technology capabilities that make it an ideal choice for NGA's new home.

I ask that my colleagues vote in favor of this amendment to ensure NGA West can continue to perform its critical role in our national security within a community that understands its needs and strongly supports its mission.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri's First District (Mr. CLAY).

□ 2250

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Chair, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for yielding. I rise today in strong support of this amendment as offered by Mrs. WAGNER.

The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's decision to locate their new western headquarters in north St. Louis was the right choice to support their vital national security mission, the best decision for the over 3,000 exceptional Federal employees who work there, and it will transform a great Federal failure into a transformational Federal success.

The misguided and shortsighted attempt to withhold funding from this project not only is petty and parochial, it is completely irresponsible because delaying this project would put our national security at risk. NGA Director Robert Cardillo said it best in his message to his employees on April 1.

Director Cardillo said: ''The future of our agency and our profession rests on our present talent and that of the next generations we can recruit onto our team. We face tough competition, and offering an environment that appeals to these future generations is critical to our success. Studies point to a desire by today's millennials to be in urban environments, and this trend is expected to continue.''

He went on to say: ''Our partnership with industry and academia will continue to grow and expand as we transform some of our work to a more open, connected and transparent environment. Our ability to engage with local universities and innovative, technology-based companies is enhanced by remaining in St. Louis city. I am confident that we will build a facility in St. Louis that will be a remarkable home for us to master our craft and engage with our partners in a flexible, technologically advanced environment that is enticing to current and future generations.''

I urge my colleagues to support the gentlewoman's amendment.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. Does any Member claim time in opposition?

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, in closing, I just want to say that NGA chose St. Louis because the location best supports the agency's mission.

The superiority of the urban setting is ideal for recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce. When focusing on the most technological, academic, and professional environment to ensure our Nation's security, the NGA chose St. Louis. The decision has been made, and my amendment supports the NGA's decision.

Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman and my colleague from the First District of Missouri.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $232,930,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $8,729,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Army National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $143,957,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $10,462,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Air National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $68,230,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $7,500,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Army Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $38,597,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $3,783,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $188,950,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $4,500,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Air Force Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $177,932,000, to remain available until expended.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $200,735,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $325,995,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $94,011,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $300,915,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $61,352,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $274,429,000.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, $59,157,000.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

For the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund, $3,258,000, to remain available until expended, for family housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing and supporting facilities.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, established by section 2906(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), $230,237,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed $25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds made available in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 103. Funds made available in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than $25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed $500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed $1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: *Provided*, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: *Provided further*, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for

which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense shall inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed $100,000.

SEC. 114. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 115. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

SEC. 116. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds made available to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were made available, if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 117. Subject to 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in ''Family Housing'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in ''Military Construction'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: *Provided*, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code, pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 118. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the Department of Defense Base Closure Account to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program incurred under 42 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)(A). Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

SEC. 119. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: *Provided*, That not more than $35,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: *Provided further*, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

SEC. 120. Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 121. During the 5-year period after appropriations available in this Act to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation ''Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense'', to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 122. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), none of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Secretary of the Army to relocate a unit in the Army that—

(1) performs a testing mission or function that is not performed by any other unit in the Army and is specifically stipulated in title 10, United States Code; and

(2) is located at a military installation at which the total number of civilian employees of the Department of the Army and Army contractor personnel employed exceeds 10 percent of the total number of members of the regular and reserve components of the Army assigned to the installation.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply if the Secretary of the Army certifies to the congressional defense committees that in proposing the relocation of the unit of the Army, the Secretary complied with Army Regulation 5–10 relating to the policy, procedures, and responsibilities for Army stationing actions.

SEC. 123. Amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in an account funded under the headings in this title may be transferred among projects and activities within the account in accordance with the reprogramming guidelines for military construction and family housing construction contained in Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation 7000.14–R, Volume 3, Chapter 7, of March 2011, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 124. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated or expended for planning and design and construction of projects at Arlington National Cemetery.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 125. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Army'', from prior appropriation Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $25,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 126. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps'', from prior appropriation Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $51,848,000 are hereby rescinded.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 127. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Defense-Wide'', from prior appropriation Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $37,377,000 are hereby rescinded.

SEC. 128. For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Army'', $40,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2017 submitted by the Secretary of Defense to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds: *Provided further*, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 129. For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps'', $293,600,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Navy's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2017 submitted by the Secretary of Defense to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds: *Provided further*, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 130. For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Army National Guard'', $67,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2017 submitted by the Secretary of Defense to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds: *Provided further*, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both

Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 131. For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Army Reserve'', $86,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2017 submitted by the Secretary of Defense to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds: *Provided further*, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 132. For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Air Force'', $26,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Air Force's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2017 submitted by the Secretary of Defense to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds: *Provided further*, That not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 133. Of the unobligated balances made available in prior appropriation Acts for the fund established in section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $25,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

SEC. 134. For the purposes of this Act, the term ''congressional defense committees'' means the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 135. Of the unobligated balances available for ''NATO Security Investment Program'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $30,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

SEC. 136. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out the closure or realignment of the United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by section 107 and chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; and burial benefits, the Reinstated Entitlement Program for Survivors, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 541 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by sections 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, and chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, $90,119,449,000, to remain available until expended and to become available on October 1, 2017: *Provided*, That not to exceed $17,224,000 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2018 under this heading shall be reimbursed to ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'', and ''Information Technology Systems'' for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code, the funding source for which is specifically provided as the ''Compensation and Pensions'' appropriation: *Provided further*, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to ''Medical Care Collections Fund'' to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 21, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, $13,708,648,000, to remain available until expended and to become available on October 1, 2017: *Provided*, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under subsection (a) of section 3104 of title 38, United States Code, other than under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of that subsection, shall be charged to this account.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by chapters 19 and 21, title 38, United States Code, $124,504,000, to remain available until expended, of which $107,899,000 shall become available on October 1, 2017.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by subchapters I through III of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That, during fiscal year 2017, within the resources available, not to exceed $500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, $167,612,000.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans, $36,000, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed $2,517,000.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, $389,000, which may be paid to the appropriation for ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration''.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, $1,163,000.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment, bioengineering services, food services, and salaries and expenses of healthcare employees hired under title 38, United States Code, aid to State homes as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, assistance and support services for caregivers as authorized by section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, loan repayments authorized by section 604 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163; 124 Stat. 1174; 38 U.S.C. 7681 note), and hospital care and medical services authorized by section 1787 of title 38, United States Code; $850,000,000, which shall be in addition to funds previously appropriated under this heading that became available on October 1, 2016; and, in addition, $44,886,554,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2017, and shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2017, under this heading, $1,400,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for the provision of medical treatment for veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lower income, or have special needs: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

□ 2300

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GOSAR

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 29, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $4,000,000)''.

Page 33, line 12, after the first dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,500,000)''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Arizona and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment which seeks to redirect scarce resources to important

mental health programs for our Nation's veterans.

At a hearing just last week entitled ''Combating the Crisis: Evaluating Efforts to Prevent Veteran Suicide,'' Chairman JEFF MILLER stated that the latest data available from the VA reports that 22 veterans per day are committing suicide.

Last fiscal year, the VA General Administration account got a $15.68 million increase for more bureaucracy within the VA. This year, the Obama administration has requested another $81 million increase for that account.

The committee wisely chose not to provide funding for the majority of the request in that bill, stating:

''It has doubts about the wisdom of establishing a large new office with regional staffing at this late date in the administration.''

My amendment simply transfers a portion of the fiscal year 2016 increase for government bureaucrats to important mental health services for our Nation's heroes returning from combat.

Traumatic brain injuries and posttraumatic stress disorder have been consistently contributing to behavioral issues amongst our veterans; and all too often, these ongoing mental health issues result in suicide. With an average of 22 veteran suicides per day, more resources are desperately needed.

While redirecting funds to where they are needed most, the Congressional Budget Office also states that this amendment would save money and reduce outlays. My amendment also helps bring the level of funding in the bill for mental health closer to the administration's requests for the fiscal year.

The VA doesn't need more money to hire more paper pushers. Instead, let's appropriate that money to where and whom the VA was created for: to serve and help improve the mental health of our Nation's heroes.

I applaud the committee for including my language that ensures the Veterans Crisis Line will provide an immediate response from a trained professional and for the resources already directed in this bill towards mental health.

I ask my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment and help ensure our veterans that are in need get the care they so earned.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, but I don't oppose the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I am certainly sympathetic to the intent of the gentleman's amendment to increase funding for suicide prevention outreach programs. Obviously, we all know this is a very serious problem. These programs already received an 11 percent increase in our bill, for a total of $164 million. So I do not oppose the amendment, and I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM OF NEW MEXICO

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 29, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $10,000,000) (increased by $10,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentlewoman from New Mexico and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Chair, we have a provider shortage in this country, and it is only projected to get worse. The Association of American Medical Colleges estimates that the United States could face a shortage of 90,000 physicians by 2025.

One of the most common complaints I hear from veterans in Albuquerque is that even with the flexibility they have to see outside providers through the Veterans Choice Act, there just aren't enough providers—especially behavioral health providers—to treat everyone who needs care.

If trends continue, we will be without the workforce needed to treat an aging population that will increasingly live with chronic health care issues. The provider shortages hit rural, poor, and underserved communities and states like New Mexico particularly hard.

According to the New Mexico Health Care Workforce Committee, every single healthcare profession in New Mexico has a shortage of providers. In fact, Los Alamos, New Mexico, is the only county in the entire State without a shortage of primary health care providers. And primary care physicians are four more times available in urban areas than in rural New Mexico.

The result: longer waits, longer travel, patients not receiving the care they need, and worse health outcomes.

We have to educate and recruit more providers, but that will not be enough to keep up with growing demand. We have to do a better job at leveraging the resources we have to put VA providers in the best situation we can to provide quality and timely care to their patients.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, the largest healthcare system in the United States, should be leading in using telehealth technology to provide care and promote patient wellness.

The VHA's Home Telehealth Program is growing and provided 2.1 million consultations to more than 677,000 veterans in 2015. But we can do much more.

In a report last year, the VA Inspector General's office found that the VA missed opportunities to serve additional patients with the Home Telehealth Program, which could have ''potentially delayed the need for long-term institutional care for approximately 59,000 additional veterans.''

The VA Inspector General also found that ''telehealth patients showed the best outcomes in terms of patient admissions and bed days of care.''

It also saves money. Using telehealth instead of placing a veterans in a contract nursing home facility saves approximately $92,000 a year, and the veteran gets to stay independently at home.

The VA should follow models such as the University of New Mexico's Project ECHO and think creatively about sharing expertise among specialists, primary care physicians, and medical centers to ensure patients in underserved communities get the care they need.

□ 2310

Mr. Chairman, the VA should increase its focus on programs that are proven to improve clinical outcomes and expand access to care while reducing treatment costs.

I urge Members to support my amendment to prioritize funding for the VA Home Telehealth Program.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition, but I do not oppose the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I share the gentlewoman's concern about the importance of telehealth as a way to provide healthcare services remotely to patients. It is especially useful in the treatment of mental health and behavioral health issues.

The VA is a leader in telehealth activities, providing 2.1 million consultations to more than 677,000 veterans in 2015, many of whom were in rural areas. VA funding for telehealth will total almost $1.2 billion in fiscal year 2017.

I do not oppose the amendment. I urge its adoption.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DENT. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I come from a very rural district as well, and I understand the importance of access to quality care.

I agree that we need to train and recruit more health professionals. In the meantime, I agree that telemedicine is a great tool to help deal with the shortage of health professionals.

So I support this amendment, and I urge all of the Members to do so. It will do a great deal toward helping to bring access to care to our veterans in rural communities.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM).

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

MEDICAL COMMUNITY CARE

For necessary expenses for furnishing health care to individuals pursuant to chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, at non-Department facilities, $7,246,181,000, plus reimbursements, to be derived from amounts appropriated in title II of division J of Public Law 114–113 under the headings ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', or ''Medical Facilities'' which became available on October 1, 2016; and, in addition, $9,409,118,000 shall become available on October 1, 2017, and shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2017, under this heading, $1,500,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2019.

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; and administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), $6,654,480,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2017, and shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2017, under this heading, $100,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2019.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, domiciliary facilities, and other necessary facilities of the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction, and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering, and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering, improving, or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry services, $5,434,880,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2017, and shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2017, under this heading, $250,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2019.

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, $663,366,000, plus reimbursements, shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemeterial expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemeterial operations; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and repair, alteration or improvement of facilities under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration, $271,220,000, of which not to exceed $26,600,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms, or allowances therefor; not to exceed $25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, $336,659,000, of which not to exceed $10,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That funds provided under this heading may be transferred to ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration''.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KEATING

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 33, line 12, after the first dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $1,500,000) (increased by $1,500,000)''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Massachusetts and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman DENT and Ranking Member BISHOP for their work on this appropriations bill, and for their cooperation with this amendment.

I rise today to offer an amendment that will support a requirement of VA prescribers to complement a continuing medication course in pain management.

Nationally, about 30 percent of Americans have some form of chronic pain. However, the percentage of veterans who report chronic pain is significantly higher. Over 50 percent of elderly veterans report chronic pain as do almost 60 percent of veterans returning from the conflict in the Middle East.

In fact, chronic pain is the most common medical problem experienced by returning combat veterans in the last decade.

Of course, pain is not a stand-alone problem. Pain is something we see as a consequence of physical injury, and sometimes that physical injury leads to co-occurring mental health ailments.

We are increasingly more aware of the mental health consequences stemming from time in combat. Veterans with brain trauma are more likely to report physical pain and, in turn, are more likely to receive prescriptions for opioids.

Recent VA data shows us that roughly 523,000 veterans are receiving prescriptions for opioids, and the number of veterans with opioid use disorders has grown 55 percent over the past 5 years. Veterans are twice as likely to overdose on prescription opioids as the general population.

We are very fortunate to live in a time where quality care can be offered to our military personnel, and it is unparalleled. Now we need to do our part to help these heroes manage their chronic pain in the safest manner possible.

Last month I introduced the Safe Prescribing for Veterans Act, which will help those who provide healthcare services to veterans learn the latest pain management techniques, understand safe prescribing practices, and spot the signs of potential substance use disorders. This act works by directing healthcare providers from the VA to take continuing education courses specific to pain management, opioids, and substance abuse.

VA healthcare providers already need continuing education to maintain their State-issued professional licenses, and my bill makes sure they spend some of the already-required time learning about safe opioid prescribing practices.

The bill does not add to the total number of credits that prescribers already have to take, it just insists that they spend their time on this important issue.

Only 14 States require their physicians to take pain management education credits. My constituents are fortunate in Massachusetts because we are 1 of the 14 States that ask its doctors to complete pain management training.

However, even our neighboring States do not have the mandatory pain management requirements. Veterans in my district, especially those in the South Coast, often find it easy to receive their health care at VA hospitals in Rhode Island. As of now, there is no guarantee that the doctors they see in Providence have taken the same pain management education courses.

I rise before you today in an effort to give our veterans that guarantee.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this amendment to ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, but I am not opposed to the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman is addressing a problem that many Members have contacted us about, the long delays that community practitioners are experiencing in being paid by VA for their care for veterans.

Our report requires VA to provide comprehensive information detailing

the reimbursements owed to providers in each State and the amounts of invoices that are more than 6 months overdue.

GAO just released a report with alarming data about VA's significant problems in managing prompt payment to outside providers. I am sure that we will revisit this issue in conference, and we will welcome any suggestions the gentleman has for us.

I have no objection to this amendment and urge its adoption.

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

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. CLAWSON OF FLORIDA

Mr. CLAWSON of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 33, line 12, after the first dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000)''.

Page 35, line 1, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $5,000,000)''.

Page 35, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $5,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Florida and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. CLAWSON of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman DENT; full respect for what he does and, more importantly, how he does it. Agree or disagree, the gentleman does it the right way, and I appreciate his leadership style.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to offer my amendment to the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

May 30 is Memorial Day, a day we set aside to recognize the tremendous debt of gratitude for those who have selflessly sacrificed for our liberties.

From constituent discussions in my district, I am acutely aware that customer service for our vets often falls short of the mark. Far too many of our vets, I am told, simply do not receive timely responses to their healthcare questions. We can do better.

My amendment, which I am proposing, is directed at improving customer service problems by improving the information technology at VA facilities.

My amendment would enhance veterans' customer service experiences by funding improved, service-based, commoditized technology and telecommunications.

□ 2320

For this, my amendment would add $5 million to the information technology systems account, specifically the funding directed at the development, modernization, and enhancement of the current IT infrastructure.

In the proposed budget, this account is currently funded at $4.23 billion, $50 million short of the President's budget request of $4.28 billion in this area. My amendment would offset this $5 million by reducing the general administration account, currently funded at $336 million. The redirected $5 million would be used in acquiring new technologies to provide more acceptable customer satisfaction and delivery measures.

I am the proud son of a veteran who served overseas. In my role in Congress, it is a great honor and privilege to serve over 100,000 veterans who call my district home. We all know vets—friends, neighbors, family, and, in my case, a nephew just returning from Afghanistan and a father who served a long time ago. Let's do right by these brave folks by improving their customer service and response.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, but I do not oppose the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I certainly know the gentleman from Florida is very committed to improving veterans' experiences when they deal with the VA, and modernizing infrastructure is certainly an important part of that. I have no objection to the amendment, and I certainly appreciate the gentleman's deep commitment given his own father's experience in our Armed Forces. We thank him for that service.

Again, I have no objection to this amendment, and I urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CLAWSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KEATING

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 33, line 12, after the first dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $1,000,000) (increased by $1,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Massachusetts and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Chairman, again I would like to thank Chairman DENT and Ranking Member BISHOP for their work on this bill and their cooperation on this amendment.

I rise today to offer a straightforward amendment that will improve our understanding of the causes of delays within the Veterans Choice Program. The Veterans Choice Program was implemented to address delays in patient care at the Veterans Administration. However, as of April of this year, data from the VA showed that the number of veterans waiting more than 30 days for an appointment was actually higher than when the Veterans Choice Program was initiated.

The well-intentioned and necessary program was initiated and acknowledged. The fact is the Veterans Choice Program was cobbled together very quickly given the time constraints. This led to excessive privatization and contracting through third parties, which has contributed to frequent delays, and we are seeing these delays even today.

In my district alone, I have spoken with numerous veterans who live a great distance from VA medical facilities, such as the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. My constituents rely heavily on accessibility to non-VA doctors the Veterans Choice is intended to provide.

Further, an oft cited problem with Veterans Choice is the lack of clear communications regarding the eligibility requirements of the program to both veterans and non-VA providers. Understanding the obstacles around efficient scheduling of appointments of veterans and swift reimbursement for providers would serve as a crucial first step in resolving some of the issues that the Choice Program faces. Without this understanding, the program itself really isn't beneficial.

That is why I am offering this amendment, to advocate for redirected funding toward finding a solution to the delays and the communication errors plaguing implementation of Veterans Choice.

I have no doubt whatsoever that every Member of Congress here agrees that our veterans deserve the very best possible care in a timely manner. Ultimately, this amendment is meant to assist the VA in identifying why these delays are occurring and to help recommend solutions.

I want to thank the chairman again.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I agree with the gentleman from Massachusetts that we need to take a serious look at the Choice Program. VA's most recent data show, compared to the last year, there are now 70,000 more appointments that kept a veteran waiting at least a month to get care. Furthermore, a March General Accounting Office report showed that the Choice Program had little impact on getting veterans to see a primary care physician in 30 days.

Thousands of veterans referred to the program are returning to the VA for care, sometimes because the program could not find a doctor for them and because the private doctor they were told to see was too far away according

to VA data. In fact, VA's own inspector general found that in Colorado, veterans were waiting longer than 30 days for care because staff at the local VA hospital was not adding them to the list of patients eligible for the Choice Program, let alone slow reimbursements.

Two years ago, Congress was hearing about the VA concealing wait times at VA hospitals and clinics and about the veterans who were suffering as a result. We were forced to act quickly in this crisis. I believe that Congress will have to revamp the Choice Program to make sure that it is doing what Congress intended for it to do. We are going to need an honest assessment from the VA.

Mr. Chairman, I urge all Members to support this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, but I do not oppose the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. I will just say very briefly, Mr. Chairman, I know the gentleman is very interested, as we all are, in finding ways to ensure that the VA healthcare providers receive up-to-date and comprehensive training in the proper use of pain management medications. So many of our veterans struggle with chronic pain, and we have seen the tragic consequences of overprescription of opioids as a method of treatment.

I appreciate the gentleman's interest and his advocacy. I have no objections to gentleman's amendment, and I urge adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KEATING. Again, Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman and ranking member.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING).

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

For necessary operating expenses of the Board of Veterans Appeals, $156,096,000, of which not to exceed $15,610,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, not otherwise provided for, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and reimbursement of the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, $2,826,160,000: *Provided*, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: *Provided further*, That, of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $141,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. RUIZ

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 34, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000) (increased by $5,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 4974, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for 2017.

My amendment will help reduce the VA's claims backlog and help improve the lives of our veterans. California is home to 2 million veterans, and I am proud to represent more than 54,000 veterans in my district alone.

There are 40,000 veterans expected to return to California every year for the next several years, including the fastest growing group of returning veterans—women.

We must ensure that our veterans have timely access to the critical benefits they have earned and deserve. Unconscionably, thousands of veterans who have sacrificed for our country are struggling to access benefits they have already earned.

Due to the lingering claims backlog at the Veterans Affairs Administration, veterans across our Nation are waiting for pensions, prescription drugs, and even lifesaving medical care.

Veterans are still waiting for the VA to process 351,676 benefit claims, and 74,589 of those veterans have been waiting longer than 125 days for a decision.

□ 2330

We owe it to our courageous men and women to clear this harmful backlog as soon as possible. Reduced to a claim number in a seemingly endless line, our veterans experience pain, frustration, hopelessness, and despair. Although the backlog has shrunk since Congress last passed a similar appropriations bill, we must not lose sight of the importance of getting veterans their hard-earned benefits as soon as possible.

That is why I am offering this amendment to advocate for an additional $5 million to fund the digital scanning of health and benefits files to reduce the backlog by redirecting funding within the General Operating Expenses account of the Veterans Benefits Administration. This amendment simply directs funds towards the digital scanning of health and benefits files that will reduce the claims backlog without any new spending.

As an emergency medicine physician, I understand the importance of efficiency in health care, and I know how dangerous continued bureaucratic rejection can be for a person with PTSD or depression. By committing resources to digitizing health and benefits files, we will further increase VA's capacity to tackle the claims backlog, ultimately ensuring veterans receive the benefits they have earned in a timely manner. We must serve our veterans by making certain that Congress focuses on eliminating the claims backlog for good.

I encourage my colleagues to stand up for veterans and support my pragmatic amendment to reduce the veterans' claims processing time.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, although I do not oppose the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, on the VA claims backlog, we have fully funded the President's request.

I have no objection to the amendment, and I am prepared to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for information technology systems and telecommunications support, including developmental information systems and operational information systems; for pay and associated costs; and for the capital asset acquisition of information technology systems, including management and related contractual costs of said acquisitions, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, $4,220,869,000, plus reimbursements: *Provided*, That $1,247,548,000 shall be for pay and associated costs, of which not to exceed $36,300,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided further*, That $2,502,052,000 shall be for operations and maintenance, of which not to exceed $177,900,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided further*, That $471,269,000 shall be for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, and shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may not be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a certification of the amounts, in parts or in full, to be obligated and expended for each development project: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for salaries and expenses, operations and maintenance, and information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among the three subaccounts

after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for the ''Information Technology Systems'' account for development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among projects or to newly defined projects: *Provided further*, That no project may be increased or decreased by more than $1,000,000 of cost prior to submitting a request to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress to make the transfer and an approval is issued, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: *Provided further*, That funds under this heading may be used by the Interagency Program Office through the Department of Veterans Affairs to define data standards, code sets, and value sets used to enable interoperability: *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading for operations and maintenance and information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, not more than a total amount of $168,113,000 shall be available for VistA Evolution or any successor: *Provided further*, That none of the funds made available by the preceding proviso may be obligated or expended for such program or any successor until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs: (1) certifies to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress that the Department of Veterans Affairs has deployed modernized electronic health record software supporting clinicians of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense no later than December 31, 2016, while ensuring continued support and compatibility with the interoperability platform and full standards-based interoperability, as stipulated by the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66); (2) submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the VistA Evolution Business Case and supporting documents regarding continuation of VistA Evolution or alternatives to VistA Evolution, including an analysis of necessary or desired capabilities, technical and security requirements, the plan for modernizing the platform framework, and all associated costs; and (3) submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, and such Committees approve, the following: a report that describes a strategic plan for VistA Evolution, or any successor, and the associated implementation plan including metrics and timelines; a master schedule and lifecycle cost estimate for VistA Evolution or any successor; and an implementation plan for the transition from the Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) to the new project delivery framework (the Veteran-focused Integration Process (VIP)) that includes the methodology by which projects will be tracked, progress measured, and deliverables evaluated: *Provided further*, That the funds made available under this heading for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, shall be for the projects, and in the amounts, specified under this heading in the report accompanying this Act.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), $160,106,000, of which not to exceed $14,800,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, including planning, architectural and engineering services, construction management services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, $528,110,000, of which $494,310,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2021, and of which $33,800,000 shall remain available until expended: *Provided*, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, including portfolio development and management activities, and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and salaries and associated costs of the resident engineers who oversee those capital investments funded through this account and contracting officers who manage specific major construction projects, and funds provided for the purchase of land, security, and maintenance for the National Cemetery Administration through the land acquisition line item, none of the funds made available under this heading shall be used for any project which has not been approved by the Congress in the budgetary process: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for fiscal year 2017, for each approved project shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2017; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2018: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a written report on any approved major construction project for which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above: *Provided further*, That, of the amount made available under this heading, $222,620,000 for Veterans Health Administration major construction projects shall not be available until the Department of Veterans Affairs—

(1) enters into an agreement with an appropriate non-Department of Veterans Affairs Federal entity to serve as the design and/or construction agent for any Veterans Health Administration major construction project with a Total Estimated Cost of $100,000,000 or above by providing full project management services, including management of the project design, acquisition, construction, and contract changes, consistent with section 502 of Public Law 114–58; and

(2) certifies in writing that such an agreement is executed and intended to minimize or prevent subsequent major construction project cost overruns and provides a copy of the agreement entered into and any required supplementary information to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, $372,069,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, along with unobligated balances of previous ''Construction, Minor Projects'' appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section: *Provided*, That funds made available under this heading shall be for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131 through 8137 of title 38, United States Code, $80,000,000, to remain available until expended.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

For grants to assist States and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, $45,000,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2017 for ''Compensation and Pensions'', ''Readjustment Benefits'', and ''Veterans Insurance and Indemnities'' may be transferred as necessary to any other of the mentioned appropriations: *Provided*, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 202. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2017, in this or any other Act, under the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Community Care'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Medical Facilities'' accounts may be transferred among the accounts: *Provided*, That any transfers among the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Community Care'', and ''Medical Support and Compliance'' accounts of 1 percent or less of the total amount appropriated to the account in this or any other Act may take place subject to notification from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the amount and purpose of the transfer: *Provided further*, That any transfers among the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Community Care'', and ''Medical Support and Compliance'' accounts in excess

of 1 percent, or exceeding the cumulative 1 percent for the fiscal year, may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That any transfers to or from the ''Medical Facilities'' account may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 203. Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901 through 5902 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 204. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for ''Construction, Major Projects'', and ''Construction, Minor Projects'') shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

SEC. 205. No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled to such hospitalization or examination under the laws providing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901 through 7904 of title 5, United States Code, or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of the cost of such hospitalization or examination is made to the ''Medical Services'' account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title for ''Compensation and Pensions'', ''Readjustment Benefits'', and ''Veterans Insurance and Indemnities'' shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2016.

SEC. 207. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable only from ''Compensation and Pensions''.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 208. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2017, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund under section 1920 of title 38, United States Code, the Veterans' Special Life Insurance Fund under section 1923 of title 38, United States Code, and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund under section 1955 of title 38, United States Code, reimburse the ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' accounts for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: *Provided*, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in such an insurance program during fiscal year 2017 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: *Provided further*, That if the cost of administration of such an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2017 which is properly allocable to the provision of each such insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in that insurance program.

SEC. 209. Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services, may be obligated during the fiscal year in which the proceeds are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 210. Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication under section 319 of title 38, United States Code, for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not to exceed $47,668,000 for the Office of Resolution Management and $3,532,000 for the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication: *Provided*, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: *Provided further*, That amounts received shall be credited to the ''General Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' accounts for use by the office that provided the service.

SEC. 211. No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: *Provided*, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: *Provided further*, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 212. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'' accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations, and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects''.

SEC. 213. Amounts made available under ''Medical Services'' are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and

(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 214. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the ''Medical Services'' and ''Medical Community Care'' accounts to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 215. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with Indian tribes and tribal organizations which are party to the Alaska Native Health Compact with the Indian Health Service, and Indian tribes and tribal organizations serving rural Alaska which have entered into contracts with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act, to provide healthcare, including behavioral health and dental care. The Secretary shall require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary. The term ''rural Alaska'' shall mean those lands sited within the external boundaries of the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(1)–(4) and (7)–(12) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), and those lands within the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(5) and 7(a)(6) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), which are not within the boundaries of the municipality of Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Kenai Peninsula Borough or the Matanuska Susitna Borough.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 216. Such sums as may be deposited to the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'' accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 217. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to implement any policy prohibiting the Directors of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks from conducting outreach or marketing to enroll new veterans within their respective Networks.

SEC. 218. Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report on the financial status of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the preceding quarter: *Provided*, That, at a minimum, the report shall include the direction contained in the explanatory statement described in section 4 in the matter preceding division A of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, P. L. 114–113 in title II of Division J of the consolidated Act in the paragraph entitled ''Quarterly Report'', under the heading ''General Administration''.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 219. Amounts made available under the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Community Care'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', ''Medical Facilities'', ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'', ''General Administration'', and ''National Cemetery Administration'' accounts for fiscal year 2017 may be transferred to or from the ''Information Technology Systems'' account: *Provided*, That such transfers may not result in a more than 10 percent aggregate increase in the total amount made available by this Act for the ''Information Technology Systems'' account: *Provided further*, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 220. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2017 for ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', ''Medical Facilities'', ''Construction, Minor Projects'', and ''Information Technology Systems'', up to $274,731,000, plus reimbursements, may be

transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): *Provided*, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress: *Provided further*, That section 223 of title II of Division J of Public Law 114–113 is repealed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 221. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs which become available on October 1, 2017, for ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Community Care'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Medical Facilities'', up to $280,802,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): *Provided*, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 222. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, for healthcare provided at facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500) shall also be available: (1) for transfer to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571); and (2) for operations of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500).

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 223. Of the amounts available in this title for ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Community Care'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Medical Facilities'', a minimum of $15,000,000 shall be transferred to the DOD–VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until expended, for any purpose authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 224. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings in a major construction project that total at least $5,000,000, or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project, whichever is less: *Provided*, That such notification shall occur within 14 days of a contract identifying the programmed amount: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 14 days prior to the obligation of such bid savings and shall describe the anticipated use of such savings.

SEC. 225. None of the funds made available for ''Construction, Major Projects'' may be used for a project in excess of the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress as part of the request for appropriations unless the Secretary of Veterans Affairs receives approval from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 226. Of the funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2017 for ''Medical Support and Compliance'', a maximum of $40,000,000 may be obligated from the ''Medical Support and Compliance'' account for the VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability projects: *Provided*, That funds in addition to these amounts may be obligated for the VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability projects upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 227. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 15 days prior to organizational changes which result in the transfer of 25 or more full-time equivalents from one organizational unit of the Department of Veterans Affairs to another.

SEC. 228. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed $2,000,000.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 229. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, upon determination that such action is necessary to address needs of the Veterans Health Administration, may transfer to the ''Medical Services'' account any discretionary appropriations made available for fiscal year 2017 in this title (except appropriations made to the ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' account) or any discretionary unobligated balances within the Department of Veterans Affairs, including those appropriated for fiscal year 2017, that were provided in advance by appropriations Acts: *Provided*, That transfers shall be made only with the approval of the Office of Management and Budget: *Provided further*, That the transfer authority provided in this section is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: *Provided further*, That no amounts may be transferred from amounts that were designated by Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That such authority to transfer may not be used unless for higher priority items, based on emergent healthcare requirements, than those for which originally appropriated and in no case where the item for which funds are requested has been denied by Congress: *Provided further*, That, upon determination that all or part of the funds transferred from an appropriation are not necessary, such amounts may be transferred back to that appropriation and shall be available for the same purposes as originally appropriated: *Provided further*, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and receive approval of that request.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 230. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2017, under the ''Board of Veterans Appeals'' and the ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' accounts may be transferred between such accounts: *Provided*, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and receive approval from such Committees for such request.

SEC. 231. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not reprogram funds among major construction projects or programs if such instance of reprogramming will exceed $5,000,000, unless such reprogramming is approved by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 232. Of the unobligated balances available within the ''DOD–VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund'', $30,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 233. Of the discretionary funds made available in Public Law 114–113 for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2017, $266,760,000 are rescinded from ''Medical Services'', $52,031,000 are rescinded from ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and $18,591,000 are rescinded from ''Medical Facilities''.

SEC. 234. The amounts otherwise made available by this Act for the following accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs are hereby reduced by the following amounts:

(1) ''Veterans Health Administration—Medical and Prosthetic Research'', $4,004,000.

(2) ''National Cemetery Administration'', $1,464,000.

(3) ''Departmental Administration—General Administration'', $1,250,000.

(4) ''Departmental Administration—Board of Veterans Appeals'', $1,214,000.

(5) ''Departmental Administration—General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'', $24,849,000.

(6) ''Departmental Administration—Information Technology Systems'', $12,535,000.

(7) ''Departmental Administration—Office of Inspector General'', $1,302,000.

SEC. 235. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the toll-free suicide hotline under section 1720F(h) of title 38, United States Code—

(1) provides to individuals who contact the hotline immediate assistance from a trained professional; and

(2) adheres to all requirements of the American Association of Suicidology.

SEC. 236. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall treat a marriage and family therapist described in subsection (b) as qualified to serve as a marriage and family therapist in the Department of Veterans Affairs, regardless of any requirements established by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

(b) A marriage and family therapist described in this subsection is a therapist who meets each of the following criteria:

(1) Has a masters or higher degree in marriage and family therapy, or a related field, from a regionally accredited program.

(2) Is licensed as a marriage and family therapist in a State (as defined in section

101(20) of title 38, United States Code) and possesses the highest level of licensure offered from the State.

(3) Has passed the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Board Examination in Marital and Family Therapy.

SEC. 237. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a performance award under section 5384 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 238. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to end, suspend, or relocate hospital-based services with respect to a health care facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs that is—

(1) the subject of an environmental impact statement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(2) designated as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service; and

(3) located in a highly rural area.

TITLE III

RELATED AGENCIES

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one-for-one replacement basis only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed $7,500 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, $75,100,000, to remain available until expended.

FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251 through 7298 of title 38, United States Code, $30,945,000: *Provided*, That $2,500,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described, and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth, under this heading in Public Law 102–229.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL

CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, including the purchase or lease of passenger motor vehicles for replacement on a one-for-one basis only, and not to exceed $1,000 for official reception and representation expenses, $70,800,000, of which not to exceed $15,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2019. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the ''Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies'' account.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

TRUST FUND

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, $64,300,000, of which $1,000,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi: *Provided*, That of the amounts made available under this heading from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, $22,000,000 shall be paid from the general fund of the Treasury to the Trust Fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. Funds appropriated in this Act under the heading ''Department of Defense—Civil, Cemeterial Expenses, Army'', may be provided to Arlington County, Virginia, for the relocation of the federally owned water main at Arlington National Cemetery, making additional land available for ground burials.

SEC. 302. Amounts deposited into the special account established under 10 U.S.C. 4727 are appropriated and shall be available until expended to support activities at the Army National Military Cemeteries.

TITLE IV

OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Army'', $18,900,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, for projects outside of the United States: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

□ 2340

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. MULVANEY of South Carolina. Mr. Chair, parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIR. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. MULVANEY of South Carolina. Where are we?

The CHAIR. The bill has been read through page 65, line 1.

Mr. MULVANEY of South Carolina. Mr. Chair, that was the quickest 25 pages I have heard in a long time.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MULVANEY

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk. Actually, I have four consecutive amendments at the desk.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I reserve a point of order on the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIR. A point of order is reserved.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIR. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. MULVANEY. Is it possible, with the approval of the gentleman who is controlling the time for the majority, to combine amendment Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 into a single amendment?

The CHAIR. The amendments could be considered together by unanimous consent.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I respectfully object. We haven't seen any of the amendments yet; so I think we should just proceed in the regular order.

The CHAIR. Objection is heard.

The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike page 65, lines 1–11.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chair, parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIR. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Do we have the text of the amendment?

The CHAIR. Copies will be made available. They are being distributed now.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I reserve a point of order until we get the amendments.

The CHAIR. A point of order is reserved.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. MULVANEY of South Carolina. Mr. Chair, I have four consecutive amendments that are all very closely intertwined. There are actually four simply for procedural matters that I offered originally as one. I am going to argue all of them together essentially at one time because this is what they do: they get rid of the OCO budget. That is it. They get rid of the OCO budget. Title IV of this bill is the OCO budget, and my amendments seek to simply be done with this thing.

Mr. Chair, it has turned into a slush fund. That is not me saying that, by the way. That is folks from both Republican and Democrat administrations, together, saying that is what this is. It may have started with the best of intentions. It may have started out of absolute necessity. It may have been a good thing when it started, but we all know what it is now, which is a place to hide money and a way to get around spending caps. That is it.

Mr. Chair, I hope I get a chance over the course of the next couple of appropriations bills to talk more about the OCO and more about specific examples of how it is abused. We actually now admit that we abuse it. We admit that there is money in the OCO budget that has nothing to do with overseas contingency operations. We admit that there is money in the OCO budget right now that has nothing to do with waging war overseas.

We admit that we abuse this particular account. Why? Because we can and because it is very difficult to vote against the troops. That is not the right way to appropriate money.

JOHN MCCAIN, a man with whom I usually disagree on many, many things, has actually said this is not the way to appropriate money for

MILCON–VA, for the DOD. For anything that has to do with defense, this is not the proper way to do it. Mr. Chair, in fact, as we look at the individual sections, it gets even worse.

In this first section that deals with the Army, we are appropriating $18.9 million for no one knows what. There is no indication whatsoever as to what we are spending this money on. The language is very straightforward. It reads that we are going to go and appropriate $18.9 million to remain available until September 30, 2021, for projects outside the United States. Period. That is it. $19 million with absolutely no indication of where it is being spent. In fact, we don't even have to spend it next year. We can spend it anytime we want to over the next 5 years. As long as it is outside of the United States, we are approving its expenditure.

By the way, you can go down to the next line where the same is true of the $59.8 million for the Marine Corps construction, of the $88.2 million for the Air Force construction, and then of the $5 million for military construction defensewide.

There is no indication of how this money is being spent. There is no limitation on when it is spent other than we have to spend it in 5 years, and there is no indication on where it is going to be spent other than it has to be outside of the United States. That is it. It is hard for me to imagine an example of a less accountable, a less transparent way for us to spend money in this country.

I have been spending some time on this for the last couple of years. I have always thought that this was a bad way for us to operate. I know that, every single year, we gather a couple more in adherence to that belief. We get a couple more votes every single year—folks who are finally waking up to the fact that, listen, we need to spend money on the military, that we need to spend money on the defense of this Nation. It is one of the few things we are affirmatively charged with in our Constitution, but this is not the way to do it.

We can't lie to people back home about how much money we are spending. We can't lie to people back home about what the deficit is going to be. We certainly can't lie to them about where they are spending their money. Let's stop doing it this way and start doing it properly.

Mr. Chair, for that reason, I encourage the support for this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment for a few reasons.

The OCO money in this bill totals $172 million. He is correct, it is about $18.9 million for the Army.

Much of this money is going to support counterterrorism efforts and the European Reassurance Initiative. We are going to be using this money for, obviously, infrastructure and for the prepositioning of assets. Given the real threats we are facing in Europe from Vladimir Putin, we need to make sure that we are reassuring our allies in Eastern Europe.

This subcommittee recently visited Eastern Europe—Poland, Lithuania, Germany—where we heard from General Breedlove, the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, talk about the need for this initiative. I think it is imperative that we reassure our allies in Eastern Europe, who are staring down—who are facing a very real threat—from Vladimir Putin's aggression in Ukraine, and we are deeply concerned that his expansionist ambitions may move into the Baltic.

This is extremely important, this OCO funding. I urge my colleagues to reject any reduction in the OCO funding for the men and women of the American Army.

I withdraw my reservation of a point of order, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 2350

The CHAIR. The reservation of the point of order is withdrawn.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from South Carolina has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, it is hard to argue with that. This money is going for counterterrorism. It is going for the preposition of assets. It is going for reassuring our allies. It is going to combat Mr. Putin or constrain him in Ukraine. I am a little hard pressed as to how $178-odd-million is going to do all of those things.

Face it, we have to take the gentleman's word for it. And as much as I trust the gentleman, why isn't that in the document? Why doesn't it say $18.9 million for this counterterrorism program or that repositioning of assets? It doesn't say that. We have no idea what this money is for. None whatsoever.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania, and I appreciate the opportunity to have my say.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that where this money is going to be expended is in the report, and it is also online in many of the budget documents. So the information is available where the money is actually going to be spent. I just wanted to share that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps'', $59,809,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, for projects outside of the United States: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MULVANEY

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk. I indicated before, I have had my say. We are going to go through the motions on the next three.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike page 65, lines 12–20.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from South Carolina and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chairman, I have had my say. I move approval.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, this money, I guess, would strike the OCO funding for the Navy. The money for the Navy is going to be used in Djibouti, I believe, for a runway and also for a medical and dental facility for our troops.

So I, again, respectfully oppose the gentleman's amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chair, I want to associate myself with the gentleman from Pennsylvania in opposition to the amendment.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Air Force'' $88,291,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, for

projects outside of the United States: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MULVANEY

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike page 65, line 21 through page 66, line 3.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from South Carolina and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I move approval.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

Mr. CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, this funding, I believe, for the Air Force, this is going to be directed toward Bulgaria, Spangdahlem, Iceland, Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia.

Again, I oppose the amendment. It is very important to our allies, particularly as it relates to the European Reassurance Initiative.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Defense-Wide'', $5,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, for projects outside of the United States: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MULVANEY

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk, No. 4.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike page 66, line 4–11.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from South Carolina and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I move approval.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I oppose the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

TITLE V

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 501. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 502. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program, project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 503. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of ''E-Commerce'' technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 504. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 505. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 506. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for a project or program named for an individual serving as a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 507. (a) Any agency receiving funds made available in this Act, shall, subject to subsections (b) and (c), post on the public Web site of that agency any report required to be submitted by the Congress in this or any other Act, upon the determination by the head of the agency that it shall serve the national interest.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a report if—

(1) the public posting of the report compromises national security; or

(2) the report contains confidential or proprietary information.

(c) The head of the agency posting such report shall do so only after such report has been made available to the requesting Committee or Committees of Congress for no less than 45 days.

SEC. 508. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) shall limit the use of funds necessary for any Federal, State, tribal, or local law enforcement agency or any other entity carrying out criminal investigations, prosecution, or adjudication activities.

SEC. 509. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by an agency of the executive branch to pay for first-class travel by an employee of the agency in contravention of sections 301–10.122 through 301–10.124 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 510. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to execute a contract for goods or services, including construction services, where the contractor has not complied with Executive Order No. 12989.

SEC. 511. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs to lease or purchase new light duty vehicles for any executive fleet, or for an agency's fleet inventory, except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

SEC. 512. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense in this Act may be used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense.

(b) The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to any modification of facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

(c) An individual described in this subsection is any individual who, as of June 24, 2009, is located at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and who—

(1) is not a citizen of the United States or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is—

(A) in the custody or under the effective control of the Department of Defense; or

(B) otherwise under detention at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

SEC. 513. Unobligated balances of amounts appropriated under title VI of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division G of Public Law 113–235) and title IX of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (division J of Public Law 113–235) shall also be available for necessary expenses to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Zika virus, domestically and internationally: *Provided*, That such amounts are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amounts shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amounts and transmits such designation to the Congress.

SPENDING REDUCTION ACCOUNT

SEC. 514. The amount by which the applicable allocation of new budget authority made by the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under section 302(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 exceeds the amount of proposed new budget authority is $0.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Chairman, I would like to raise some concerns I have about VA's efforts to streamline the catalog of surgical tools that are available to VA Medical Centers.

I share the VA's goals of increasing efficiency and purchasing power. However, I am concerned that there is a reliance on single-source contracts, and here is why: I believe single-award contracts are too limited and will reduce choice for surgeons.

As a surgeon myself, I know practitioners have specific preferences and a comfort for what tools work best in their hands. Surgical residents learn when they have more options, more techniques in front of them and innovations.

Often, when surgeons are restricted, they practice elsewhere. I am concerned that limiting surgeons' options will have an effect on the morale and retention of surgeons in the VA, and I think the last thing the VA needs right now is to lose more providers.

I also know that patients have different needs. Every surgery case is unique due to the individual patient anatomy, comorbidities, et cetera.

So I would just like to be assured that surgeons will have flexibility, which means more choice and better care for veterans and for our patients. Unfortunately, in my efforts to get this assurance, I get conflicting information from various sources within the VA.

Multiyear, single-award contracts are irreparable if we get them wrong. I would like to work with the chairman and the authorizing committee to conduct oversight on this issue to ensure that we do get this right because we can't lose more surgeons and we can't compromise care for our veterans.

□ 0000

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, reclaiming my time, I certainly understand the gentleman's sincere desire to provide better care to our veterans. As it relates to the single-source issue, single-source contracts, obviously he has a great deal of expertise. I would like to work with the gentleman to get more information about the issue and work with him, but also, again, I also commend him to the authorizers, who will have a great deal of say on this matter as well. I pledge to him my commitment to work with him to try to get to a better place on this matter.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. RATCLIFFE

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Texas and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Chairman DENT and Ranking Member BISHOP for their hard work on behalf of servicemembers and veterans all across the country.

The Ratcliffe-MacArthur-Bost amendment that I am offering today with my colleagues, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MACARTHUR) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), will prohibit any funds made available in this act from being used to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional round of base realignment and closure, or BRAC.

My congressional district in northeast Texas is home to the Red River Army Depot, which has maintained a steadfast commitment to supporting America's Armed Forces since 1941. While the depot has endured many challenges over the years, it has remained dedicated to fulfilling its motto: ''We build it as if our lives depend on it. Theirs do.''

Not only is the depot a vital job creator, employing more than 5,000 people in northeast Texas and southern Arkansas, it is a critical component of our national defense. The depot acts as an insurance policy for America's security, one capable of bolstering production in a manner that simply can't be duplicated by civilian industries. So the need for this amendment is clear.

In a fiscal environment where every penny is carefully scrutinized, we have to ensure that taxpayer dollars truly address our national security needs, and another round of BRAC certainly won't help us achieve this important goal. In addition to jeopardizing our defense readiness, BRAC has proven to be incredibly expensive. According to the Government Accountability Office, the last round of BRAC in 2005 cost the American taxpayers a whopping $35.1 billion. At the same time, the expected savings from the last round of BRAC haven't materialized, and those promised savings have since been revised downward by 73 percent.

Mr. Chairman, at a time when the terror threat level hovers at an all-time high, it is especially important that we do everything possible to ensure that our military is prepared for the call of duty. The amendment that I have introduced today does just that. I urge my colleagues to support it on behalf of the safety of our Armed Forces and the American people.

I yield to the chairman.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I just want to say I have no objection to the gentleman's amendment, and I am prepared to accept it.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce Veterans Health Administration directive 2011-004 (or directive of the same substance) with respect to the prohibition on ''VA providers from completing forms seeking recommendations or opinions regarding a Veteran's participation in a State marijuana program''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Oregon and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great concerns we have is how the 2 million young Americans who were sent to Iraq and Afghanistan reintegrate back into society. Many of them return with wounds visible and invisible. We find that more than 20 percent of those 2.8 million American veterans suffer from PTSD and depression. A recent survey revealed that suicide rates among veterans are roughly 50 percent higher than among civilians. Another study found that the death rate for opioid overdoses among VA patients is nearly double the national average.

What I hear from veterans that I talk to is that an overwhelming number of them say that medical marijuana has helped them deal with PTSD, pain, and other conditions, particularly as an alternative to opioids, and I would argue that it is essential that veterans be allowed access to this as a treatment if it is legal in their State.

Twenty-four States, the District of Columbia, and Guam have passed laws that provide for legal access to medical marijuana at the recommendation of a physician to treat such conditions, ranging from seizures to glaucoma, anxiety, chronic pain, traumatic brain injury, and the symptoms associated with chemotherapy. Fourteen of these States specifically allow physicians to recommend medical marijuana for the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, PTSD.

As a result of these medical marijuana laws, more than 2 million patients across the country, including

many of our veterans, now use medical marijuana. Unfortunately, the Department of Veterans Affairs specifically prohibits its medical providers from completing forms brought by their patients seeking recommendations regarding a veteran's participation in a State medical marijuana program. What this means is that those patients who want to pursue medical marijuana have to go ahead and hire a physician out of their own pocket, not dealing with the medical professional of their choice, the medical professional, their VA doctor, who knows them the best. I think that is unfortunate.

I have an amendment cosponsored by Dr. JOE HECK, SAM FARR, DANA ROHRABACHER, DINA TITUS, TOM REED, and others that would prohibit funds from being made available to the VA to implement this prohibition. I think it is the right thing to do for our veterans, to be able to treat them equitably, to enable them to have access to the doctor who knows them the best, giving them better treatment, and saving them money. I would respectfully request that we approve this amendment to eliminate this unjustified prohibition.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I rise up somewhat reluctantly to my friend in opposition.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. DENT. Mr. BLUMENAUER is a very genuine and sincere, very thoughtful Member of this body. I understand that the country is evolving on this issue, as many States, including my own, have moved forward on medical marijuana.

As a Member of this House, I am a bit uncomfortable, however, in trying to dictate policy on marijuana without guidance from the Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, and other medical professionals. That said, I reluctantly rise in opposition.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to close. I am going to close when you have exhausted your speakers.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I support the amendment that is offered by Mr. BLUMENAUER. Last year in Georgia, the general assembly passed and Governor Deal signed legislation that immediately legalized the use of medical marijuana to treat serious medical conditions. Georgia became the 36th State plus Washington, D.C., to legalize marijuana extracts to treat illnesses.

I believe that we should not limit the Veterans Health Administration from providing optimal pain care for our veterans. If medical marijuana is legal in a State, then the VA should be able to discuss that treatment option and allow the veteran to make his or her own choice.

I believe that the VA's published policy guidance related to the use of medical marijuana by our veteran patients, VHA Directive 2010–035, Medical Marijuana, has become outdated. I believe that supporting a veteran's right to use alternative methods to deal with pain is the right thing to do.

Mr. Chairman, I support the amendment, and I urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 0010

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, as I said, I reluctantly oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, there is nobody who I have more respect for than my friend, the chairman of the subcommittee. But I take modest exception.

This amendment does not dictate treatment options. It is not interfering, it is not superimposing anybody's judgment about the merits of marijuana. It simply enables VA doctors and patients to interact with State legal marijuana systems—systems that this Congress has repeatedly supported through amendment votes, just like everybody else.

We should not be limiting the treatment options available to our veterans. I fail to understand what the basis is to force veterans in the State of Pennsylvania who feel that they need to avail themselves of medical marijuana, like any other citizen in Pennsylvania or in Oregon has a right to do, but force them to not use the doctor that knows them best; instead, go to somebody else, hire them out of their own pocket, and be engaging with somebody who doesn't know their full range of activity.

This doesn't engage the Veterans Administration. There is no marijuana on premises. It simply allows the doctor to be able to deal with the veteran, as a patient, to be able to counsel and potentially prescribe them, like any other person in any other State where it is legal.

Bear in mind that these people are suffering from PTSD, chronic pain, depression, conditions that medical marijuana is legally entitled to treat and which veterans, who I have met with literally from coast-to-coast, say has transformed their lives.

What we are doing now, they are dying at a higher rate than the average member of the population. Their suicide rate is high. Their opioid addiction rate is almost twice as high as the average citizen. I think that is unconscionable. We should have this amendment to try and help address it.

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

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FLEMING

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to modify a military installation in the United States, including construction or modification of a facility on a military installation, to provide temporary housing for unaccompanied alien children.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Louisiana and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, my amendment would prohibit funds from being used to modify a military installation for the purpose of housing unaccompanied alien children.

Our military installations are for training and equipping soldiers to fight our Nation's wars. The use of DOD facilities to house unaccompanied alien children undermines the readiness of our Armed Forces, which we know to be in extremis at this point.

This amendment follows on from a provision included in the National Defense Authorization Act, passed out of the House Armed Services Committee, that prohibits unaccompanied alien children from being hosted on military installations. A similar standalone bill has also been introduced by Judge JOHN CARTER of Texas and has 61 cosponsors.

Under recent agreements made by the Department of Health and Human Services, the DOD has provided housing to unaccompanied alien children with certain requirements and preferences being requested by HHS that facilities be able to provide space for security fencing, service trailers, and potential soft-sided outdoor housing.

It is inappropriate for scarce defense dollars, meant to go for the readiness of our soldiers, to be used for nondefense purposes, especially at this time in our Nation's history when our readiness is so low.

Take, for example, the Army Air Defense and Artillery training site at Fort Sill, where unaccompanied minors were housed in 2014. These barracks were used by HHS, and resources had to be expended to ensure HHS contractors and the minors being hosted did not gain access to sensitive areas and live-fire training ranges.

Fort Hood was also on the short list for hosting unaccompanied minors in 2015. Because of this, the Texas National Guard was unable to stand up a training facility because the base was being considered to host these unaccompanied minors.

Our military infrastructure is in serious need of upgrading and construction dollars are scarce. Mr. Chairman, the slightest use of resources to modify an installation to meet nondefense missions jeopardizes the readiness of our Armed Forces.

Following on the prohibition placed in this year's House NDAA, I ask my colleagues to support my amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, there are no projects in the FY 17 request for this purpose in the United States. There is $33 million in funds to support the naval station at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, at the request of SOCOM, Southern Command, to deal with various issues of people, obviously, who were interdicting on the seas or arriving in Cuba.

But the point is, I don't want to preclude the Department of Defense from dealing with an emergency situation, should one arise in the U.S. So that is why I must oppose my friend's amendment.

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), my distinguished colleague and ranking member.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chair, we have an opportunity and an obligation to help migrant children who have come across the border to escape the problems with their homeland. The challenges of poverty and violence continue to grow, and it is a moral obligation and one that I support.

To not allow the use of military installations for temporary housing for migrants only exacerbates the problem. This is temporary. Why would we prohibit the use of bases only until the adjudication of a migrant's case, for example? Is my colleague suggesting that we immediately send migrant children back to the countries they fled without due process? Should we send them back to violence?

That is not what the United States stands for. It is not what the United States should stand for. It is not consistent with our country's Christian values.

I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment, and I agree with the chairman.

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time I have?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Louisiana has 2½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chair, I thank my friends and colleagues for their comments and statements, but I simply have to disagree. Again, this is about military readiness, which we are at a low, low point.

We are getting all sorts of reports. We are having hearings from generals, commanders in the field, and generals at the Pentagon, telling us that they are scratching for every little penny they can find for readiness.

In fact, just the other night on FOX News, they talked about a Marine Corps F–18. They had to go to a museum just to find a part to put on that in order for it to go into service.

Look, if it is important to provide facilities for unaccompanied alien children, then the Appropriations Committee should appropriate those dollars. But they should not take them from the vital military facilities. They shouldn't take scarce dollars away from our readiness. As a result of that, again, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chair, again, I just ask my colleagues to support this. This is common sense. We need to protect our soldiers, sailors, airmen, as well as marines. We need to make sure that they are safe out there, that every dollar is put into readiness to protect them, and it should not be diverted in this way. Again, I urge support of this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana will be postponed.

□ 0020

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. HUFFMAN

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement section 8(d)(2) of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration Directive 3220 of November 22, 2005.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

I am pleased to offer this amendment to the 2017 MILCON-VA spending bill, and to stand today with my colleague, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO), who has offered a standalone bill on this same subject, along with our colleague from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Last year, we all remember the tragic shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and how it reopened a painful but necessary national conversation about symbols like the Confederate battle flag that represent racism, slavery, and division.

Rightfully, leaders in South Carolina and other Southern States, Democrats and Republicans alike, joined together to call on their States to end the display of the Confederate battle flag on government property.

The Confederate battle flag, a symbol of hate and opposition to the United States of America, has no place, no place on government property, especially not at VA cemeteries, a place where families and loved ones go to pay respect to our Nation's veterans.

Over 150 years ago, slavery was abolished. Why in the year 2016 are we still condoning displays of this hateful symbol on our sacred national cemeteries?

Symbols like the Confederate battle flag have meaning. They are not just neutral, historical symbols of pride. They represent slavery, oppression, lynching, and hate.

To continue to allow national policy condoning the display of this symbol on Federal property is wrong, and it is disrespectful to what our country stands for and what our veterans fight for.

Mr. Chairman, it is past time to end the public promotion of this cruel, racist legacy of the Confederacy. So let us move forward in a direction of reconciliation, unity, and justice.

Symbols matter. Even General Robert E. Lee recognized that symbols of the Confederacy are symbols of treason, which is why he asked that they not appear at his funeral.

The United States House of Representatives, in 2016, should be at least as forward-looking as Robert E. Lee was in 1869.

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from California is under recognition.

Mr. HUFFMAN. I reserve a point of order.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized on his pending amendment.

Mr. HUFFMAN. On the point of order?

The CHAIR. On his amendment.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, my point is that the House of Representatives, in 2016, should be at least as forward-looking as General Robert E. Lee was in 1869.

Let us do the right thing tonight in this House, and let's do it together, on a bipartisan basis.

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

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment to the amendment.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

The CHAIR. Will the gentleman send his amendment to the desk?

Mr. MULVANEY. Yes, sir.

Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my amendment.

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

The CHAIR. Does any Member seek time in opposition to the amendment offered by the gentleman from California?

The gentleman from California may proceed on his amendment.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I request an ''aye'' vote, and I respectfully yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FITZPATRICK

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to procure the birth control known as Essure.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Pennsylvania and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by recognizing my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), the chairman of the subcommittee, for his diligence and his hard work in bringing this important bill to the floor and, more importantly, for his work on the bill, and listening to ideas coming from both sides of the aisle, and his fairness in considering all ideas as part of this bill. So I thank the gentleman for that.

□ 0030

I rise this evening in support of an amendment that is common sense. It is a no-brainer. What this amendment would do is say, if a medical device is under review by the FDA over concerns of its harmful impacts on women, the Federal Government shouldn't be spending taxpayer dollars to offer it to our Nation's veterans.

The medical device I am referring to is the permanent sterilization device, Essure. Essure is a permanent sterilization device that was approved by the FDA in 2002. However, since it was first approved, this device has caused irreparable harm to tens of thousands of women and their families.

FDA data shows that Essure has caused the death of at least four women and nearly 300 fetal deaths. Additionally, tens of thousands of women have reported other symptoms which are debilitating.

Over 25,000 women have joined together on Facebook to share their stories of how the Essure device has ruined their lives. They call themselves the Essure Sisters. They came together as a group because nobody believed them—for many, not even their doctors. They were told that this device was safe and there was no way the device caused their pain and other symptoms. But that proved to be wrong. We don't need another study. Their pain is real. Their stories are real. They have been ignored by their doctors, by the device manufacturer, and by the Food and Drug Administration.

I rise today as a voice for these women, to tell this Chamber that their stories are real, that their pain is real, and that their fight is real. Working with them over the last year, we have been able to force the FDA to call for yet another review of this flawed device, and this request was made by Democrats and Republicans in this Chamber.

Yet the product remains available, sometimes aggressively pushed. And, as it relates to this appropriations bill, Essure remains on the list of federally purchased devices. We know that this device has already harmed female veterans.

I want to give a direct quote from an Essure Sister and Operation Enduring Freedom veteran: ''I still live in massive chronic pain, and I'm on pain meds every day of my life. I cannot do the things I used to do with my children and my husband. Each day that I live with this newfound pain and suffering, I grow more and more disgusted at the fact that both he and I traveled to the war multiple times and made it home, only to have a device forced upon us that would ruin our lives and my health.''

Mr. Chairman, this amendment is not about women's reproductive decisions or a debate about contraceptives. It is about protecting our female veterans from being harmed by a device that we know has ruined the lives of thousands across this Nation. All I am saying is we should not allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to purchase and implant this dangerous device in our Nation's veterans.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition of this amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. I do want to commend Mr. FITZPATRICK for his diligence and his attentiveness to his constituency. I know he feels very sincerely about this particular amendment. It is, of course, disturbing to hear adverse consequences of any drug or device, but we rely on the FDA to be the safety arbiter in these cases.

The VA simply follows FDA's approval of drugs and devices. If anyone wants to go to the source on this, then that individual should work through the Agriculture Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the Food and Drug Administration. But I believe it is not the proper role for Congress to act as doctors in this case, substituting what appears to be anecdotal evidence for the considered judgment of teams of independent doctors and physicians. We also shouldn't influence the marketing of birth control drugs and devices by targeting one particular manufacturer.

Again, I do understand my very good friend and colleague's sincere desire based on his conversations with constituents, but at the same time, I do think that we should let the medical experts determine the efficacy or the safety of a particular device in this case. So, again, I have to rise in opposition.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I join my chairman in opposing this amendment. Why has my colleague again started the war on women's rights? Why is the gentleman getting involved in the contraception choices of women veterans?

Under VA Directive 1331, it is the policy of the VA to provide elective sterilization, for example, salpingectomy, tubal occlusion procedures, vasectomy, and surgery to reverse elective sterilization to eligible veterans as part of contraceptive and infertility services.

I don't see my colleague from Pennsylvania calling for a ban of funding vasectomies or even a tubal ligation, getting tubes tied. Both of these are procedures currently allowed. If a woman has decided that she is seeking permanent birth control, why is Congress going to mandate that she undergo a surgical procedure?

It is important to recognize that family planning is the most effective way to prevent abortion and unwanted pregnancies. Study after study show that when women have access to contraceptives, the incidence of abortion decreases. Family planning programs are an extremely effective way to support women in improving their own health and that of their families. Why would anyone insist on government interference in providing health care to women?

This amendment also demonstrates the deeply troubling and partisan approach on issues affecting women and families.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would say, with all due respect, this is about a dangerous medical device, and there are men and women on both sides of the aisle here in the House of Representatives that have called on the FDA to withdraw

the device from the market. There are other options.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the time on the floor tonight.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GRAYSON

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, Grayson No. 1.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies, as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation, that the offeror or any of its principals:

(A) within a three-year period preceding this offer has been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property; or

(B) are presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated above in subsection (A); or

(C) within a three-year period preceding this offer, has been notified of any delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds $3,000 for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

Mr. GRAYSON (during the reading). Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent that the reading be waived.

The CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Florida and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is identical to other amendments that have been inserted by voice vote into every appropriations bill considered under an open rule during the 113th and 114th Congresses.

My amendment expands the list of parties with whom the Federal Government is prohibited from contracting due to serious misconduct on the part of the contractors. I hope that this amendment will remain noncontroversial and be passed unanimously again by the House.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition, although I have no objection.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, again, I have no objection to the gentleman's amendment. He offered the same amendment last year, and it passed by voice vote. So I certainly urge adoption of the amendment.

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

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BOUSTANY

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to pay any bonus or monetary award under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, to an employee of the Chief Business Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is responsible for processing emergency medical care claims until the percentage of emergency medical care claims processed within 30 days reaches 90 percent.

(b) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit quarterly data to Congress on the following:

(1) The total number of emergency medical claims and the total number of billed charges for such claims.

(2) The total number of emergency medical claims and billed charges for such claims pending for more than 30 days.

(3) The number of veterans with unpaid claims under consideration in each Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(4) The percent of clean claims processed within 30 days.

□ 0040

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order on the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIR. A point of order is reserved.

Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Louisiana and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, our veterans have put their lives on the line to protect this country. The very least we can do is keep our promise to take care of them when they return home.

But since the passage of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, the VA has demonstrated little progress in addressing the emergency medical claims processing backlog hurting our veterans.

When I pressured the VA for statistics on this issue last year, the VA was processing only 14 percent of the claims within 30 days in my home region—14 percent. Since that time, the VA has conveniently loosened their timely processing goal from 30 days to 45 days, making it impossible to measure real progress.

Despite this change in internal procedure, not a single VISN has reached a satisfactory timely processing rate. When these claims are not paid on time by the VA, the bill often gets passed onto the veteran—in many cases, threatening their personal credit rating. This is just unacceptable.

While the VA wants to claim it is making progress by changing internal metrics to cook the numbers, it has taken constant pressure from my office, providers, and veterans groups just to get this agency to pay attention and try to do their job.

American veterans should never have to worry about calling an ambulance or taking a trip to the emergency room and wondering whether this will hurt their finances. They should be focused on their health and their recovery.

My amendment is very simple. It prevents the VA from granting bonuses to its emergency medical care claims processing staff until the percentage of claims processed within 30 days reaches 90 percent.

Mr. Chairman, no business in my home State of Louisiana, or anywhere in this country, would ever think about rewarding its employees for such a poor performance. It has to change. We must demand the highest standard for America's veterans. I encourage my colleagues to hold the VA accountable and support this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I insist on my point of order.

The CHAIR. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I make a point of order against the amendment because it proposes to change existing law and constitutes legislation in an appropriation bill and, accordingly, violates clause 2 of rule XXI.

The rule states in pertinent part: ''An amendment to a general appropriation bill shall not be in order if changing existing law.''

The amendment gives affirmative direction in effect.

So I would ask for a ruling from the Chair.

The CHAIR. Does the gentleman from Louisiana wish to be heard on the point of order?

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I respect the gentleman's call on this with regard to the rules. I would just hope that the members of the subcommittee, as well as my colleagues in the House, would work with us to solve this problem once and for all. This is unacceptable.

Veterans are getting hurt day in and day out. Their credit ratings are suffering. This is one more egregious example——

The CHAIR. The gentleman's remarks must be confined to the point of order.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I am not going to defy the point of order. I understand the rule.

The CHAIR. Does the gentleman wish to withdraw his amendment?

Mr. BOUSTANY. No.

The CHAIR. Or would the gentleman like a ruling on the point of order?

Mr. BOUSTANY. I would like a ruling on the point of order.

The CHAIR. The Chair is prepared to rule.

The Chair finds this amendment includes language imparting direction; namely, by requiring the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit quarterly data to Congress.

The amendment, therefore, constitutes legislation in violation of clause 2 of rule XXI.

The point of order is sustained, and the amendment is not in order.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIR. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Right here it says ''waives all points of order against consideration of the bill.''

Can I seek a clarification on this?

Clause 2(e) of rule XXI.

The CHAIR. The point of order was sustained under clause 2.

Mr. BOUSTANY. The base bill, right?

The CHAIR. 2(c) of rule XXI.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Thank you.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GOHMERT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available in this act may be used to establish, maintain, employ, or enter into any contract or agreement with any organization, including a political party, that endorsed, embraced, or encouraged any form of slavery, nor to display the name of such organization nor to have its name displayed in any facility in which or for which funds made available in this act are used.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order on the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIR. A point of order is reserved.

Pursuant to House Resolution 736, the gentleman from Texas and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Chairman, it should be pretty straightforward. My friends on the other side of the aisle continue to push forward amendments that seem to want to leave the appearance that the Republican Party still wants to retain some fight that it has never had. The Republican Party opposed slavery. The Republican Party and everybody that I know of in this Chamber on this side of the aisle has never supported slavery, has never supported anything that wreaks of slavery.

Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, all of those early leaders in this country, had it very right—it is an abomination. It kept God from blessing this country.

I am surprised that anyone would wish to reserve a point of order to try to prevent this amendment from going forward. Anything, as my friends across the aisle have repeatedly pointed out, that reminds people of slavery is repugnant and is abhorrent, and I would think that that is something that we could all agree on.

If it is an organization that supported slavery, then why would we want to give that organization any more credence and cause those who may have lived through the vestiges of the civil rights problems that lasted after slavery?

It is time to put this to an end and let the dream of Dr. King finally come to fruition.

I reserve the balance of my time.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I must insist on my point of order.

The CHAIR. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I make a point of order against the amendment because it proposes to change existing law and constitutes legislation in an appropriation bill and, therefore, violates clause 2 of rule XXI.

The rule states in pertinent part: ''An amendment to a general appropriation bill shall not be in order if changing existing law.''

The amendment requires a new determination.

I ask for a ruling from the Chair.

The CHAIR. Does any other Member wish to speak to the point of order?

□ 0050

Mr. GOHMERT. I would address the point of order in that it really doesn't require any new act or law or activity. The thing should speak for itself unless my friend across the aisle has some concerns that some organization he wants to protect has supported slavery, and he is seeking to protect that. Otherwise, the law will speak for itself as does this amendment.

The CHAIR. The Chair is prepared to rule.

The Chair finds that this amendment includes language requiring a new determination of whether an organization had ''embraced'' any form of slavery.

The amendment, therefore, constitutes legislation in violation of clause 2 of rule XXI.

The point of order is sustained, and the amendment is not in order.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair, but given the hour, the fact that there aren't that many of us here on the floor at this time, that it would require a quorum and would require under the rules an immediate vote, what I will do is withdraw my amendment at this time. I am assured that we will still be taking up limitation amendments in the morning, and I can offer it at that time without dragging all of our friends out of their places of repose at this time.

The CHAIR. The amendment has been ruled out of order. The appeal is withdrawn.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PERRY) having assumed the chair, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. SWALWELL of California (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of a family health emergency.

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. 2840. An act to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds for active shooter training, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 4923. An Act to establish a process for the submission and consideration of petitions for temporary duty suspensions and reductions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4957. An Act to designate the Federal building located at 99 New York Avenue, N.E., in the District of Columbia as the ''Ariel Rios Federal Building''.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 1492. An act to direct the Administrator of General Services, on behalf of the Archivist of the United States, to convey certain Federal property located in the State of Alaska to the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska.

S. 2143. An act 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 56 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until today, Thursday, May 19, 2016, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

5361. A letter from the Under Secretary, Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter reporting multiple violations of the Antideficiency Act, Army case number 12-07, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1351; Public Law 97-258; (96 Stat. 926); to the Committee on Appropriations.

5362. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the annual Reserve Component Equipment Report for fiscal year 2017, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 10543(c); Public Law 104-201, Sec. 1257(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 112-81, Sec. 1064(11)); (125 Stat. 1587); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5363. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report for Fiscal Year 2017, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 10541(a); Public Law 101-510, Sec. 1483(a) (as amended by Public Law 112-81, Sec. 1070); (125 Stat. 1592); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5364. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting additional legislative proposals that the Department of Defense requests be enacted during the second session of the 114th Congress; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5365. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Budget Material Corrosion Reports for FY 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5366. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, Department of Energy, transmitting the report on Securing the United States Power Grid as required by House Report 113-486; ; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5367. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Requirements for the Submission of Data Needed To Calculate User Fees for Domestic Manufacturers and Importers of Cigars and Pipe Tobacco [Docket No.: FDA-2012-N-0920] (RIN: 0910-AG81) received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5368. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Antimicrobial Animal Drug Sales and Distribution Reporting [Docket No.: FDA-2012-N-0447] (RIN: 0910-AG45) received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5369. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report entitled ''United States Tobacco Product Exports That Do Not Conform to Tobacco Product Standards'', pursuant to Sec. 801(p)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5370. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Secretary's determination that five countries are not cooperating fully with U.S. antiterrorism efforts: Eritrea, Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Syria, and Venezuela, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2781(b); Public Law 90-629, Sec. 40A (as added Public Law 104-132, Sec. 330); (110 Stat. 1258); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5371. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a determination and certification to waive for a period of six months the restrictions of Sec. 1003 of Public Law 100-204, pursuant to Public Law 114-113, Sec. 7041(j)(2)(B)(i); (129 Stat. 2780); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5372. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's intent to sign a Project Agreement between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of Defense of the State of Israel, Transmittal No. 14-16, pursuant to Sec. 27(f) of the Arms Export Control Act and Executive Order 13637; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5373. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's intent to sign the AEGIS Combat System Project Agreement No. Three between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Minister of Defense of the Kingdom of Spain, Transmittal No. 11-16, pursuant to Sec. 27(f) of the Arms Export Control Act, and Executive Order 13637; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5374. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Office of the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's intent to sign a Project Arrangement Between the Department of Defense of Australia and the Department of Defense of the United States of America, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2767(f); Public Law 90-629, Sec. 27(f) (as amended by Public Law 113-27 6, Sec. 208(a)(4)); (128 Stat. 2993); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5375. A letter from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, transmitting the thirty-first quarterly report to Congress on Afghanistan Reconstruction, in accordance with Sec. 1229 of Public Law 110-181; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5376. A letter from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's semiannual report for the period of October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016, pursuant to Sec. 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5377. A letter from the Sr. VP, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, Potomac Electric Power Company, transmitting the Balance Sheet of Potomac Electric Power Company as of December 31, 2015, pursuant to D.C. Code Ann. Sec. 34-1113 (2001); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5378. A letter from the Inspector General, U.S. House of Representatives, transmitting the Management Advisory Report — Procurement Process Review, Report No. 16-CAO-05; to the Committee on House Administration.

5379. A letter from the Director, Office of Financial Management, United States Capitol Police, transmitting the Statement of Disbursements for the United States Capitol Police for the period of October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 1910(a); Public Law 109-55, Sec. 1005; (119 Stat. 575) (H. Doc. No. 114—136); to the Committee on House Administration and ordered to be printed.

5380. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a follow up letter regarding Puerto Rico's debt crisis; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

5381. A letter from the Controller, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, transmitting the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2015, pursuant to Public Law 88-504; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5382. A letter from the Staff Director, United States Sentencing Commission, transmitting a report on the compliance of the federal district courts with the documentation submission requirements, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 994(w)(3); Public Law 98-473, Sec. 217(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-21, Sec. 401); (117 Stat. 672); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5383. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report entitled ''Regarding the Incidental Capture of Sea Turtles in Commercial Shrimping Operations'', pursuant to Public Law 101-162, Sec. 609(b)(2); (103 Stat. 1038); jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources and Appropriations.

5384. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's summary presentation of final rules — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-88; Introduction [Docket No.: FAR 2016-0051, Sequence No.: 2] received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, and Science, Space, and Technology.

5385. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation: High Global Warming Potential Hydrofluorocarbons [FAC 2005-88; FAR Case 2014-026; Item I; Docket No.: 2014-0026; Sequence 1] (RIN: 9000-AM87) received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, and Science, Space, and Technology.

5386. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation: Simplified Acquisition Threshold for Overseas Acquisitions in Support of Humanitarian or Peacekeeping Operations [FAC 2005-88; FAR Case 2015-020; Item II; Docket No.: 2015-0020; Sequence No. 1] (RIN: 9000-AN09) received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, and Science, Space, and Technology.

5387. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Basic Safeguarding of Contractor Information Systems [FAC 2005-88; FAR Case 2011-020; Item III; Docket No.: 2011-0020, Sequence No. 1] (RIN: 9000-AM19) received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec.

251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, and Science, Space, and Technology.

5388. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's Small Entity Compliance Guide — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-88; Small Entity Compliance Guide [Docket No.: FAR 2016-0051, Sequence No. 2] received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Armed Services, and Science, Space, and Technology.

5389. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Technical Amendments [FAC 2005-88; Item V; Docket No.: 2016-0052; Sequence No. 2] received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Armed Services, and Science, Space, and Technology.

5390. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Improvement in Design-Build Construction Process [FAC 2005-88; FAR Case 2015-018; Item IV; Docket No.: 2015-0018; Sequence No. 1] (RIN: 9000-AN10) received May 16, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Armed Services, and Science, Space, and Technology.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. NUNES: Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. H.R. 5077. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–573). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia):

H.R. 5272. A bill to amend the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 to protect civil rights and otherwise prevent meaningful harm to third parties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TIBERI (for himself and Mr. MCDERMOTT):

H.R. 5273. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for regulatory relief under the Medicare program for certain providers of services and suppliers and increased transparency in hospital coding and enrollment data, 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. GARAMENDI (for himself, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. TONKO, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. BASS, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CONYERS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. HONDA, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. HAHN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. LEE, and Mr. MEEKS):

H.R. 5274. A bill to provide for the refinancing and recalculation of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. MESSER (for himself, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. MASSIE, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. JORDAN, and Mr. WALKER):

H.R. 5275. A bill to protect the authority of States and local governments to enact and enforce policies regarding the use of sex-segregated bathrooms and sex-segregated locker rooms of educational institutions on the basis of gender identity; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BARR (for himself, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. STEWART, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. YODER, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. YOHO, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. BRAT, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. WALKER, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. BABIN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, and Mrs. LUMMIS):

H.R. 5276. A bill to prohibit the provision of Federal funds to State, territory, and local governments for payment of obligations, to prohibit the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System from financially assisting State and local governments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. PINGREE (for herself, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mrs. CAPPS):

H.R. 5277. A bill to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 to establish a Working Waterfront Task Force and a working waterfronts grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DUFFY (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER):

H.R. 5278. A bill to establish an Oversight Board to assist the Government of Puerto Rico, including instrumentalities, in managing its public finances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Education and the Workforce, and Small Business, 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. DELAURO:

H.R. 5279. A bill to re-impose sanctions on Russian arms exporter Rosoboronexport, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. GRAHAM (for herself and Mr. YOHO):

H.R. 5280. A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to carry out a pilot program to lend Department of Defense farm equipment to eligible farmers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 5281. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to permit Governors of States to regulate intrastate endangered species and intrastate threatened species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. ESTY (for herself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, and Mr. POLIS):

H. Con. Res. 132. Concurrent resolution prohibiting the House or Senate from adjourning or convening in a pro forma session for a period of more than 2 days unless the Senate has acted upon the nomination of Judge Merrick Garland for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H. Res. 737. A resolution condemning and censuring John A. Koskinen, the Commissioner of Internal Revenue; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and 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. CARSON of Indiana (for himself, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. ROKITA, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana):

H. Res. 738. A resolution commemorating ''The Greatest Spectacle in Racing'', the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500, and recognizing the groundbreaking impact the race has had on the Nation and the sport of automobile racing; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. DELANEY (for himself, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KILMER, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. COSTA, and Mr. BEYER):

H. Res. 739. A resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. LATTA:

H. Res. 740. A resolution congratulating Dr. and Mrs. David and Valerie Hodge on a successful 10-year tenure as President of Miami University; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

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. KENNEDY:

H.R. 5272.

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

Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. TIBERI:

H.R. 5273.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 14 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GARAMENDI:

H.R. 5274.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 5275.

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

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

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 5276.

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

Article I, Section 9, clause 7, which states that, ''No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by the law.''

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 5277.

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

Clause 1 of Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 5278.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 5279.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.

By Ms. GRAHAM:

H.R. 5280.

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

Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 5281.

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 1, 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.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 266: Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 525: Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 532: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 546: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia and Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 563: Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 664: Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 775: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 836: Mr. RIGELL.

H.R. 864: Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 868: Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 885: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 1192: Mr. BLUM.

H.R. 1197: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 1306: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 1309: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. WESTERMAN.

H.R. 1312: Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 1349: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 1459: Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 1608: Mr. ZELDIN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, and Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 1643: Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 1859: Mr. WENSTRUP.

H.R. 1877: Mr. KING of New York and Mr. MEEHAN.

H.R. 1932: Mrs. NOEM.

H.R. 1943: Mr. KILMER and Mr. TAKAI.

H.R. 1963: Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 2315: Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 2368: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 2380: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 2404: Mr. ZELDIN and Mr. WALDEN.

H.R. 2493: Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 2603: Mr. BUCSHON.

H.R. 2739: Mr. LATTA and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 2747: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 2799: Mr. HECK of Washington.

H.R. 2804: Mr. BEYER.

H.R. 2817: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 2844: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 2911: Mr. ROUZER, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. Polls, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. HECK of Nevada.

H.R. 2948: Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 2983: Mr. TED LIEU of California.

H.R. 3139: Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 3222: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.

H.R. 3229: Mr. ROUZER, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 3235: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. KNIGHT.

H.R. 3286: Mr. POMPEO.

H.R. 3308: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 3337: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, and Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 3355: Mrs. BEATTY, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Mr. BLUM.

H.R. 3381: Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 3471: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 3516: Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 3590: Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 3591: Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 3636: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 3687: Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 3706: Mr. VARGAS.

H.R. 3742: Mr. LATTA, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

H.R. 3815: Mr. MULVANEY.

H.R. 3863: Mr. CROWLEY.

H.R. 3892: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 4032: Mr. HUELSKAMP.

H.R. 4061: Ms. LEE.

H.R. 4062: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.

H.R. 4152: Mr. BEYER.

H.R. 4166: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Mr. LUETKEMEYER.

H.R. 4183: Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 4247: Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.

H.R. 4262: Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 4268: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. FARR.

H.R. 4365: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 4381: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. YOHO, Mr. JONES, Mr. RYAN, of Ohio and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 4396: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 4424: Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 4460: Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 4514: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. ROYCE.

H.R. 4535: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 4567: Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 4575: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

H.R. 4614: Mr. VALADAO.

H.R. 4615: Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. RUIZ.

H.R. 4616: Mr. TED LIEU of California and Mr. MCDERMOTT.

H.R. 4622: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 4625: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 4626: Mr. RUSH, Mr. HIMES, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 4662: Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. LANCE, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 4693: Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 4764: Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 4766: Mr. MULLIN.

H.R. 4768: Mr. GARRETT, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. FLORES, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. WESTMORELAND.

H.R. 4770: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.

H.R. 4773: Mr. NUGENT, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. MARINO, and Mr. SHIMKUS.

H.R. 4775: Mr. HUELSKAMP and Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 4795: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.

H.R. 4830: Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 4833: Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 4848: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.

H.R. 4860: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. MARINO, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. HAHN, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. SIRES, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. YOHO, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 4904: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.

H.R. 4955: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 4979: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5025: Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 5044: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. KEATING, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. COHEN, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 5047: Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. STEFANIK, and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 5073: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5082: Mr. LANCE, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MARCHANT, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 5102: Mr. CALVERT.

H.R. 5103: Mr. CALVERT.

H.R. 5112: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 5135: Mr. NEWHOUSE.

H.R. 5137: Mr. DENHAM, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 5143: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 5167: Mr. RENACCI and Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 5170: Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. KATKO, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. CARNEY, and Mrs. WALORSKI.

H.R. 5185: Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 5191: Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 5207: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 5210: Mr. CHABOT, Mr. LATTA, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. HUDSON, and Mr. HOLDING.

H.R. 5216: Mr. POCAN and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 5233: Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 5243: Mr. COLE, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. STEWART, Mr. WOMACK, and Ms. GRANGER.

H.R. 5262: Mrs. BLACK, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. CHAFFETZ, and Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 5268: Mr. MEEHAN.

H.J. Res. 94: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. HAHN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Mr. SHERMAN.

H. Con. Res. 56: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H. Con. Res. 114: Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H. Con. Res. 122: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H. Con. Res. 129: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DESANTIS, and Mr. SHERMAN.

H. Res. 28: Mr. NOLAN.

H. Res. 263: Mr. MURPHY of Florida and Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.

H. Res. 650: Mr. OLSON, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. YOHO, and Mr. CHABOT.

H. Res. 716: Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. RENACCI.

H. Res. 717: Mrs. DINGELL and Ms. NORTON.

H. Res. 729: Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, and Mr. NADLER.

H. Res. 733: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 4974

OFFERED BY: MR. KING OF IOWA

AMENDMENT NO. 4: At the end of the bill, before the short title, add the following new section:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the prevailing wage requirements in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act).

H.R. 4974

OFFERED BY: MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 5: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies, as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation, that the offeror or any of its principals:

(A) within a three-year period preceding this offer has been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property; or

(B) are presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated above in subsection (A); or

(C) within a three-year period preceding this offer, has been notified of any delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds $3,000 for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

H.R. 4974

OFFERED BY: MRS. WALORSKI

AMENDMENT NO. 6: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds available to the Department of Veterans Affairs, in this or any other Act, may be used to replace the current system by which the Veterans Integrated Service Networks select and contract for diabetes monitoring supplies and equipment.

H.R. 4974

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 7: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) For an additional amount for ''Veterans Health Administration—Medical Services'' for grants to States under subchapter III of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, to expand, remodel, or alter existing buildings for furnishing nursing home care to veterans in State homes that are former nursing home facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as authorized by section 8133 of such subchapter, there is hereby appropriated, and the amount otherwise provided by this Act for ''Departmental Administration—General Administration'' is hereby reduced by, $10,000,000.

(b) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the prioritization requirements in paragraphs (1)(C) or (2) through (5) of section 8135(c) of title 38, United States Code, with respect to the appropriation in subsection (a).

H.R. 4974

OFFERED BY: MR. KILDEE

AMENDMENT NO. 8: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the Sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should work with State and local health officials to prevent human exposure to perfluorinated chemicals.

H.R. 4974

OFFERED BY: MRS. WAGNER

AMENDMENT NO. 9: Page 4, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $801,000) (increased by $801,000)''.

H.R. 4974

OFFERED BY: MS. JACKSON LEE

AMENDMENT NO. 10: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act for benefits for homeless veterans and training and outreach programs may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in contravention of subchapter III of chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2016 No. 79

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, our hope and our salvation, we trust You to surround us with Your Divine favor. Your way is perfect. Give us the wisdom to follow Your guidance. Become for us a shield of salvation as we seek to do Your will. Lord, keep us from self-made cares as we continue to look to You, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Today, support our lawmakers with Your grace. Give them faith to look beyond today's challenges and trials, knowing that nothing can separate them from Your love. Help them to demonstrate their gratitude to You with selfless service to those who need Your love and care.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

TRANSPORTATION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today we will continue working on two appropriations measures that responsibly fund American priorities. The first will invest in our transportation infrastructure and fund economic development efforts. The second will support our veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

These are good, bipartisan bills that prioritize funding for important programs. They are the result of the continuing leadership of Senators COLLINS and KIRK. I would encourage my colleagues to work together to continue moving these appropriations bills forward.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, on another matter, Mr. President, last week, the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee said that some would like to do ''some sort of a pretend hearing'' on the President's Supreme Court nomination. He went on to dismiss the idea by noting that the Senate ''is not a pretend office.'' Apparently, he was overruled.

Later today, Democrats will have what he called a ''pretend hearing.'' Senate Democrats initially invited a witness who, at the beginning of the Bush administration, wrote this: ''The Senate should not act on any Supreme Court vacancies that might occur until after the next presidential election.'' He also wrote that this would be a ''responsible exercise of the Senate's constitutional power.'' Apparently, that witness is no longer available—interesting.

The would-be witness is Abner Mikva, a former Democratic Congressman, Federal judge, and White House Counsel. He wrote these words in the second year of President George W. Bush's first term. It was not, like the situation today, in the eighth year of a term-limited President.

Democrats certainly have a complicated history when it comes to their own words and the Supreme Court. They have the Schumer standard: Don't consider a President's nominee 1½ years before the end of his final term. They have the Biden rule: Don't consider a President's nominee before he has even finished his first term. Now they have the Mikva mandate: Don't consider a President's nominee from, basically, the moment he takes office.

It seems the more we hear from Democrats about the Supreme Court, the more we are reminded, by comparison, of how reasonable and commonsense the Republican position is today.

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, on one final matter, Mr. President, that our colleagues will discuss further a little later today, a video recently surfaced that should concern all of us. It was three of President Obama's former speechwriters laughing it up. They were reminiscing about the time they apparently helped mislead the American people with a line that would one day become PolitiFact's ''Lie of the Year'': ''If you like your health care plan, you can keep it.''

They laughed and laughed. It was, evidently, pretty funny to them. It is no laughing matter, however, for the millions—millions—who have lost their plans. It is no laughing matter for the millions who continue to suffer under this partisan law, this partisan attack on the middle class.

Health care costs are now the No. 1 financial concern facing American families, according to a recent survey—No. 1—more than concerns about low wages, more even than concerns about losing a job.

Another survey found a clear majority of Americans disapproving of this partisan law. Yet another survey found that, of Americans who said Obamacare had impacted them, more reported it hurting rather than helping them.

If recent headlines are anything to go by, it is no wonder. Americans now face premium hikes of up to 30 percent

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

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in Oregon and 37 percent in Virginia. They face premium spikes as high as 43 percent in Iowa and 45 percent in New Hampshire. In Tennessee, the State's largest health insurer is planning additional rate hikes that are even higher than the 36.3 percent implemented just this past January.

Remember, this is the same law whose champions promised it would make health care more affordable for American families. But nearly half of all Americans reported increases in their insurance premiums, and more than a third reported increases in copays and deductibles in the past 2 years.

Consider this dad from Jackson, KY, who learned that his insurer would no longer offer his current plan as a result of ObamaCare. He said that the most inexpensive replacement plan would be an 80-percent increase over his current monthly premium. ''This ill-conceived health care reform,'' as he put it, ''is going to be the end of good-quality care for the whole nation unless it is repealed and replaced.'' That is from Jackson, KY.

Part of the reason insurers are seeking such dramatic premium rate increases is to help cover the losses they have experienced as a result of the unworkable policies of ObamaCare. Some are pulling out of the exchanges altogether. Several States and hundreds of counties now only have a single insurer to pick from in the ObamaCare exchanges—just one, no choices.

That is true in parts of Kentucky, too, and it is terrible for consumers. What if these sole insurers pull out of the exchanges? An administration official couldn't rule out that possibility, and it doesn't appear they have a serious plan to deal with it either. The administration hardly ever seems to have an ObamaCare answer that doesn't boil down to this: more money from taxpayers.

Look, this is not a law that is working. This is not a law that is fair. This is a partisan law that is a direct attack—a direct attack—on the middle class.

The Democratic leader recently said that Americans just need to ''get over it''—just get over it—''and accept the fact that ObamaCare is here to stay.'' ObamaCare, he says, is ''doing so much to change America forever.'' Maybe Democrats think the middle class should just get over double-digit premium increases. Maybe Democrats think it is funny that millions of Americans lost their plans because of ObamaCare.

Republicans think we should work toward better care instead. That is why we recently passed a bill to repeal ObamaCare and start over with real care. ObamaCare may be changing America, but this partisan law's attacks on the middle class do not have to go on forever, as the Democratic leader would like. We can give our country a new and better beginning.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend, the Republican leader, continues to complain about ObamaCare. This has been the mantra of the Republicans since it passed. But the true facts are these: ObamaCare has reduced the number of uninsured to the lowest rate since we have been keeping records in America. The uninsured are going down, not up. People are healthier now as a result of being able to go to the doctor or the hospital when they are hurt or sick.

Now, we talk about ObamaCare in a vacuum. What was going on before Obamacare? Insurance companies ravaged the American people. The people who were fortunate enough to have health care had to be aware that at any given time they could have their insurance canceled. If you were disabled, there was no insurance. But that isn't all. If you had a prior malady of some kind—if you had cancer, if you had diabetes—you couldn't get insurance—but not anymore. Under ObamaCare you cannot be denied insurance for any condition.

They used to charge women more than men—for no reason, except that some statistical analysis had taken place in some dark room by a guy with green eyeshades who determined that maybe, statistically, women cost a little more than men. They can't do that anymore.

I am always so stunned by this mantra: ''We have to replace it.'' With what? It has been 7 years. With what? The Republicans have come up with nothing.

So, in short, is ObamaCare perfect? Of course not. Could we improve it? Yes, we could. But it would be nice to have a little cooperation from the Republicans. They are unwilling to do anything other than complain.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, again the senior Senator from Kentucky complains about the fact that the most senior member of the Senate, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator PAT LEAHY, is going to have a meeting today, and he has invited all the Judiciary Committee members to come—Democrats and Republicans. He has invited all Senators to come because he is going to have some witnesses testify about the importance of having a Supreme Court that is full of Justices—all nine. So that means full.

Republicans won't come to that hearing, meeting. Call it whatever you want. They won't be there. No, they are blocking that, obstructing that like they have everything else.

The American judiciary is in trouble, and that is why the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee is having this meeting today. To do its work, the U.S. Supreme Court needs nine Justices—not eight, not seven, but nine. But because of Senate Republicans' refusal to consider a senior judge on the DC Circuit—the second most influential court in the land—Merrick Garland, the Court is in trouble. The Court is short-staffed. The Court doesn't have enough people to do its work. People—we are talking about one person who has so much control over what goes on in the Supreme Court. But that person is not there.

In recent weeks, the Supreme Court has deadlocked on many important cases and questions before it. For example, the day before yesterday, the Justices punted on two more cases, remanding both to lower courts. These actions were a clear indication the Court was tied 4 to 4. Due to the wisdom of the people on that Court, they decided it would be better, since they could not write the decision, to send it back to the lower courts and see if they could help work out the problems.

Not having nine Justices is a serious problem. As was written yesterday in a New York Times editorial: ''Every day that passes without a ninth Justice undermines the Supreme Court's ability to function, and leaves millions of Americans waiting for justice or clarity as major legal questions are unresolved.''

Litigants take their cases to the Supreme Court in search of justice. It often takes years to get to that Court. They seek resolution. They seek clarity, but because of Republicans' unprecedented obstruction, Americans have gained neither. They are not getting clarity, they are not getting resolution, and they are not getting justice. The problem is only going to worsen, and that is the sad part of it. Already, the stalemate has created long-term issues for our Nation's highest Court.

This term, eight Justices on the Court have agreed to hear only 12 cases its next term, which begins in October through January 2017. If the Court continues to accept or, I should say, not accept cases at this glacial pace, the next term will have Justices hearing fewer cases than has been heard by that Court in more than seven decades, 70 years. It stands to reason that Chief Justice Roberts and his colleagues are calling cases according to their ability to hear and process them. A gridlocked Court can't accomplish the same work as a fully staffed Court. It is not the Supreme Court's fault. The blame belongs to Senate Republicans for their blocking Merrick Garland's nomination. For 7½ years, Senate Republicans have blocked anything President Obama has proposed. Who is behind this? Rightwing organizations led by the Koch brothers. They want to keep it just the way it is. They want to keep this Court so it can't do its job.

For 7½ years, Senate Republicans have blocked anything President Obama has proposed, including now a new Supreme Court Justice. Now, by preventing the Court from having nine Justices, Republicans are bringing gridlock in the legislative branch to the judicial branch. Previously, for the whole time Obama has been President, they were blocking what has gone on in the legislative branch. They have now broadened that to deadlock the Supreme Court. This is not acceptable. Justice delayed, we have heard, is justice denied, and that is certainly true. By bringing the Court to a standstill, Republicans are denying the justice all Americans deserve.

There is still time for my Republican colleagues to do the right thing—fill the Supreme Court vacancy—but to do that they must begin to process Garland's nomination. His questionnaire is here. It is filled out. It is done. I wonder how many Republicans have even looked at it. Has there been any? Shouldn't there be a hearing? The reason Republicans don't want a hearing is they know that a hearing, public in nature, would show the American people and the world what a good man Merrick Garland is, what a good lawyer he was, and what a good judge he has been, but they have to start processing this. Republicans seem to be refusing anything dealing with him. I think they should attend the meeting today on the Garland nomination organized by Judiciary Committee Democrats, calling on the finest people we can find to tell us what is going on in the judiciary.

My friend the Republican leader brings up Abner Mikva. Abner Mikva hasn't served in Congress in 40 years. He was a lawyer for President Clinton. We have been through quite a bit since then, but he has nothing else to refer to so he talks about Abner Mikva, who was going to come, who is not going to come. Do you think part of it can be he is more than 90 years old? Republicans should attend today's hearing.

The Judiciary chair, Senator GRASSLEY, should proceed with committee hearings. The American people deserve a full and transparent accounting of Merrick Garland's record and qualifications. After a hearing, of course we should move his nomination for a vote on the Senate floor. Every day that passes without confirmation, without a ninth Justice to serve on the Supreme Court, is another lost day for the Federal judiciary and American justice. Republicans claim their obstruction of President Obama's Supreme Court nominee is to give the people a voice, but their actions are doing just the opposite. Republicans are denying the American people the justice they deserve.

For example, take the cases they referred back to the lower courts. They have already done it and litigants have waited years to get before the Supreme Court. Now, in effect, they have to start over. Republicans are denying the American people the justice they deserve—the justice we thought was guaranteed by the Constitution. So instead of silencing the Supreme Court and gridlocking our entire judicial system, Republicans should give the Court the ninth Justice it desperately needs.

Focus has been on the Supreme Court, and it should be, but Republicans are doing the same thing with trial court judges. The Federal judiciary has many districts that have declared judicial emergencies. They don't have enough judges to do their work. Republicans are in a state of—the only thing they know to do very well is to block things. We, the American people, know we need to do something about the judiciary. Republicans should do their job and give Merrick Garland a hearing and a vote.

Mr. President, my friend from South Dakota is here. I would ask the Chair, prior to the Senator being recognized, to tell us what the schedule is for today.

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 for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the second half.

The Senator from South Dakota.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to discuss Congress's efforts to combat the Zika virus. Combating Zika is a public health priority, and it is important that this not be turned into a political issue. The administration and Congress need to work together to combat the virus by funding necessary programs, such as mosquito eradication efforts, before the threat escalates further. Congress has already acted to provide incentives for manufacturers to develop new medicines to prevent or to treat Zika. We have also approved the use of nearly $600 million to initiate a Zika response effort, including research into vaccines and treatments and improving mosquito control, because the best way to deal with any illness is to stop people from getting sick in the first place. We need to make controlling mosquitos a priority.

I introduced a measure to remove burdensome permitting restrictions on mosquito control efforts so we can immediately free up additional resources to keep the mosquito population in check. A vaccine to prevent the Zika virus isn't likely to be available until next year, at the earliest, which means our primary weapon in combating Zika right now is controlling mosquitoes so people don't get infected. For that reason, we need to prioritize mosquito control programs and provide immediate regulatory relief.

Aggressive mosquito abatement is the most timely step we can take to keep women and children safe. I am pleased my approach was included in the Cornyn amendment the Senate considered yesterday. I only wish it had prevailed. I am hopeful we can still work with both sides of the aisle to get timely regulatory relief for all impacted industries in the final Zika response package. I believe it is important that if we are going to beat this thing, we do it by eradicating mosquitoes and making it possible for those who are responsible and tasked with that responsibility to be able to do that.

OBAMACARE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, back when the President and Senate Democrats were lobbying for passage of ObamaCare, they made a number of promises. The one thing they promised over and over again was that the President's health care plan would lower costs.

''Bringing down costs of health insurance and making it more affordable is job one for this health care reform.'' That is a quote that was made by the then-Democratic majority whip on the floor in December of 2009. Families will save on their premiums, President Obama pledged that same month. The Affordable Care Act, Democrats made clear, was the solution to the health insurance challenges facing American families. Well, 6 years down the road it is clear the Affordable Care Act was no solution at all.

The President promised that health care reform would reduce premiums by $2,500 for the average family. Instead, the average family premium for employer-sponsored health insurance rose by $4,170 between 2009 and 2015. Forty-five percent of Americans report that their health insurance premium has increased over the past 2 years, and 35 percent report that their copays and deductibles have increased over the same period. The President promised that Americans who liked their insurance plan could keep it. Instead, the President's health care law pushed more than 4.7 million Americans off their health care plans.

Then there is the centerpiece of the President's health care law, the exchanges. The exchanges were supposed to offer accessible, affordable health care to those who had struggled to get insurance, but a lot of Americans are finding out the health care offered on the exchanges is neither affordable nor accessible. Last year countless consumers around the country faced massive rate hikes on their exchange plans. One constituent wrote to tell me that her plan would cost $1,600 a month for

her, her husband, and their four children—$1,600 a month. That is more than $19,000 a year. A new car would be cheaper, and all signs point to consumers being set to face yet huge rate hikes again this year.

Investor's Business Daily recently reported that Oregon's largest insurer in the individual market is seeking an average rate increase of 29.6 percent for its exchange and nonexchange plans for 2017. Meanwhile, over the weekend the Chattanooga Times Free Press reported that Blue Cross exchange customers in Tennessee will face a ''major rate increase'' that may exceed the 36.3-percent rate increase exchange customers faced this January. The Associated Press recently reported that insurers are seeking rate hikes ranging from 9.4 percent to 37.1 percent on the exchanges in Virginia—a 37.1-percent increase.

Think about that. Let's say you have a family health insurance plan that costs $10,000 a year. A 37.1-percent increase would add more than $3,700 to the cost of your plan—$3,700—for just 1 year. That is a significant amount of money, and you could easily end up facing a similar rate hike the following year.

I could go on and on about ObamaCare. I could read from a steady stream of news stories reporting on ObamaCare's many failures, from huge cost increases to bankrupt co-ops, to decreased access to doctors and hospitals. I could talk about the ways ObamaCare has hiked prescription drug costs or the challenges facing businesses, thanks to the Affordable Care Act's taxes and mandates. I could read stories from my constituents—constituents who have had to wrestle with the inefficient ObamaCare bureaucracy, constituents who lost their health plans as a result of ObamaCare, constituents who can't afford their ObamaCare insurance, but since I don't want to use up all my colleagues' time on the floor as well as my own, I will just say this: Three weeks ago, on April 27, Gallup published the results of a poll on the financial challenges facing American families. The headline of the article was this: ''Healthcare Costs Top U.S. Families' Financial Concerns.'' Let me repeat that. ''Healthcare Costs Top U.S. Families' Financial Concerns.''

If 6 years on from the passage of the Affordable Care Act health care costs top the list of American families' financial concerns, then the Affordable Care Act has failed, and it is time to repeal it. The Republican-led Senate has already passed legislation to repeal ObamaCare, but we need a President willing to work with us or significant support from Democrats in Congress if we want a repeal to become law. I hope we will see that kind of support in the near future.

The Affordable Care Act has been a disaster from the beginning, and it is time to lift the burdens the law has placed on Americans and replace this law with health care reform that will actually drive down costs for American families and consumers and increase access to care. That is what we should—and I hope we will—be focused on.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak, as Senator THUNE has just spoken, about the disastrous health care results for patients of ObamaCare. You have to go no further than this Sunday's New York Times, the Sunday Review front page. It looks like a red cross tilted on its side with the headline ''Sorry, We Don't Take ObamaCare.''

The minority leader, HARRY REID, comes to the floor and talks about how wonderful it is. The President says: ''Forcefully defend and be proud.'' Of what? Of ''Sorry, we don't take ObamaCare''?

This is the New York Times, a newspaper whose editorial board has supported this health care law. They talk about the pains of the health care act frustrating patients.

It says:

> Amy Moses and her circle of self-employed small-business owners were supporters of President Obama and the Affordable Care Act. They bought policies on the newly created New York State exchange.

We have two Democratic Senators from New York. Where are they to respond to what has happened to the people of their home State as a result of this law?

They bought insurance policies on the New York State exchange. What happened? Well, when they called doctors and hospitals in Manhattan to schedule an appointment, they were dismayed to be turned away—not once, it says, but again and again. It says ''We don't take ObamaCare'' is the umbrella term for the hundreds of plans offered through the President's signature health legislation.

This is the New York Times, about New York. It is a big city, a place where there should be plenty of doctors, plenty of opportunity.

Ms. Moses said:

> Anyone who is on these plans knows it's a two-tiered system.

Is that what the President promised the American people—a two-tiered system? She is a successful entrepreneur in a two-tiered system. We are talking about a number of women in New York who are entrepreneurs and are very successful.

> Anytime one of us needs a doctor, we send out an alert.

Is that what we are supposed to have? Anytime anybody needs a doctor, send out an alert? If you have a sore throat, send out an alert. That is what they need to do.

The alert they send out among this whole group in New York says: ''Does anyone have anyone on an exchange plan that does mammography or colonoscopy [who takes our insurance]?''

She said, ''It's really a problem.''

I could go on. This is what the President of the United States and the Democrats in this body, who shoved this bill down the throats of the American people, have found that they have created—a plan one in four Americans says has hurt them personally.

That is just one story in the news in one major newspaper, but it says a lot about the health care law in general.

We just heard from Senator THUNE. We know this health care law is a lot more expensive than the President ever promised. People all around the country remember the President saying that it will drive down health care premiums by $2,500 per family if it becomes law. Remember that? People all across the country remember it. It just hasn't happened. Costs have gone up, copays have gone up, and deductibles have gone up. People have lost their plans, lost their ability to see their doctor, can't go to the hospital they want, and can't get the care they need.

Insurance companies are cutting back on which doctors people can see, and they are cutting back on what drugs people can take. This health care law has made health care worse across the United States of America. We know that some insurance companies are dropping States entirely in terms of a place to do business, so millions of Americans are going to lose their insurance plan again next year.

Do you remember what the President said? ''If you like your plan, you can keep your plan.'' Well, not next year, not last year, not the year before that. Even the Kaiser Family Foundation, which studies these issues, says that there are more than 650 counties in which families will have only one choice for insurance next year.

I pulled up an article from the New York Times. That is not the only place there has been a similar article. This is Monday's paper, May 16, Wall Street Journal: ''Health insurers quit rural exchanges.'' They are abandoning rural areas all across the country—in my home State of Wyoming, but it is also happening everywhere. It is entire States—Alaska, Alabama, Wyoming. There is only one choice where people can buy ObamaCare insurance next year.

If you only have one choice, often you are put in a situation where you can take it or leave it. Not under Barack Obama. Oh, no. You must buy it. You have no choice, other than to pay an expensive penalty. That is what health care looks like now under HARRY REID and the Democrats and Barack Obama and the Senators on the Democratic side of the aisle who voted for this monstrosity. Take it or leave it. But you can't leave it because you must buy it.

What happens when there is no competition? What happens when the health care law adds thousands of pages of expensive mandates and costs continue to go up? Premiums have gone through the roof. These are the

requested premium hikes for ObamaCare plans for next year: We have seen 33 percent requested in Virginia; Oregon, 32 percent; Iowa, 43 percent; New Hampshire, 45 percent for some families. People are finding out that their insurance premiums are now higher than their mortgage payment.

What do the Democrats say about all of this? Someone brought this up to Hillary Clinton at a campaign event in Virginia last week. A woman who owns a small business said: ''I have seen our health insurance for my own family go up $500 a month in just the last two years. We went from 400-something to 900-something [a month].''

What did Hillary Clinton have to say about this? What was her response? She said: ''What could possibly have raised your costs . . . that's what I don't understand.''

Is she serious? It is ObamaCare that raised her costs. Where has Hillary Clinton been the last 6 years that she doesn't understand it? This was in Virginia. This small business owner—the woman who went to the townhall meeting and asked Hillary Clinton a question—may see her rates go up another 33 percent next year.

It is not just Hillary Clinton who is clueless. HARRY REID, the Democratic leader in the Senate, came to the floor last month and told the world that ObamaCare is ''working.'' Does HARRY REID not understand that millions of American are paying more for their health insurance and their health care than they did before ObamaCare? Many people are paying for insurance, but they can't get care, as we see from the New York Times story. Does Senator REID not understand that people are paying more for coverage and getting less care in return?

Does every Senator on the Democratic side of the aisle who voted for ObamaCare not understand how this outrageous law is hurting America and Americans and the people of this great country?

There was a new poll that came out last month that found that only 44 percent of Americans approve of the health care law but 54 percent disapprove of the law. I remember Senator SCHUMER of New York saying: After we pass it, it will get more popular. Still, 54 percent disapprove. That is the highest disapproval number in the last 2 years. In this poll, almost one in three Americans said that the health care law has had a negative effect on their family—their personal family; not that they know somebody but in their own family. Hillary Clinton doesn't seem to understand that. She said that she wants to expand ObamaCare. She wants more regulations, more restrictions, more of the terrible ideas that have driven up costs for American families.

There was another piece of news last week that shows one more way the health care law is failing. It turns out that the Obama administration has been making illegal payments—payments found by a judge to be illegal—to big insurance companies to help prop up this health care law. That is what the Federal court ruled last Thursday.

In 2014 the administration asked Congress to appropriate money to pay insurance companies above and beyond the subsidies they already get that the government pays for insurance premiums. It is called a cost-sharing subsidy. Congress—power of the purse—refused to appropriate the money.

Do you know what the administration did? The administration panicked. It knew that without more Washington spending, people would pay even more out of pocket for their health care costs, and that would make ObamaCare even more unpopular than it is today. In the panic, because they knew that if that happened, people would realize how expensive the law really is and the disaster it is turning into, and people would see that all the President's promises about reducing costs were nothing but fairy tales, the panicked Obama administration went ahead and handed over the money anyway without the authority of Congress. The total was about $7 billion over the last 2 years. That is how much additional taxpayer money the administration has given away so far to hide the fact that the health care law is an expensive failure.

The American people have had enough of this costly and collapsing health care law. They have had enough of losing their insurance, losing their doctors, losing access to the prescription drugs they need, and paying 20 or 30 percent more every year to get less coverage.

The Democrats can come to the floor and pretend that ObamaCare is working. The Democrats, like Hillary Clinton, don't understand what is going on. The American people know exactly what is going on. They want us to repeal ObamaCare and replace it with health care that actually works, that has fewer restrictions, more freedom—freedom for people to get the coverage that works for them and their families, not what President Obama says they have to have because he believes he knows what they need better than they do.

We need fewer mandates that drive up the cost for everyone and more options for patients to see the doctors they want and to get the medicine they need. That is what the American people want, and it is time for Democrats to show that they are listening to the people of America and that they understand, because up to this point, they have not been listening and they do not understand.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his words. Obviously he is an expert on health care. He is somebody who spent his entire life treating patients and working to improve the health care of others in Wyoming and beyond. His expertise on this issue is particularly important as we debate the real-life ramifications of ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act—the so-called Affordable Care Act.

I come to the floor today to talk about the broken promise of ObamaCare and the negative impacts this poorly planned law has had on my State of Colorado. In essence, what ObamaCare did was create a pay-to-play scheme—mandates and dictates of a law where you will pay higher premiums to abide by the law.

As ObamaCare continues on a downward trajectory, Americans are the ones who are bearing the brunt of its failures, particularly those who are living in rural America, in rural Colorado.

Month after month, headline after headline, Americans are no longer surprised when they hear of another ObamaCare disaster as they continue to foot the ever-increasing bill. There are fewer choices, less competition, and higher costs.

''If you like your health care plan, you can keep it.'' Do you remember those famous words? The President assured Americans time and time again not to worry. ''If you like your health care plan, you can keep it.'' He said it countless times. It was echoed by almost every Member in this body who supported ObamaCare.

Coloradans and millions of Americans around the country learned that this promise was far from the truth. In late 2013, roughly 335,000 small-group and individual policies in Colorado were canceled due to the requirements of ObamaCare, 335,000 Coloradans who witnessed through a letter in their mailbox—including a letter I received in my mailbox canceling my insurance because of ObamaCare. Those 335,000 people realized that ''if you like your plan, you can keep your plan'' was simply not true.

The cancelations in 2013 were just the very beginning. In 2014, a couple months later, the Colorado Division of Insurance canceled another 249,000 plans because these plans didn't meet the requirements of ObamaCare. When we talk about these plans being canceled because they didn't meet the requirements of ObamaCare, some people on the left, those who supported ObamaCare, would argue they must have been bad plans, bad insurance, or bad policies. But that presumes that the government knows what is best for everyone involved, that the government has a better idea of what their insurance ought to be, and that the government should take care of and think for people who chose these plans themselves individually. But 249,000 people, on top of the 335,000 people in January of 2014, had their insurance canceled.

Again, in 2015 the story continued with an additional 190,000 plans on the individual and small group markets being canceled. In total, according to the Congressional Research Service,

over 750,000 health insurance plans in Colorado were canceled between 2013 and 2015. Three-quarters of a million people who were promised that ''if you like your health insurance plan, you can keep your plan'' had their plans canceled under the broken promise of ObamaCare. That is still not the end of it for Coloradans because Coloradans are still receiving cancellation notices. Within the last 2 months, two of the Nation's largest insurers, UnitedHealthcare and Humana, announced their intent to exit the individual marketplace. UnitedHealth Group's CEO cited that the marketplaces were a risky investment and that UnitedHealth could not serve these exchanges on an ''effective and sustained basis.'' This decision will impact roughly 20,000 more Coloradans, and beneficiaries of these plans can expect cancellation notices in July.

The disappointment and frustration over a canceled plan that your family once enjoyed is made worse by the rising costs of the remaining plans, and that is what many Americans are faced with today. After losing 750,000 of them in Colorado—losing the health insurance plans they were promised they could keep—they looked at the second promise made under ObamaCare—that this will lower the cost of health care. Now they are met with the second broken promise—the broken promise of cost. They were told they would see reduced costs with ObamaCare. Yet the Colorado Division of Insurance found that individual insurance premiums for 2016 on the Western Slope of Colorado rose by an average of 25.8 percent. The Western Slope of Colorado had a nearly 26-percent rate increase. When people think of Colorado, that is often the part of Colorado they think of most. Denver is on the Front Range. The mountains have the ski communities. The rural communities have farming and agriculture. The mining communities and the oil and gas industries are on the Western Slope. These rural areas watched their health insurance premiums increase by 26 percent—premiums that were promised would be going down.

A woman who lives on the Western Slope was recently interviewed by the Denver Post. She said she saw her premium cost alone rise from $300 per month to $1,828 per month, or nearly $22,000 a year in increased costs. She says:

> It's actually like another mortgage payment. I have friends who are uninsured right now because they can't afford it. Insurance is hard up here.

The Western Slope of Colorado had two promises broken—the promise that if you liked your health care, you could keep it and that this would lower the cost of your health care. They had an increase of nearly 26 percent. If you live on the Western Slope of Colorado, you saw your increase go from a premium of $300 a month to over $1,800 per month—a $22,000 a year increase. This is incredible.

In 2014, a study found that nearly 150,000 Coloradans saw their insurance become 77 percent more expensive. Where is the promise of ObamaCare? Where are the people who supported the Affordable Care Act today defending this law, defending the promise, or explaining how these promises weren't broken? They are not here because they can't explain it. They know the promise was broken. They know that 750,000 people had their promises broken. In Colorado alone, there are people facing 26-percent and 77-percent increases. As we approach the new rates for 2017, it appears there will be no limit to the additional costs that Coloradans will have to bear as a result of this poorly conceived partisan law.

Marilyn Tavenner, president and CEO of America's Health Insurance Plans, or AHIP, served as a key Obama administration health official as Administrator of CMS. She has testified multiple times before committees of the House and Senate and has made warnings that the Affordable Care Act premium increases are coming. She predicted that the increases for open enrollment in 2017 will be higher than ever before. This is coming from a former administration official who helped run ObamaCare and was in the room during the discussions and the crafting of policies of ObamaCare.

In Colorado, insurers submitted their initial premium bids last Friday, May 13. We will soon know the rates that have been approved by the Colorado Department of Insurance in late September or early October, but it looks like Coloradans are in for yet another rude awakening. The people in Colorado have already had their health insurance plans canceled, and more are losing their policies in July of this year and trying to figure out how to make ends meet. If they are in a situation like the one I spoke of before—the example I used before—this person is going to have to figure out over the next year how they are going to basically create a $22,000 a year payment they didn't face before.

I was speaking to an executive with an insurance company who said they believe the rates they will be submitting for increases this year to their department of insurance commissioner will be between 60 and 70 percent. That is a 60- and 70-percent insurance rate increase under ObamaCare for the 2017 cycle. Premiums are expected to rise and many parts of the country are going to experience double-digit rate hikes. Plans are getting canceled, plans are getting more expensive, yet the ObamaCare mandates continue.

I believe what we need in this country is greater competition and greater choice. That is what President Obama promised in the marketplace, but data shows that because of unbearable bureaucratic hurdles, competition has actually decreased.

On Sunday, the Wall Street Journal published an article titled ''Insurance Options Dwindle in Some Rural Regions.'' I live in a very rural part of Colorado, on the Eastern Plains, as opposed to the Western Slope, which we spoke of before. I live in a town of about 3,000 people. The nearest big town is 60 miles away, and that town has 9,000 people. The article in the Wall Street Journal explains how rural areas have experienced the greatest decline in competition and how many rural counties will only have one insurance plan to choose from. I think most people understand that rural areas aren't exactly the wealthiest areas in the Nation. There are pockets of wealth, absolutely, as there are in most places, but by and large our rural communities represent some of the poorest and least economically driven counties in the country.

A Kaiser Family Foundation study found that over 650 counties across this country will have only 1 insurer on the exchanges to choose from during the open enrollment in 2017. This is a number which is up by 225 counties from 2016. Let me say that again. There are 650 counties across this country that will only have 1 choice when it comes to open enrollment. They will only have one plan to choose from under ObamaCare. This is the plan for competition that the Affordable Care Act was supposed to address. But instead of adding more insurers to the marketplace, it actually resulted in fewer insurers in the marketplace. We will see 225 additional counties down to 1 choice in 2017. These 650 counties are 70 percent rural, and these rural areas are fearful that the dwindling competition will create a monopoly and costs will continue to rise.

The President also insisted that the competition would increase through consumer-run co-ops. Over 80,000 Coloradans felt the impact of this broken promise when Colorado HealthOP was declared to be insolvent by the Colorado insurance commissioner and expeditiously liquidated.

To date, 12 of the 23 co-ops created by ObamaCare have been shut down. That is an additional 80,000 people in Colorado who had their insurance policies canceled because ObamaCare created a system that allowed insurance co-ops and companies to bank on a bailout. They were able to bank on a bailout and use that to create some aura of economic feasibility on their balance sheets. When the government couldn't provide any bailouts—because the government shouldn't be in the business of bailouts—the ObamaCare promises were shown for what they truly were—poor policy. Collectively the failed co-ops were loaned over $1 billion in taxpayer money to help get them off the ground. Now, with these failures, the taxpayers will never get their money paid back and tens of thousands of people lost their insurance.

Today, this Congress has shown a path forward. With each passing disaster of ObamaCare, it continues to become clearer how much of a failure this law is. Americans continue to demand

real health care reform that will increase competition, reduce costs, and expand access to lifesaving care that improves the quality of their lives and, most importantly, will provide predictability and sustainability in the marketplace.

This crisis demands real leadership, and I continue to remain committed to working with my colleagues on free-market solutions that will bring about real change that will actually uphold the promises that were made.

In Colorado, I heard from countless individuals who have been displaced from their plans, and it is time for Congress to stand up as well.

The Denver Post article that I referred to about the broken health care system in Colorado's Western Slope begins with a statement from Terri Newland of Glenwood Springs, CO. This is the headline: ''Colorado mountain residents struggle to pay for health insurance.'' The story starts like this: ''The new era of affordable health care bypassed Terri Newland.''

Millions of Americans have seen the Affordable Care Act's era of affordable health care bypass them, and this body's responsibility for that law can only be made up by repealing the law and putting in its place a bill that actually increases the quality of care and decreases the cost of care.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNITED STATES-CUBA RELATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, since December of 2014, when the United States and Cuba ended 54 years of diplomatic isolation that had accomplished nothing good for the people of Cuba or the United States, there has been an explosion of engagement between our two countries. The number of U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba has skyrocketed. Talks between both governments resulted in agreements to resume direct airline, ocean ferry, and mail service. There is expanded cooperation in a wide range of bilateral and regional issues. These are encouraging steps, but there is a long road ahead.

For more than half a century, whatever problems there were in Cuba the Cuban Government could blame on the United States because of our embargo. Some Members of the House and Senate have expressed disappointment, and criticized President Obama's opening to Cuba because the restoration of diplomatic relations has not quickly brought about dramatic changes in Cuba's repressive political system and did not reverse 54 years of history in 54 days.

Well, these Members of Congress are either naive or simply prefer to ignore the positive changes that are occurring and choose to ignore or dismiss the views of the overwhelming majority of Cubans and Americans who support the restoration of relations. They continue to defend a discredited policy of isolation that through all those decades, and Republican and Democratic administrations, failed to achieve any of its objectives.

As President Obama said, if you try something for 50 years and it doesn't work, it is time to try something else. In the past 15 months, although the naysayers will not publicly admit it, the Cuban people have a sense of hope about the future that has not existed since the time of the 1959 revolution. I know. I have seen and heard it on my trips there.

It is also important to recognize that the majority of Cubans alive today were born after the revolution. And just as Cuba's population has changed, so the world has changed.

Overwhelmingly, Cuba's younger generation has experienced enough of a paternalistic, Communist dictatorship and economic stagnation to know that is not what they want. It is no surprise that their reaction to President Obama's extraordinary speech in Havana was warmly and enthusiastically received by them, while several top Cuban officials, sensing the inspiring impact of the President's words, felt compelled to criticize our President. I was there for that visit. I saw the reaction of the Cuban people.

The raising of the American flag in Havana last August symbolized the beginning of a new era in U.S.-Cuban relations, but change was happening in Cuba well before then, and it is going to continue at its own pace. Ultimately, the Cuban people—not the United States—will determine that pace and what a post-Castro Cuba will look like.

My wife Marcelle and I stood there at our Embassy as the flag went up, and we heard the cheers of the Cuban people standing just outside the gates of the Embassy.

We can contribute to the process of change in positive ways. One way is through student exchanges. Last month, Vermont students from Burlington, Essex, Shelburne, and Bristol traveled to Cuba to participate in a week of Little League baseball games and cultural exchange. Marcelle and I went to Burlington to see them off. I cannot begin to describe thrill in their faces, the excitement they felt. We gave them an American flag to take with them. The Vermonters didn't speak much Spanish, and the Cubans spoke almost no English, but it didn't really matter. They had translators, and the game of baseball is a language across cultures.

Here is a picture of the Vermonters with the Cuban ball players holding the American flag that we gave them, the Cuban flag, and a Vermont flag. This was taken in Cuba. I love to take photographs. I wish I had been there to take that one. We know a picture is worth a thousand words. They show how just a few days of competing on a baseball diamond can help bridge a half-century divide between two countries and cultures. Anybody who has children—or grandchildren—who play baseball or Little League ball recognizes these smiles. We know what it means. They don't speak the same language, but they speak one language, which is the game of baseball.

The Vermonters voiced high praise for the Cuban players who won all the games, except the all-star game at the end when they shared players and were evenly matched.

But winning isn't everything. As the Vermont players recounted after returning home, it was not only a fun week of baseball, but one of the most rewarding parts of the trip was the time spent after the game getting to know the Cuban players, getting to know their families, and learning about life in Cuba.

This is actually the second baseball exchange involving Vermont and Cuban Little Leaguers, the first being in 2008 when a group from Vermont and New Hampshire played a series of games on the outskirts of Havana. One of those players said the team went to Cuba just to have fun: ''We are not here to win. If they hear about us, maybe other teams will want to do this or maybe even get a Cuban team to the United States to play.''

Lisa Brighenti in my office took this photograph. I think it says it all. You can't see their faces, but we know one is Cuban and one is American. These are kids playing a Little League game. And think of what this picture says to all of us.

Children don't care about the politics. They don't even care about the differences in language. They just care about the things that unite them.

I remember speaking with President Obama shortly after he became President and saying we had to change our policy toward Cuba. I told him there would be a memo saying he should hold tight, the Castros will be gone any day. I pointed out that same memo was sent to President Eisenhower and President Kennedy and President Johnson and President Nixon, and he said: I get your point.

Nothing changed during more than half a century when we tried to isolate Cuba. Now I think change will come.

Our governments remain far apart on key issues. A few Members of Congress continue to stubbornly obstruct efforts to end the embargo, but as every poll has shown in this country the American people—like these young Vermont athletes—are showing us a way forward by breaking down barriers on their own.

I am so proud of these young Vermonters. They know. They know what the future looks like. As for the rest of us, let's step toward the future with them.

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.

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

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

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business, with time reserved for the Democrats.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2577, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2577) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Collins amendment No. 3896, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Lee) amendment No. 3897 (to amendment No. 3896), to prohibit the use of funds to carry out a rule and notice of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

McConnell (for Nelson/Rubio) amendment No. 3898 (to amendment No. 3896), making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2016 to respond to Zika virus.

McConnell (for Cornyn) modified amendment No. 3899 (to amendment No. 3896), making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell (for Blunt) modified amendment No. 3900 (to amendment No. 3896), Zika response and preparedness.

Collins (for Blunt) amendment No. 3946 (to amendment No. 3900), to require the periodic submission of spending plan updates to the Committee on Appropriations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I thought it would be useful for our colleagues if I gave a brief update on where we are. First of all, I think it is important to know that more than 70 Senators had input into the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development and Related Agencies funding bill. I am sure if you added the number of Senators who weighed in on the VA-Military Construction bill, the number is even higher.

We worked very hard in the subcommittee process and the full committee process to incorporate suggestions from many of our colleagues to produce a bipartisan bill. The ranking member, my friend and colleague Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island, has been a tremendous leader in this effort. We have worked in a very transparent and collaborative manner to bring us where we are today.

Since we started the debate on this bill, we have had 17 amendments that have been adopted by unanimous consent on the two divisions of the bill. That has required a great deal of work, but I think it shows the good faith of both of the managers of the bill and the sponsors of these amendments that we were able to work together, compromise, negotiate, and get them adopted in three separate packages.

We are continuing that process. More and more amendments have been filed, and we are continuing to see how we can best accommodate the concerns that have been raised by our colleagues while keeping the essential principles of this bill and the desire to make sure we keep on track with the appropriations process.

I believe it is a great credit to the Senate, to the leaders, and to Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, who has made as a goal that we would report all of the appropriations bills, bring them to the floor, one by one, for full and open debate, the way it should be, and that we get our work done so we avoid the situation of either having a series of continuing resolutions—which lock in last year's priorities and lead to wasteful spending, which is not a good solution and ends up costing us more because agencies can't plan, they can't do their contracting activity—or having the other unfortunate outcome of bundling all 12 of the appropriations bills into one huge omnibus bill that is thousands of pages long and is very difficult for Members to know exactly what is in the bill.

That is not a good way to legislate. It is not in keeping with our responsibilities. I am proud the Appropriations Committee in this Chamber is doing its job and that the Republican leader set as the goal that we are starting the appropriations process earlier than ever before. The Energy and Water appropriations bill was passed earlier than any appropriations bill in literally decades. I would note that would not be possible without the cooperation we have had from our Democratic colleagues on the committee. We have worked as teams. That is the way the process should work. I could not have a better partner in that regard than Senator JACK REED.

We also had a very vigorous debate yesterday on the funding that is necessary to combat the very serious threat posed by the Zika virus. We know this virus causes very severe birth defects, in some cases, and has been linked to Guillain-Barre syndrome, which can lead to paralysis and even death. So this is a serious public health threat.

A couple of weeks ago, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON and I went to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA. We were briefed on the threat posed by Zika, which is carried by a mosquito that is known as the cockroach in the mosquito world because it is so difficult to get rid of. It can reproduce in water in a container that is size of a bottle cap. We know Zika has already become an epidemic in Puerto Rico and that there are confirmed cases in nearly every State in the Union. That is because, even if you live in a far Northern State where the type of mosquito that causes Zika is not present, such as the State represented by the Presiding Officer, Zika is still a threat. People travel. We know it can be transmitted through sexual contact. That is why we are seeing Zika showing up in virtually every State. We need to get ahead of this epidemic. That is why we had three different approaches offered yesterday on the Senate floor. Cloture was successfully invoked on a bipartisan proposal offered by Senators BLUNT and MURRAY that provides more than $1 billion to counter effectively the threat of Zika.

The last thing we want is not to have acted against this serious public health threat and find that pregnant women, who are especially at risk, are going to be infected and, in some cases, have children who will have a lifetime of serious disabilities as a result of the impact of Zika. We are hearing more and more about the dangers of the Zika virus every day.

I have great confidence in the CDC, which is the major interface with our local and State public health agencies, to do an excellent job on prevention and education of providers and the public. They are also working on diagnostic tests so we can have a more rapid response to Zika. The National Institutes of Health is working on a vaccine which we hope will be available in another year, but in the meantime this truly is a public health emergency.

I believe the Senate deserves great credit for putting the Zika supplemental on our bill and providing adequate funding to do the job, to do the job that is necessary to counter this very serious threat.

We will have to proceed to a vote on the underlying Blunt-Murray amendment now that we have invoked cloture by 68 votes. I would note also that there is a 1 p.m. deadline today on filing first-degree amendments to the substitute bill. I also anticipate that this afternoon we will have a debate on Senator LEE's amendment, which has to do with a rule the Department of

Housing and Urban Development has issued to implement provisions of the landmark 1968 Fair Housing Act.

In addition, Senator REED and Senator COCHRAN and I have offered an alternative amendment. At some point, we will have votes related both to the Collins-Reed-Cochran amendment and the Lee amendment. That is going to be a very important debate this afternoon on a very important policy that I believe helps to further the goals of the 1968 civil rights-era Fair Housing Act. That will be an important debate on this bill.

In the meantime, we are continuing to work with our colleagues on other amendments, as the Presiding Officer is well aware. I believe we are continuing to make progress. I thank my colleagues for coming to the floor, for working with us. That is the update I wanted to give my colleagues at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

ARKANSANS OF THE WEEK

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I would like to honor all Arkansas law enforcement officers as this week's Arkansans of the Week. This week marks the 54th National Police Week. On Sunday, we marked National Peace Officers Memorial Day, a day set aside by President Kennedy in 1962 to honor those law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Arkansas has over 7,000 law enforcement officers who protect our State every day. These men and women willingly put themselves in harm's way to ensure the safety of our residents, and maintain order in our State. National Police Week is also a time to remember and honor the nearly 300 Arkansans who have lost their lives in the line of duty as law enforcement officers. Their service and sacrifice is not forgotten, and Arkansas is safer because of their service.

There are many different types of law enforcement officers, but each plays an important and distinct role in our safety. There are officers, such as Chris Bunch of the Paragould Police Department, who protect Arkansas' students as a school resource officer, officers such as Jeff Prescott and Sergeant Greg Herron, who are retiring from the Rison Police Department after 30 and 20 years of service, respectively, and Corporal Kristi Bennett of the Texarkana Police Department, who serves as the public information and education officer. Kristi recently received the Silent Wilbur Award, which is given to an officer who shows leadership and works to motivate and move their community forward.

These are just a few of the long list of Arkansas law enforcement officers who serve our State, but there are many more where those names come from.

I know I join all Arkansans in extending our sincere thanks and appreciation to all Arkansas law enforcement officers, not only this week but every week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

OBAMACARE

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, we are all too familiar with the famous promises President Obama made to sell the American people on his ObamaCare proposal, and yes, I said, ''sell.''

We now know from White House revelations made by former Members who work for the President that the White House has been actively engaged in selling their program, selling their proposals to the American people through some admittedly sophisticated ways in using social media to achieve a goal. Just recently, White House National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes did an interview and discussed openly how the White House manipulated the media and the American people to sell the administration's Iranian nuclear agreement.

With all the authority given to an American President, President Obama made this statement to sell ObamaCare to the American people—and I quote: ''No matter how we reform health care,'' the President said, ''We will keep this promise to the American people: If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor, period. If you like your health care plan, you'll be able to keep your health care plan, period.''

Why did the President add ''period'' to that statement? The statements are clear. If you like your doctor, you keep your doctor. If you like your health care plan, you keep your health care plan. When you add ''period,'' it basically says: Take my word for it. Count on it. It is a done deal. I am telling you, the American people, I am making you a promise—period. You can take this one to the bank.

I am not often a reader of the New York Times, but a recent headline in the paper caught my attention: ''Sorry, We Don't Take Obamacare.'' The article discusses the growing number of doctors and hospitals who are no longer accepting patients who are covered by ObamaCare insurance plans. So much for ''If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor, period.'' So much for that promise.

It is not just medical professionals who are saying no to ObamaCare. The largest health insurer, UnitedHealth Group, recently announced it will stop selling individual ObamaCare plans in Indiana next year because such plans simply are not profitable. It is pretty hard to run a business if you are not making a profit. If you are losing money, you can't pay the employees. You can't produce your product. UnitedHealthcare has said: We have lost so much money under this ObamaCare mandate that we are going to stop selling individual plans.

According to the Indianapolis Business Journal:

> In April, UnitedHealth said it would drop out of all but a ''handful'' of state exchanges where it sells individual Obamacare plans. It had said the exchange market was smaller and riskier than it had expected.

I think I heard a lot of the Republican Members on the floor basically saying what has been written and endorsed and imposed on the American people is something that simply doesn't make economic sense. There are going to be insurance companies that simply are not going to be able to not only survive on this basis but will not make any profit whatsoever. Obviously, with the case of UnitedHealthcare, they are dropping this because they simply cannot expose themselves to this kind of risk. It is said that they will lose $650 million on the plans this year alone, and UnitedHealthcare sold coverage in 34 States on the ObamaCare exchanges.

The UnitedHealthcare situation is not unique. According to the Indiana Business Journal, ''Roughly half of the health insurers selling plans on the Obamacare exchange in Indiana lost money on the business last year.''

So much for the President's promise: ''If you like your health care plan, you'll be able to keep your health care plan, period.'' So much for the President's promise.

Decreased access to providers is just one of many problems with ObamaCare. Another major problem is the rising cost of coverage for those who are on this plan. Oh, yes, there were other promises made by the President here also. You may recall the President promised that the annual health care costs would be cut by $2,500 per family if ObamaCare were enacted. As recently as 2012, we were told by the President that the health insurance premiums paid by small businesses and individuals will go down because of ObamaCare—another promise to the American people: Don't worry, folks. . . . Your costs are going to go down, not up.

Despite that promise that ObamaCare will cut costs and make coverage more affordable for families and small businesses, many Americans are experiencing higher premiums or paying outrageous deductibles when they purchase coverage through the ObamaCare exchanges.

I have been on this floor documenting literally hundreds, if not thousands, of inputs to my office through phone calls, emails, and so forth, saying: Wait a minute. I just got a notice from my insurance company that my deductible is skyrocketing from $1,000 to $5,000 or to $7,500 or $9,000. I can't afford this kind of stuff. I thought we were promised this wouldn't happen. It is not just the deductibles, it is the copays.

All of a sudden, I walk in and a doctor's office says: Wait a second. You have to put down the cash copay here. My copays have just gone through the roof.

Premium increases have dramatically increased. The average premium

for benchmark silver plans in the Federal exchange, the ObamaCare exchange, is rising by 7.5 percent this year.

In Indiana, premiums for policies on the ObamaCare marketplace have gone up by an average of 14.4 percent per year since ObamaCare was implemented, a total increase. Get this. We have had a total increase in premiums under ObamaCare in Indiana totaling 71.5 percent.

Tell the American people: You have my word, period. This isn't going to happen.

It happens, and what do we hear? What is this rhetoric we hear coming out of the White House? This is one of the most wonderful things that has ever happened.

In the campaign—I mean, those running for office from the President's party are simply saying: You have to elect us to preserve this wonderful ObamaCare health plan.

Is it any wonder the American people are turning out in record numbers to vote against this kind of thing?

These are just a few of the many broken promises and the many problems with the ObamaCare law. There are many other things I could get into, such as the failure of many State-run exchanges. Some States only have one exchange or no exchanges left. The rollout of the plan—which cost American taxpayers hundreds of millions of hard-earned tax dollars because this rollout was so botched nobody could get into the computers or even on the phone—the thing was rushed to meet a deadline, and they weren't prepared. It was hundreds of millions of dollars just to get it on board so people could begin to ask questions as to what they were mandated they had to do. So from increasing premiums and increased health care costs to failures to keep your doctor, to reduced access to doctors and hospitals, the bottom line is ObamaCare is not working for the American people.

Rather than making health care more affordable and successful, ObamaCare has actually driven up health care costs and a decreased choice of doctors for too many Americans and too many American businesses. It is long past time for repeal of the President's disastrous health care law. We need to replace it with more effective and clearly patient-centered solutions.

Despite numerous attempts by Republicans to repeal this fatally flawed legislation, all efforts have been rejected by the President and the White House, but we are approaching the time when the American people can express their response to these broken promises this administration has made in relation to ObamaCare.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak once again about the rising cost of health care in the United States.

It has been a few months since I came to the floor to comment on the state of our health care system. Sadly, over that time period, we have seen little, if anything, in the way of good news. Indeed, while the United States has some of the best health care law in the world, recent headlines point to serious problems with how that system is working.

A little over 6 years ago, the Democrats on both sides of the Capitol and on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue forced the so-called Affordable Care Act on the American people without any Republican votes or any serious attempt to get bipartisan consensus. The result was an attempt at overhaul of roughly one-sixth of the American economy crafted with the input and support of only one political party.

As I have said before, given its size and scope, the passage and signing of ObamaCare was probably the largest exercise of pure partnership in our Nation's history. Quite frankly, our country hasn't been the same since.

At the time the law was passed, Republicans made a number of predictions about the negative impact this law would have for people buying health insurance and for our economy overall. Six years later, many of those predictions have already come to pass, with many more on the way.

Still, looking back on it, I think we may have undersold our case at the time. I don't think any of us could have predicted just how detrimental the law would be, not only for the United States but on our Nation's public discourse and our government institutions. As a result of ObamaCare, the divide between Republicans and Democrats has gotten deeper, voters have become more cynical and distrusting of our government and our leaders, and the government itself has expanded its powers well beyond the authority granted in the statute.

At the time the law was passed, many of us issued warnings of what was to come, though much of that seemed to have been drowned out by the sounds of celebration emanating from the Capitol and the White House.

To quote some of my friends on the other side, passage of this law was a ''big bleeping deal'' because once the law was passed, the American people would finally get a chance to see what was in it. In the midst of all that self-adulation, many promises were made about what the law would do for individuals and families throughout the United States of America.

Chief among those many promises was a claim that as a result of in law, the cost of health care for the average American family would go down. That is what the American people were told in 2010. In 2016, the law has been implemented and in effect for 3 years. Despite those many promises, average health insurance premiums have gone up every single year. As insurers begin to make decisions about rates and availability for the 2017 plan year, we are looking at significantly higher premiums, double-digit increases in some places, for the fourth straight year.

Reports about these premium increases seem to be coming in on a daily basis. For example, in Virginia we know that among the five largest carriers in the State, premiums could go up anywhere from 9 percent to 37 percent, with a likely average of around 18 percent.

In Iowa, tens of thousands of people who buy their insurance from one major carrier will likely see increases in the neighborhood of 40 percent. In Oregon, the State's largest insurer in the individual market has requested a premium increase of nearly 30 percent. That number, 30 percent, is similar to the rate hikes requested by some of the largest insurers in Maryland as well.

I could go on and on. I am not just cherry-picking States, this is a trend. Unfortunately, it is having a real-world impact. People are concerned, and they have every right to be. According to a Gallup poll a few weeks back, health care costs are the No. 1 financial concern for families in the United States. People are more concerned about health care costs than they are about low wages, housing, education, or even debt. As premiums go up, I can imagine that the number of families concerned about health care costs will continue to go up as well.

In addition to higher premiums for 2017, we are also hearing many insurers will be opting to drop out of the exchange markets. For example, one of the country's largest insurers has, so far, decided to pull out of more than two dozen State exchanges due to mounting losses. This is the same company that currently offers plans in 34 different States but has said it will continue to do so only in a small number of States going forward.

In Utah, we recently saw the closing of an ObamaCare co-op that covered roughly 45,000 people, all of whom had to find health insurance at the beginning of this year. Indeed, 12 of the 23 co-ops around the country have already closed, further reducing the number of health insurance options available to people throughout the country.

The Obama administration is trying to downplay these reports and convince people that a smaller number of insurers in various markets will not be a problem. But the impact should be obvious: When an insurer—let alone many insurers—drops out of a market, the patients and consumers in that market are left with fewer choices. And in any market, for any product, when consumers have reduced options, it generally leads to both lower quality and higher prices. That is definitely true in the health insurance market.

The question many are asking is, Why is this happening? Why are so many insurers raising premiums or choosing not to participate in the ObamaCare exchanges? The answer is relatively simple: ObamaCare is not working and can't work the way it was designed.

I think it would be helpful at this point to briefly review its timeline. From the time the law was first drafted, the Affordable Care Act included a number of insurance coverage mandates designed to dictate what insurance companies had to offer and what coverage patients would have to buy. Of course, imposing those kinds of requirements was bound to increase the cost of insurance across the board.

However, if you will recall, during the congressional debate over the law, the President and his supporters repeatedly claimed that because the law was going to require everyone to have health insurance, more young and healthy patients would be coerced into the insurance risk pools. According to their arguments, this shift in the market would more than compensate for the costs associated with the new insurance coverage mandates. In short, they claimed they could expand coverage requirements and keep premiums from going up.

Now, fast forward to 2013, which is when the exchanges went online. At that time, insurers entered the exchanges and set premium rates, presumably assuming the law would work as promised. As it turns out, that assumption was ill informed in many cases, and insurance companies across the board found they had priced their premiums too low. The expansion of younger, healthier, less risky market participants never came and, as a result, the industry suffered huge losses.

According to a report released last month by the Mercatus Center, in 2014 alone, insurers nationwide suffered more than $2 billion in losses for plans sold on the exchanges. This happened despite subsidies they received from the government to mitigate the risk of covering a mostly unknown population.

As we fast forward once again to the present day, we see that this situation has not corrected itself over the first 3 plan years under ObamaCare. In fact, it has only gotten worse. Premiums are going up, enrollment is lagging far behind the initial rosy estimates, and millions of the younger, healthier population of insured people the system needs to properly function are either opting to pay the fines for going without insurance, going undetected because they do not file tax returns, or staying on their parents insurance for as long as legally possible.

A recent Blue Cross Blue Shield report compared three separate groups among the carrier's membership. These groups were, No. 1, individual members newly enrolled in the ObamaCare exchanges; No. 2, members who had individual plans prior to the passage of ObamaCare; and No. 3, members currently enrolled in Blue Cross employer plans. According to the study, the people newly enrolled in insurance under ObamaCare are significantly less healthy and require significantly more services than the other two groups. The cost of care among that group is, not surprisingly, significantly more expensive.

That is remarkable. If we assume what is happening in this study is in any way reflective of what is happening nationwide, not only did the Affordable Care Act fail to create more favorable risk pools for insurers and patients sharing the costs, but the risk pools are, overall, more risky now than they were before.

While a number of complicated factors have likely contributed to this outcome, the major reason we are seeing this result is relatively simple: ObamaCare did little, if anything, to address health care costs. As a result, young and healthy people who are less in need of health insurance are making the calculation that it would be less costly for them to go uninsured and pay a fine than purchase insurance through an exchange. Indeed, in countless polls and surveys of still uninsured Americans, we have seen the biggest reason people refuse to buy health insurance is that it costs too much.

Under this status quo, insurers can stay afloat only in one of two ways: They can raise premiums, which makes their coverage even more costly, driving more young and healthy people out of the market, further depleting the risk pools, or they can exit unprofitable markets. Currently, we are seeing insurers do both, ensuring that the exchanges—and with them the entire system created by the Affordable Care Act—are becoming more unstable all the time.

Let's be clear: There is no solution to this problem that keeps the current system in place. There is no way to reset or rearrange the incentives under the current system. There is no minor tinkering that can fix these problems. It is not simply going to correct itself over time. Quite frankly, the system is damaged beyond repair. The only thing we can do to give options to patients and bring down costs is create a different system.

Some of us have put forward plans to do just that. I have a plan that I put forward with Senator BURR and Chairman UPTON over in the House. It is called the Patient CARE Act, which I have mentioned a number of times here on the floor. However, ours isn't the only solution out there. There are a number of ideas. We just need to get serious about addressing these issues. But that will not happen—that will not happen—so long as people refuse to acknowledge there is even a problem.

The supporters and authors of the Affordable Care Act have gotten pretty good over the years at mining the available data for favorable citations and moving the goalposts for what qualifies as ''success'' for this law in order to fool the American people. Fortunately, the people are not buying it.

Since the day the law passed, 90 percent of national polls show that more people oppose ObamaCare than support it. I don't see that changing as long as premiums keep going up and people are left with fewer and fewer options.

However, as always, I am an optimist. I believe we can make some progress here. I currently chair the Senate committee with jurisdiction over many of the most consequential elements of ObamaCare. Over the next few months, I plan to do something that the authors of ObamaCare never did—listen. I am going to take the time to engage with stakeholders from across the spectrum to get a clear sense of what needs to be done to bring down health care costs for American families and get skyrocketing premiums, deductibles, and out-of-pocket limits under control.

I plan to hear from experts, industry leaders, and advocacy groups to get their ideas in order to arrive at a workable solution. Then I am going to solicit the help of anyone in Congress—from either side of the aisle—who is willing to put in the necessary work to right this ship and craft meaningful legislation to address these problems.

As I said, the cost of health care is the No. 1 financial concern for American families. It is an issue that deserves the attention of everyone in this Chamber. Finding a solution will require not only that we acknowledge the failings of the system created by the Affordable Care Act but that we also work together to address these failings in a productive, less political way—in a bipartisan way, if you will.

Now, that is my focus when it comes to health care, Mr. President. I hope all of my colleagues will be willing to work with me on this effort.

With that, 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. REED. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

AMENDMENT NO. 3897

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to speak on Lee amendment No. 3897 that deals with the Federal Fair Housing Act, and I want to describe why many of my colleagues and I are opposed to the amendment. The amendment would eliminate the current affirmative furthering fair housing enforcement regulations promulgated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I want to go into that.

I will start with a personal story. Before I was in partisan elected politics, I was a civil rights lawyer in Richmond for 17 years. About two-thirds of my legal practice was fair housing cases. I will just tell you the story about my first client and two lessons I learned from my first client that bear upon this amendment.

I had barely hung my diploma on the wall in my office, where I was the junior person among 12 lawyers, when a client was referred to our firm. They

did what is often the case; they sent it to the newest person. Somebody needed some help—pro bono assistance. This young woman's name was Loraine.

Loraine was almost exactly my age. I think I was 25 at the time, and she was the same age. I had just moved to a new city and had just gone out to find my apartment in that new city and started my first real job after school. She was kind of in the same place—just out of college, just starting a new job, just looking for an apartment.

Loraine had been at work one day and had read in the newspaper an ad for an apartment in a neighborhood she liked. So she called the landlord and said: Hey, I am really interested in your apartment. Is it still available? Yes, it is available. Could I come over on my lunch hour to take a look? Sure, come on over.

Well, about an hour later she went over to the apartment, and when she met the owner, the owner looked at her and said: Oh, I'm sorry, this place has just been rented.

This was in the fall of 1984.

Loraine drove back to her office and had this sinking suspicion that when the person saw she was African American, maybe that was why suddenly the available apartment turned into one that wasn't available. When she got back to the office, she asked a Caucasian colleague to make a call to the same owner and ask about the apartment. Within 20 minutes the colleague had made the call and asked: Hey, I'm calling about this apartment. Is it still available? The owner, who had just turned Loraine away, said: Sure, it's still available. When do you want to come over and see it?

That was the first lawsuit I drafted. I know I am speaking to a Presiding Officer who is an attorney and who has done the same thing. For the first client who was truly mine, the first pleading I drafted was a Federal fair housing action. With the testimony of the coworker, it was a slam-dunk case. We settled it shortly after we filed it. So in that sense, I don't have a big momentous trial story or anything to tell. Nevertheless, it made a huge impression on me as a brand-new attorney for two reasons. First, in hearing my client tell me the story, I understood more deeply than I ever had how important your home is, how important housing is. I think most of us feel that what is important in life is relationships—not things, not physical objects. But where you live is more like a part of your person than it is a physical thing.

As she described this experience, obviously, that was what made it so painful. But the thing that really stuck with me about this was this: She and I were so similar in many ways—about the same age, excited to be coming out to find a house, having a new job. But my experience—I found an apartment with no problem for my wife and me—was a positive one. But Loraine's experience of being turned away—and then having the sinking suspicion that she was turned away because of her skin color and then finding out that was the case—was a very negative and painful one. What really struck me, as I talked to her, was that the pain was not just the pain of something in the past tense. The pain was also the anticipation: What about the next time I look for a house? What about the next time? Am I going to be faced with this same differential treatment because of the color of my skin?

That first case I had suddenly made me the expert in Virginia on fair housing law—doing one case that was settled within a matter of weeks. So for the next 17 years, this was the heart of my legal practice—representing people who had been turned away from housing because of their race, disabilities—apartments, houses, mortgages, homeowner's insurance policies. I learned an awful lot when I did it.

One of the things I learned was what a superb piece of legislation the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 is. It was the last of the major pieces of civil rights legislation done in the 1960s. There was the 1964 act of public accommodations, employment discriminations, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In 1968, the Federal Fair Housing Act was really the last of those big pieces of Federal legislation. I am proud to say that even over the course of my legal career, from 1984 until I stopped practicing in early 2002, in Virginia and elsewhere there was significant improvement. The Federal Fair Housing Act really did open the doors so that people could live where they wanted to live and as their resources would allow them to live there. Yet, if we just looked at the statistics about residential segregation, in all 50 States, we would see that we still have more work to do. There are still barriers that people face, and some of them are just absolute, sharp, and clear barriers, and some of them are more subtle.

HUD was directed by GAO in 2010 to do a study because they had been encouraged as part of the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 to encourage affirmatively to advance the fair housing mission through agencies that are funded by HUD. The case that I described with Loraine was a private landlord, and that is not necessarily relevant to this topic except to underline how important the law is and how critical housing is. But there are circumstances in which HUD is giving funding to organizations.

I was a mayor, and my city had a housing authority. HUD funding went into the housing authority in my city, just like it goes into housing authorities all around the United States. I was a Governor, and Governors got CDBG funds that came from HUD. So whether it is to a city, county, State, or to a CDBG program that then gets allocated out—even to worthy and strong housing nonprofits—HUD was under a directive when it was funding organizations to make sure they were affirmatively advancing the commands of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. HUD was doing this sort of in fits and starts and in a little bit of an extemporaneous way. In 2010, the GAO said: You have an obligation to affirmatively further fair housing, but you are not exactly doing it the right way. Can you really look at guidance that you can give to your grantees?

Now, this was really important—that Federal grantees get this guidance and affirmatively further fair housing because it wasn't just the private landlords of the world that had done bad things in the housing industry. In fact, there had been a lot of policies of State and local governments, and even the Federal Government, that had cut against fair housing. There were zoning laws that cut against fair housing. There were Federal appraisal standards to get FHA loans that cut against fair housing, and there were other Federal policies that actually cut directly against the goal of allowing people to live where they wanted to live.

So that is the reason why these grantees that are receiving Federal money, are in a unique position to do something about it, and often are inheriting a history where in the past they did the wrong things, need to be encouraged and given clear guidance about how to affirmatively further fair housing.

So to follow the GAO directive, HUD, under this administration—and I give Secretary Castro huge credit for getting this to the goal line—did the work to come up with clear guidance so that organizations that receive HUD funding know what it means to affirmatively encourage fair housing and so that it is not just a vague platitude or something you pay lip service to but you don't actually do it.

The rule announced by HUD is pretty straightforward. It doesn't mandate changes to local zoning laws. It doesn't require people to move. It doesn't end local control of community planning and development. It allows communities to determine what the best strategies are to comply with the Fair Housing Act. It provides local communities with data and tools that are needed to make fair housing decisions, including allowing local communities to add any relevant local or regional data so that people can understand the effects of their actions.

It does include protected classes in the statute in the larger community planning process. It prevents the use of Federal resources to discriminate against protected classes of individuals. It simplifies compliance with the Fair Housing Act, and this is really important because a lot of small communities don't have a phalanx of lawyers to pour through all the laws and regs. So simplified compliance guidelines are helpful. It does not require grantees to collect new data and data they are not already collecting, and it encourages engagement with the local

community, including the real estate industry, residents, developers, and other organizations.

As somebody who was sitting on the other end of this as a mayor, and as somebody who was appointing members to a public housing agency in Richmond, I think this kind of guidance is actually very, very helpful. So I was heartened when the GAO directed HUD to do this work. HUD did a significant period of study and put out guidance under Secretary Castro's leadership. I think it is actually something that is helpful—not harmful—to those who are receiving HUD funds and should be using HUD funds to advance important goals, including the fair housing goals.

I know the Senator who is proposing the amendment—Lee amendment No. 3897. I know it is well-intentioned, and the intention might be to not put too many burdens and obligations on the shoulders of local planning officials or cities or counties. But as somebody who has been a mayor and been in that spot, guidance is helpful. I actually think this guidance gives clarity in an area where, before the guidance, there was some confusion. I think the guidance strikes the right balance.

I don't know exactly when this is going to be called for a vote. I gather soon. But I just wanted to take the floor and hearken back to the days before I ever knew I would be in politics and I was representing people who desperately needed to just be treated equally to everybody else when it came to their housing. This HUD regulation really furthers that goal in a positive way, and I think we should not eliminate it by accepting Lee amendment No. 3897. So, for that reason, I encourage my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I just want to thank the Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia for an excellent statement. As he has indicated, he comes to this issue from the perspective of an attorney who is an expert in the Fair Housing Act, which, as he notes, is a landmark civil rights law. But he also brings a very important perspective of having been a mayor who was the recipient of Federal funds and who looked to HUD for guidance on how to make sure that, when community development block grant monies, for example, were given to local communities, the communities used them in ways that carried out the goals of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. It is very valuable that he has both the technical understanding of an attorney who has practiced in this very field for many years and also as a municipal official who had to live with the Federal rules.

The fact is, as he indicated, the Fair Housing Act regulation that came out last year is intended to give clarity to local officials who are the recipients of Federal funds.

I am very much opposed to the amendment offered by Senator LEE that would prohibit any funding for carrying out HUD's affirmatively furthering fair housing rules.

It is important to recognize that this rule didn't just come out of the blue. It is based on a specific requirement included in the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which mandates that HUD ensure that the recipients of Federal funds not only prevent outright blatant discrimination but also act to affirmatively further the fair housing goals of the act.

In fact, Congress has repeatedly reinforced this concept in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act, and the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. All of those laws require HUD program recipients to affirmatively further fair housing. It is probably a phrase that most of us are not that aware of, and it does not come trippingly off of one's tongue. But it is an integral part of the 1968 civil rights law, the Fair Housing Act.

It is also important to remember that when we are discussing fair housing, we are not only talking about discrimination based on race but also discrimination based on disabilities, national origin, and even against families with children.

It is important to note that more than 50 percent of all reported complaints of housing discrimination are initiated by individuals with disabilities. That is one reason the Paralyzed Veterans of America organization has come out so strongly against the amendment that will be offered by Senator LEE.

In a letter issued by the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the organization notes:

> HUD's AFFH rule helps curb discrimination against people with disabilities, including veterans and the elderly. Each year, over 50% of all reported complaints of housing discrimination are initiated by people with disabilities.

The organization goes on to say:

> This alarming trend will continue and affects Americans returning from conflicts abroad with a disability and the growing percentage of elderly Americans with a disability. HUD's AFFH rule will help governments identify strategies and solutions to expand accessible and supportive housing choices for our veterans and elders with disabilities.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter from the Paralyzed Veterans of America be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA,
Washington, DC.

VOTE "NO" ON LEE ANTI-CIVIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Senator Mike Lee plans to introduce an amendment to the FY17 T-HUD/MilCon-VA appropriations bill which would prohibit HUD from implementing or enforcing its "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing" (AFFH) rule (FR–5173–P–01), keeping long-awaited guidance and data intended to help state and local govemments connect housing and community development dollars to neighborhood opportunity. Any limitation or reversal of HUD's AFFH rule will stop our nation from ensuring that federal investments connect every neighborhood to good schools, well-paying jobs, public transportation options, and safe places for children to play and grow.

Senator Lee's amendment would halt implementation of the Fair Housing Act and throw our nation back into the pre-civil rights era. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was intended to prohibit discrimination and dismantle historic segregation, which continues to limit the housing choices and opportunities of people of color, people with disabilities, families with children, and religious groups. To achieve this goal, the Fair Housing Act requires that recipients of federal housing and community development funding "affirmatively further fair housing" (AFFH).

HUD's AFFH Rule closes recommendations made by the GAO. In 2010 the GAO issued a report recommending that HUD reform its process of implementing the AFFH provision of the Fair Housing Act and the guidance that it provides to grantees. HUD's rule implements the GAO's recommendations by providing state and local governments and PHAs with data about the demographics and housing needs of their communities as well as a framework that they can use to identify and address issues that contribute to isolation and economic inequality.

HUD's proposed rule emphasizes local control in the development and implementation of solutions to remove obstacles to opportunity. Once an analysis of the barriers to fair housing is complete, governments and PHAs have the power to decide for themselves which issues they and local stakeholders identify are important to prioritize and address. HUD leaves these choices to the discretion of local governments and PHAs.

HUD's AFFH rule helps curb discrimination against people with disabilities, including veterans and the elderly. Each year, over 50% of all reported complaints of housing discrimination are initiated by people with disabilities. This alarming trend will continue and affects Americans returning from conflicts abroad with a disability and the growing percentage of elderly Americans with a disability. HUD's AFFH rule will help governments identify strategies and solutions to expand accessible and supportive housing choices for our veterans and elders with disabilities.

Ms. COLLINS. So I think it is important, as we debate this issue today, that we recognize what is at stake. The Paralyzed Veterans of America organization was founded by a band of servicemembers who came home from World War II with spinal cord injuries. I think we should listen to their experience.

There are many other groups that have come out in opposition to Senator LEE's amendment. They include the Urban League. Those are big cities that receive a lot of Federal funds, but they are opposed to Senator LEE's amendment. The NAACP is opposed to the amendment. Disability groups have come out in opposition to the amendment.

There is another extremely important point that the Senator from Virginia made; that is, this rule, which has been criticized by some, is in direct

response to GAO criticizing HUD for not doing a good job in carrying out this part of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. That is so important.

How many of us in this Chamber have repeatedly looked to GAO for advice on how we can improve how Federal programs work? Look to GAO. Look to its 2010 report, which is very critical of HUD. Surely, it is significant that when HUD issued the new regulations last year, the GAO said ''Fine'' and closed out its recommendations as being completed. That is significant.

This wasn't some wild scheme that was dreamed up by bureaucrats at HUD, as some have claimed. This was in response to a report from the Government Accountability Office. We talk about how we want more efficiency, better accountability. That is why we have the GAO. This rule that was directly adopted in response to the GAO's report surely is significant.

I see the Senator from Texas has arrived and wants to speak. I will be speaking more on this issue later today. Let me make one final point.

There are those who have claimed that somehow HUD is going to get involved in dictating the zoning rules and ordinances of local communities. I don't believe that is the case, but we are going to offer an amendment and have filed an amendment to make sure that is not the case.

The amendment that Senator REED, Senator COCHRAN, and I am offering specifically prohibits HUD from dictating in any way to any community what its zoning ordinances should be. If that is a possibility, we will foreclose it with our amendment.

I will be speaking further about this important issue later this afternoon, but I know there are many of my colleagues who are eager to speak, and I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to congratulate our friend, the Senator from Maine, for doing a tremendous job of managing this bill. It is never easy, given the fact that an individual Senator can slow down the process or insist on their rights, which I am not disparaging at all. There comes a time in every piece of legislation where it is important for us to make sure that we invoke our rights as Senators on behalf of the people we represent. I know it takes some patience and diligence, and I admire the diligence, patience, and professionalism of our colleague from Maine on what is always a challenging piece of work, which is trying to get an appropriations bill passed.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK AND POLICE ACT

I wish to speak on a different topic. This is National Police Week. Earlier this week I had the chance to visit with a police officer by the name of Gregory Stevens of the Garland Police Department. For people who are not aware, Garland is a city northeast of Dallas, TX. Around this time last year, it was a site of an attempted terrorist attack. There was a display of some artwork of the prophet Muhammad that provoked a terrorist attack. Fortunately, Officer Stevens was the man in the right place at the right time when it happened.

Many of us remember that fateful day last May when two armed gunmen from Phoenix, AZ—clad in body armor with automatic weapons—pulled up to the conference center and opened fire. According to media reports, the attackers were inspired by ISIS, the Islamic State. This is a real problem because these folks, like the shooters in San Bernardino, hadn't actually traveled to Syria, although the San Bernardino couple had been in Saudi Arabia and had traveled overseas—if I am not mistaken. But these people were radicalized in place by the ideology of the Islamic State.

This is a big problem for the United States because, as the FBI director has commented, in every FBI field office in America, there are FBI investigations open on potential radicalization of people in place here in the United States. It doesn't take people traveling from the Middle East over here. It doesn't take people traveling from here, over there, and coming back. This is the third leg of the stool or the third prong of the threat, of people being radicalized in place.

Getting back to my story, Officer Stevens responded decisively. He was able to stop the two terrorists from hurting or killing hundreds of people inside the conference center and, thankfully, he left unscathed.

I asked him: What sort of weapon did you have to protect yourself against these two terrorists in body armor with automatic weapons?

He said: I had a .45-caliber Glock with a 14-shot clip. He said he had to do a tactical reload, but he never fired an additional shot after he reloaded his weapon. For those of us familiar with such things, that is the mark of a real professional—somebody who is very well trained and responds as well as you could hope for.

I know the people of the city of Garland and the folks in Texas are grateful to Officer Stevens for his quick response and his bravery. As I said, he saved potentially hundreds of lives and prevented injuries. I think it is appropriate during National Police Week for us to honor people like Officer Stevens by telling their stories.

On Monday, President Obama presented Officer Stevens the Medal of Valor, the highest honor given to a police officer. It is a fitting tribute to the heroic actions he exhibited that day.

During National Police Week, we should note that there are more than 900,000 law enforcement officers serving our country. After 9/11, we have come to talk about them as being first responders, but I am talking specifically about the law enforcement officers, not the broader category here during National Police Week. They are folks who get up every morning, kiss their families good-bye, go to work, put on a uniform, and put themselves in harm's way to protect our communities and our families.

Tragically, we know that not all of them make it home at the end of the day. Last year, the United States lost 124 law enforcement officials; 12 of those officers were from the State of Texas. All of them had their individual stories, but some left behind spouses and children. I have no doubt that all of them left behind loved ones and people who care deeply about them and a community that, in their absence, misses them terribly.

I am particularly proud of the men and women in my State who serve in law enforcement—not just in Texas but across the country, including here at the Nation's Capitol. Our Capitol Police do a terrific job of keeping all of us safe and not just Members of Congress but, obviously, the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit the Capitol on an annual basis.

All of the professional law enforcement officials have dedicated their lives to public safety, and we should honor them for it. There is no doubt that our Nation is a better place because of their hard work and dedication, and we all owe them a debt of gratitude.

In the Senate, we need to do everything we can do to help professional law enforcement officials learn how to do their jobs as effectively and as safely possible. One simple way we could do that is by making sure they have access to the very best and latest training techniques—active shooter training, for example.

I recall the situation at Fort Hood when MAJ Nidal Hasan killed 13 people and wounded many more. Two police officers in active shooter mode crashed the site, exposing themselves to danger and ultimately paralyzing Nidal Hasan. More importantly, they took him out of action and saved a lot of lives.

This training they had and they exhibited with such great effect on that day is what we need to give more of our law enforcement officials access to. That is why I am glad to join my colleague, the senior Senator from Vermont, in sponsoring a piece of legislation called the Police Act—a bill that passed out of the Judiciary Committee last week.

This is pretty straightforward and it is bipartisan, so it doesn't make a lot of news, but I do think it serves a useful purpose. It will allow the use of existing grant money for police training to be used for this active shooter training. I know some of that training occurs at Texas State University in San Marcos. I have been to that site and walked through some of the buildings they use for the training. It is a heart-thumping exercise to realize what law enforcement deals with when confronting an active shooter. It is really important training.

We have seen terrorist attacks and sudden acts of violence in communities

across the country and, thankfully, we have people like Officer Stevens who helped avoid tragedy in Garland. But we should do everything we can to help equip our law enforcement officials with the training and tools they need in order to do their jobs as effectively as possible.

The Police Act would help in this effort, and it would help protect those who put their lives on the line on our behalf every day and support their efforts to guard the communities they serve. I look forward to passing this legislation soon. I can think of no better way to honor those who serve our country so well during National Police Week than to pass the Police Act, which will in some small way provide them access to the training they need in order to do their jobs better and help keep our communities safer.

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

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I have been coming to the Senate floor and talking about a very important issue for our country that we should be spending much more time focusing on, and that is the importance of growing our economy. With the exception of national defense, I believe there is no more important moral imperative for this body and the Federal Government to focus on than this issue, but unfortunately, as we have seen, the administration doesn't focus on it. They don't want to talk about the importance of growing the economy because the record they have of economic growth for Americans, particularly middle-class Americans, has been dismal.

I have been trying to get my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to focus on this chart over the last several weeks because this chart says a lot. If you look at the different records of different administrations, both Democratic and Republican, the Obama years have been a lost decade of economic growth. This red line shows 3 percent GDP growth. That is decent growth but not great. We can see that Reagan, Clinton, and Kennedy all had better numbers. This is the worst recovery over a 7-year period. That is a fact. They don't want to talk about it. We should talk about it a lot more.

I clearly think it is one of the most important things we should be doing in this body, and one way we can reignite the American dream and our economic growth, especially for the next generation—like for our pages—is to reduce burdensome and unnecessary regulations. Everybody agrees with that, including the Presiding Officer and all of my colleagues here. We need to reduce burdensome and unnecessary Federal regulations and build infrastructure for America. That is exactly what my amendment No. 3912 to the Transportation appropriations bill—which is so ably managed by my colleagues from Maine and Rhode Island—would do, and that is what I will talk about for a minute.

My amendment would give States and communities throughout this Nation the ability to expedite permitting for the maintenance, reconstruction, or construction of structurally deficient bridges. It is pretty simple. The amendment is very narrowly tailored. It says: If you are going to do maintenance, construction, or reconstruction on a bridge that is structurally deficient and the Federal Government won't be burdened, we will expedite the permitting by waiving many of the permitting requirements. That is it. It is very simple. As a matter of fact, this amendment only has two paragraphs.

It is a win-win for the country. Investing in our infrastructure will help boost our economy and economic growth, and importantly, it will keep American families safe. It is a commonsense approach that I am hoping my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support.

Recently, President Obama was asked about the economy and our crumbling infrastructure. He talked about the need for infrastructure investment, which I completely agree with; however, he laid the blame for a lack of investment in infrastructure on Republicans, who he said were unwilling to spend on our infrastructure. Well, I think with the highway bill, the WRDA bill, and this appropriations bill, we are doing it. Again, it is very bipartisan. I don't think what the President said is true. We are certainly willing to invest in infrastructure, which is so important to our economy, but we need to do it wisely, and we need to make sure our taxpayer money does not go to unintended uses. In fact, I believe, as do many of my colleagues, that there is perhaps nothing more central to growing our economy and competing globally than sound infrastructure for America, but throwing money at projects that aren't ready for development because of the burdensome permitting and regulatory requirements that we often see from the Federal Government is not a sound use of taxpayer dollars.

A recent column in the Wall Street Journal points out that of the $800 billion of taxpayer money that was passed several years ago as part of the President's stimulus package, only $30 billion was spent on transportation infrastructure. That is remarkable. Out of the $800 billion, only $30 billion was spent on infrastructure. Why? One of the big reasons is because these infrastructure projects were not shovel-ready because of the onerous permitting requirements and environmental reviews.

Consider this: The average time for an environmental review for a major transportation project in the United States has increased to a staggering 8 years. In 2011, it took 8 years to get a transportation project approved in terms of Federal permitting, and that is up from 3½ years in the year 2000. We have more than doubled the time in less than 7 years because of the Federal permitting requirements.

The average environmental impact statement was about 22 pages when NEPA, which requires EIS's—and that is important. When that bill initially passed, the average EIS was 22 pages. Today's highway projects often have EIS's that are well above 1,000 pages. On average, it takes over 5 years to permit a bridge in the United States. Nobody wants this.

As a matter of fact, former President Bill Clinton highlighted the need for reform in this area in a well-known Newsweek article. In 2011 he was on the front cover of Newsweek. His article talked about how to get Americans back to work. One of his top recommendations was to make sure that when we have infrastructure projects, the permitting requirements don't take forever. He said that we need to ''keep the full review process when there are real environmental concerns, but when there aren't, the federal government should be able to give a waiver to the states to speed up start times on construction projects.'' That was former President Bill Clinton's recommendation. Well, that is exactly what my amendment does. Again, if you are going to repair or build a bridge and keep it in the same capacity—a two-lane bridge stays a two-lane bridge, not a four-lane bridge—and in the same place and the same size, then the permitting process should be expedited.

Let me spend a few minutes on why this is so important for our economy and the safety of our citizens. I think most people in this body know our bridges are in poor condition. About 1 in 10 of America's roughly 607,000 bridges is termed and classified as ''structurally deficient.'' Let me repeat that in a different way. In the United States, there are more than 61,000 bridges in need of repair. The average age of our bridges is 42 years old. Americans cross these structurally deficient bridges 215 million times a day.

Here is a chart that shows where they are located. If you look here, this classifies different bridges. The red category shows the most bridges—over 25 percent—that are structurally deficient. The lighter red represents 20 to 25 percent, and the lightest shade of red represents 15 to 20 percent. As we can see, every State has structurally deficient bridges that Americans are crossing 215 million times a day.

Let me be clear. It is not just about the economy, where truckers and commerce are crossing these bridges every day; it is about the safety of our children when they ride on schoolbuses and parents when they come home from work. Every State in the Union is impacted by this.

Let me give a few quick examples of some structurally deficient bridges across the country.

This is the Magnolia Bridge in Seattle, WA. It was built in 1929. This bridge carries over 18,000 cars per day and has been declared structurally deficient.

The Greenfield Bridge in Pittsburgh, PA—Pennsylvania has the most structurally deficient bridges in the country, and this chart shows one of them. It was built in 1921. It carries almost 8,000 cars per day. In 2003 a 10-inch chunk of concrete went through a car windshield, injuring the driver. This structurally deficient bridge has been crumbling for decades.

I have one more example, which the Presiding Officer will find of significant interest. This is the Russell Street Bridge in Missoula, MN. Transportation for America rates the deck of the Russell Street Bridge a 4 out of 10 in terms of structural soundness. It was built in 1957 and carries over 22,000 cars a day.

I think we would all agree that we need to fix these 61,000 structurally deficient bridges. There is no doubt about it. I don't think there is any Member of this body or anyone in the Federal Government who would disagree about that, but what happens when we try to do that? In fact, the efforts, especially in the local communities, are strangled by bureaucratic redtape.

The Wall Street Journal recently had an article titled ''The Highway to Bureaucratic Hell,'' and it talked about this very issue of what happens when communities try to fix their structurally deficient bridges. They gave a number of examples, but I wanted to read one that impacts Americans in the New Jersey-New York area of the country. The Wall Street Journal article stated: Another illustration of what happens is the Bayonne Bridge that connects New Jersey to Staten Island and at 150 feet tall blocks large cargo ships. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey plans to raise the bridge from 150 feet to 215 feet. They wanted to do that to allow cargo ships to go under it. They planned to keep the bridge the same size; they just wanted to raise it so they wouldn't have to spend over $3 billion to build a tunnel.

The article goes on to say that their reward for thinking rationally was that it took 6 months to have the lead agency identified for an environmental review—an environmental review that dragged on for more than 5 years and spanned 20,000 pages. That is not good for New Jersey, that is not good for New York, and that is not good for America.

Again, what my amendment would do would fix this issue. It is very narrowly tailored, and it would simply make sure that when we are trying to fix the 61,000 structurally deficient bridges in the United States, we can do it in an expedited manner, not in the way in which this Wall Street Journal article described—5 years and 20,000 pages.

This amendment is a win-win-win. It will help spur economic growth, help us with the safety of our citizens, and help our workers get back to work so we can do the maintenance and reconstruction on these bridges. Everybody here talks about regulatory reform and how we need it. Even the President, in his State of the Union speech, talked about the need to cut redtape in order to grow this economy. But we rarely act on it. We talk about it, but we don't act on it.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—my colleagues particularly from older States, where this amendment will help them more than the rest of the country—to vote on this amendment which will keep our families and kids safe, help grow our economy, and put workers back to work. It is a commonsense thing to do for our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, it has now been 62 days since Judge Garland's nomination—62 days. As we all know, our Founding Fathers entrusted all of us in the Senate with the role of providing advice and consent to the President of the United States in relation to his appointments to the Supreme Court. We have the option—in fact, I believe the responsibility—to meet with the nominee in person. We are responsible for holding hearings through the Senate Judiciary Committee. Based on his responses to questions, we then have the opportunity to vote yes or no on the nomination. But we don't have the responsibility of doing nothing. We have to proceed to consider the nomination.

Unfortunately, Senators in the majority are refusing to do that. They have said they will not hold hearings—no hearings, zero—on a nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court. And too many have refused to even meet with the nominee, and I believe it is a matter of respect to meet with the nominee, Judge Merrick Garland. This is our job in the Senate. This is their job—the job established for them—for us—by America's Founding Fathers. Unfortunately, the majority is refusing to do it.

I have talked with a lot of hardworking people in Michigan and, frankly, people around the country about what would happen if they decided to not do one of the most basic parts of their job; if they said: For the next year, I think I am just not going to do this major part of my job description. Usually, when I ask people about that, they laugh and say: Well, that is simple; I would be fired. That is the response of the majority of Americans.

If we go back in history and look at how long it usually takes for the Senate to process a President's Supreme Court nomination, we see how unprecedented these delays really are. If this Republican-controlled Senate did its job as previous Senates have, then there would have been a hearing of the Judiciary Committee by April 27, which was 3 weeks ago—3 weeks ago—but that hasn't happened. The Judiciary Committee would have held a vote on May 12, but that vote never came, and there is no sign it is coming anytime soon, if at all, this year. Based on historical precedent, the Supreme Court nominee would then come to the floor for a vote on confirmation, up or down, yes or no, by Memorial Day. That is not going to happen either.

I urge my Republican colleagues to schedule a hearing so that the American people can hear directly from Judge Merrick Garland in a transparent and open way. Ask the tough questions. Talk about his almost 20 years on the circuit court bench and his role as chief judge. We should also talk about the fact that he was confirmed for that position overwhelmingly, on a bipartisan basis, by the U.S. Senate.

Because there is not a willingness to hold hearings, to debate, to discuss, to have a vote, I think that is why polls show that the majority of Americans support holding the hearings and a vote for Judge Garland and don't understand what is going on.

Meanwhile, the eight Justices of the Supreme Court have been unable to reach a final decision on two important cases, and I am sure there will be more. Those cases are Zubik v. Burwell and Spokeo v. Robbins. As a result, the law remains unsettled and is likely to remain unsettled for a year or more as to whether women who work for certain nonprofits will continue to have seamless access to contraceptive health care coverage. Given the gravity of the decision the Supreme Court must make, we can't afford to let it continue with less than the nine Justices who make up the Supreme Court.

This is supposed to be a separate branch of government that will place a check on the administration and on Congress, the third branch of government.

It is time that we get about the business of doing our job and for our Republican colleagues to say they are going to do their job and provide advice and consent on the nomination. Again, if there is not support for this nomination after rigorous debate, after hearings, after questions, after hearing from Judge Garland, then so be it. Then the President of the United States will have to come back with another nomination. But right now nothing is happening to reflect the fact that the third branch of government will be left ineffective, unable to fully function for probably a year, and it could be longer. That makes no sense.

It is time to do your job. It is time to do your job so that the U.S. Supreme Court can do its job on behalf of the American people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss important legislation

before the U.S. Senate this week—the combined Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill.

As chairman of the Surface Transportation Subcommittee and an active member of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, I am pleased that this appropriations bill includes a number of critical transportation and infrastructure initiatives that I have advocated for during my time in the Senate. A safe, efficient, and reliable transportation system is crucial to the economic growth of our country.

Last year Congress passed a much needed 5-year highway bill known as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or the FAST Act. I was proud to work with my colleagues on this bipartisan legislation and usher in the first multiyear Transportation bill in over a decade.

The Transportation appropriations bill before the Senate fully funds the highway bill. Because of the FAST Act, Americans will benefit from increased investment in our Nation's transportation system. Rural and urban communities across Nebraska and our country will have new opportunities to secure funding for essential freight infrastructure projects. Meanwhile, a new national strategic freight program within the FAST Act will help our States and local communities prioritize freight traffic and increase safety. Through this program, States will be provided with the discretion to direct new funds to rural and urban freight corridors with higher commercial traffic.

As States work to develop their freight plans and designate corridors, stakeholders across all modes will have the opportunity to participate and provide valued feedback. First and last mile connectors for freight at airports, trucking facilities, and rail yards will also be eligible for increased investment under this national freight program.

Railroad infrastructure is also a pivotal component of our national transportation network. According to the Nebraska Department of Roads, my State hosts more than 3,000 at-grade rail crossings that will be eligible for Federal dollars. Additional funding is provided for railroad safety and research programs, including positive train control installation and resources to address highway-rail grade crossing safety.

I am also pleased that T-HUD advances key pipeline safety efforts, which I worked with my Commerce Committee colleagues, including the Presiding Officer, to include in the bipartisan SAFE PIPES Act. America's pipeline infrastructure transports vital energy resources to homes, businesses, schools, and commercial centers across our country. According to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or PHMSA, more than 2.5 million miles of pipelines traverse the United States. Pipelines are often renowned as the safest way to transport crude oil and natural gas. Nevertheless, Congress must continue to increase safety on America's vast pipeline network. Our Nation's hazardous materials emergency responders and our firefighters are supported by T-HUD report language that encourages PHMSA to update important training curriculum programs.

The Surface Transportation Subcommittee has also been working on legislation to strengthen our Nation's maritime programs. For example, the Maritime Security Program is responsible for ensuring a fleet of U.S. merchant marine vessels stands ready and available to assist our Nation's military in times of war or national emergency, and I appreciate that T-HUD bolsters this very valuable program.

Furthermore, DOT and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy will be compelled to provide more information to Congress on efforts to combat on-campus sexual assault. Addressing on-campus sexual assault is something I have been seeking to address as part of my bill, known as the Maritime Administration Enhancement Act of 2017. Through meaningful prevention and response efforts, we can provide a more secure experience for the Academy's men and women, many of whom will go on to serve our country.

America's aviation and aerospace system will benefit from increased resources without raising ticket fees on our Nation's passengers. The bill's report tasks the Federal Aviation Administration with evaluating and updating commercial airline onboard emergency medical kits, particularly for families traveling with young infants. This is something I fought for in the Senate FAA bill.

Full funding is provided for the Contract Tower Program, which allows smaller airports to contract with the private sector for air traffic control services. Airports across the country, such as the Central Nebraska Regional Airport in Grand Island, NE, will benefit greatly from this program.

T-HUD allocates critical funding for our Nation's multimodal transportation network, and I am pleased the bill advances many of my own key initiatives.

I would also like to address some of the important provisions included in the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs portion of the bill. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our veterans and we have a responsibility to help them in their time of need. These men and women answered the call to serve our country and to defend our freedom. Some have deployed around the world, often into the heart of danger, to fight or provide humanitarian assistance. Many of these veterans return from service with both the visual and the unseen scars of battle.

These brave men and women deserve timely access to quality health care. Unfortunately, veterans living in rural States can be forced to travel great distances to receive the care they need. Through this legislation, the VA would be prevented from diminishing services at certain existing Veterans Health Administration medical facilities. It would also require the VA to take a more holistic approach to planning and executing realignment.

Throughout Nebraska, veterans are fortunate to receive quality care from dedicated VA medical providers. At the same time, the lack of modern infrastructure and outdated facilities are hindering efforts to provide the latest treatments and support. The VA must continue to explore innovative strategies to hasten updates and the completion of our new facilities.

Although this bill offers progress, we are not finished in our efforts to address problems at the VA. I will continue to do whatever I can to ensure that every veteran has access to the health care they need.

As I mentioned, the appropriations bill before us moves forward a number of significant national transportation priorities and enhances programs beneficial to America's veterans. I greatly appreciate the hard work of Senators COLLINS, KIRK, and their Appropriations subcommittee staffs on this critical bill. It will allocate much needed dollars to advance our Nation's transportation system and strengthen veterans programs.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nebraska, Mrs. FISCHER, for her comments. She is such a leader on so many issues in the Senate. We work closely together on transportation issues, and she gave us very valuable input for the bill that is before us. So I acknowledge her help and assistance and guidance and thank her for her comments.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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 ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak as in morning business.

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, over the last few months, we have witnessed ObamaCare crumbling in my home State of Arizona. Several Obamacare-established co-ops collapsed, including Arizona's Meritus Mutual Health Partners, forcing nearly 63,000 Arizonans scrambling to find new coverage. Last month, UnitedHealth, the Nation's largest health insurer, announced it

will exit the Arizona marketplace and leave about 45,000 Arizonans to find new coverage in 2017. Now, as a direct result of the President's failed law, health insurer Humana just announced it, too, will exit the marketplace in 2017 in my home State. All together, over half of Arizona's counties will be left with a single insurer, and another third will be left with just two. In turn, this will cause premiums to skyrocket even higher than last year. While Democrats continue to stand by a failed law, Arizona families are bearing the burden. This is unacceptable.

More than 6 years after ObamaCare was rammed through Congress without a single Republican vote—and I was on the floor on Christmas Eve morning as it was passed on a strict party-line vote—Democrats are still trying to spin their overhaul of America's health care system. We continue to hear from advocates of ObamaCare who make their claims that continue to leave me speechless, such as that insurance markets are stable and premiums are not rising quickly. Unfortunately, as is often the case with advocates of the President's disastrous law, these statements are largely devoid of reality.

ObamaCare's upheaval and disruption to our Nation's health care system is a direct result of the efforts of the White House and Democratic leadership to write this massive bill behind closed doors, with no input from this side of the aisle. The process was anything but bipartisan, as promised on the campaign trail by the then-Presidential candidate, Barack Obama. Instead of crafting health care reform that works for the American people, the administration cut deals with drug companies to get their support, ensuring they would see increased profits and consumers would face increased costs.

Democrats' partisan effort to write and pass ObamaCare without Republican participation flies in the face of how every other major reform in American history was enacted. I have worked with Democrats on many occasions to solve some of the country's most urgent problems. Never in my experience has one party attempted to increase the government's influence in one-sixth of the American economy over the unanimous opposition of the other party.

Unfortunately, Americans are now facing the consequences of this massive overhaul of our health care system. The biggest problem in our health care system, and Americans' most pressing concern, is out-of-control cost increases, but ObamaCare does nothing to address this issue. That is why we continue to see health care costs balloon, while health insurance becomes increasingly expensive and unaffordable for citizens and their employers.

Sadly, as we have seen in recent weeks, the situation is only getting worse. Just last month, a poll by Gallup found that Americans cite health care costs as the most important financial burden facing their families. They name health care costs ahead of other financial burdens, such as low wages, debt, and being able to afford college or a mortgage.

The American people are now experiencing firsthand exactly what Republicans have been warning about ever since ObamaCare was written: The law will ultimately do far more harm than good, and they have every right to question what the future holds. The fact is, the crumbling of ObamaCare should come as no surprise to anyone.

UnitedHealth—which will exit from all but a handful of States in the individual marketplace in 2017—lost $475 million on the ObamaCare exchanges in 2015 and is projected to lose $650 million on the exchanges in 2016. Its exit from ObamaCare exchanges will send an estimated 45,000 citizens of my State, Arizona, scrambling to find new coverage with even fewer options to choose from.

Humana's announcement that it will follow in UnitedHealth's footsteps by exiting Arizona's exchanges should also come as no surprise, given the fact that it continues to incur losses as a result of ObamaCare's onerous regulations. Humana and UnitedHealth's exit means fewer options, less competition, and most certainly higher costs for consumers. This is especially true after Blue Cross Blue Shield, the only remaining provider in several Arizona counties, increased premiums last year by 27 percent merely to recover the $185 million in losses it incurred in the ObamaCare marketplace between 2014 and 2015.

The health insurer has noted that continuing to suffer losses in the marketplace is unsustainable, meaning significant premium increases are on the horizon for 2017. All of this news of insurance companies exiting the marketplace and others increasing premiums is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the consequences of this disastrous law. Since ObamaCare became law, prescription drug costs have continued to skyrocket.

Instead of encouraging innovation and competition, ObamaCare places heavy taxes on manufacturers and prescription drug importers to the tune of $27 billion over 10 years. According to Standard & Poor's, the cost of drugs on the individual insurance market jumped 50 percent in 2015. Just as some are forgoing a visit to the doctor because of higher out-of-pocket costs, we are starting to see more and more individuals with chronic conditions not getting their prescriptions filled because of the increasing cost of drugs.

The fact is, ObamaCare was a failure from the start and Americans are paying the price. The best thing government can do to expand access to health insurance is to institute reforms that will rein in costs and make health care more affordable. I have introduced legislation to replace ObamaCare with real reform that would expand quality access to health care without compromising individual liberty, competition, or innovation.

Regrettably, every Republican effort to meaningfully bring down the cost of health care has been met with rigid opposition by Democrats who are more concerned with protecting President Obama's legacy than making health care accessible and affordable. Every day that goes by, with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle continuing to dig in their heels, leads to another day that millions of Americans face higher health care costs, decreased quality of care, and fewer choices.

It is past time for the President of the United States and Democrats in Congress to answer to the thousands of citizens across my State and the Nation who have been let down time and again by this disastrous law.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to commend the leaders of the Senate Appropriations Committee for accepting transparency language that I requested be included in the fiscal year 2017 spending bill for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The good governance provision, which I championed after years of oversight work, will ensure greater accountability in public housing authorities' use of the Federal money that they receive in this annual appropriations bill.

For the last 6 years, I have raised concern about HUD's failure to conduct proper oversight of how local housing authorities use those Federal dollars. Specifically, my concerns relate to HUD's practice of allowing local housing authorities to spend hundreds of millions of Federal dollars each year with virtually no Housing and Urban Development oversight and no transparency to the public. We all have reason to be concerned about this lack of transparency because some local housing authorities rely on the Federal Government for up to 90 percent of their funding.

That is why I thank Senator COLLINS, Senator KIRK, and other members of the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee for recognizing that Congress must insist on HUD's paying closer attention to the use of taxpayer dollars by housing authorities.

The good governance provision that the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee included in this year's appropriations report ensures that in the future the housing money we appropriate for low-income families will retain its Federal designation even

after it is transferred to the housing authorities.

I want to stress that this designation is no small matter. In other words, Federal money is going to be considered Federal money when it gets to the local housing authority, and no games can be played with it as are being played with it now.

U.S. taxpayers spend about $4.5 billion every year to help low-income Americans put a roof over their heads. We can be proud that we do so much for people in need. We should not let any of that money specifically for people of need be wasted or spent to feather the nests of local public housing authority bureaucrats.

I wish to take a few minutes to explain why the appropriations language that I championed and is in this legislation is so sorely needed. Some local housing authorities have devoted these limited funds, which are meant to help low-income people find affordable housing, to high salaries and even for perks for the people who run housing authorities around the country. I will just use three examples, but there are dozens of examples that can be given.

At the Atlanta Housing Authority, at least 22 employees earned between $150,000 and $303,000 per year.

The former executive director of the Raleigh Housing Authority in North Carolina received about $280,000 in salary and benefits plus 30 vacation days.

The executive director of the Tampa Housing Authority is paid over $214,000 per year, and the housing authority spends over $100,000 per year on travel and conferences.

After I called attention to these wasteful practices a few years ago, HUD limited the executive salary paid by local housing authorities. That is good news, right? Well, it didn't work out that way, even after the salaries were capped at level IV of the Executive Schedule pay scale, which today amounts to about $160,000 a year. As I say, it didn't turn out to be good news. Unfortunately, as it did turn out, this compensation cap had little impact in limiting housing authority salaries.

I will explain how this works. HUD provides over $350 million in operating fees annually to local housing authorities. Right now, these fees are considered income earned by the housing authorities for managing programs instead of considering them as what they are—grants given by the Federal Government. That is where the Federal money gets mixed up with local money and the Federal money isn't followed by HUD. That is why they get away with the waste of taxpayers' money.

Despite their source, when these fees reach housing authorities, they are no longer considered Federal funds. I say that a second time for emphasis. Once these funds lose Federal designation, housing authorities then can use the tax dollars as they see fit—and they do. Then, when they use it as they see fit, HUD is not required to conduct oversight of how the money is spent. Believe me; HUD hasn't done much oversight.

This means that many employees of housing authorities can continue to earn annual salaries well in excess of the $160,000 without technically violating the Federal salary cap. You can see the games that are being played to let these local housing people get these massive high salaries and fringe benefits and waste taxpayers' money that should be spent helping low-income people get safe housing. Sadly, these salaries exceed limits that were imposed by the Federal Government to ensure the money we appropriate goes to low-income families in the greatest need of our assistance.

After I began publicly voicing my complaints about this practice, the Office of Management and Budget in December 2013 issued a government-wide guidance that should have—should have—put a stop to it, but it didn't. But let me tell you what the guidance called for. So-called fees for service would then be designated as program income so the Federal funding would retain its Federal designation after it is transferred into housing authority business accounts. Making sure it kept its Federal designation meant it had to be subject to HUD oversight. HUD initially agreed to fully implement the OMB guidance, but they did not.

Later, the Department quietly—very quietly—requested a waiver that, if that waiver was granted, would have allowed housing authorities to sidestep the new OMB rule and then continue to avoid commonsense oversight because, with that waiver, the Federal dollars would not have Federal designation. They would be considered local money and could be spent any way people wanted to spend it.

I might never have learned of this HUD effort to get around this OMB rule but for the very good work of the HUD inspector general. After I learned from the inspector general's staff that HUD was requesting a waiver of the OMB guidance, I sent a letter to OMB expressing my concerns. But as so often happens with bureaucrats in this town, I didn't hear from OMB until I attempted to include amendment language addressing the fee designation in the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill before Thanksgiving of last year, when the issue was on the floor of the Senate. As we all know, that bill was pulled from the floor. But neither the inspector general nor I were ready to give up, and that is why we are here today.

Just recently, I received good news that reinforces my belief that congressional oversight works. HUD has finally agreed to implement its inspector general's recommendations requiring that funding provided by the taxpayers to public housing authorities will keep its Federal designation. In other words, HUD will be responsible for making sure that Federal funding is used as intended, and that is very clear. It is why we have public housing—to provide safe, affordable housing for those in need and, consequently, then, not to use that Federal money to pay exorbitant executive salaries.

My concern now is the timeframe for implementation and ensuring that HUD does not request another waiver.

HUD expects the final rule to be completed by December 2017, more than 1½ years from now. That is a very long time to finalize regulations. I hope HUD isn't delaying the process in the hope that either the inspector general or this Senator will give up. I can assure you that will not happen. We need to ensure that this reform is implemented by including language in this appropriations bill to not just keep salaries in check but also to ensure that HUD exercises oversight authority over how these funds are used and that more money is actually used for the poor.

I hope HUD uses that oversight authority to combat waste, such as in the following three examples: The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles misused over $3.9 million in operating funds for salary, travel, bonuses, and legal settlements. The Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority in Canton, OH, misused $4 million in operating and capital funds to build a commercial development, and an additional $2 million was misused for salaries and benefits. The Hickory, NC, housing authority paid over $500,000 in operating funds to a maintenance company owned by the brother of a board member—a clear conflict of interest.

It is also vital that Congress be aware of any effort by HUD to once again avoid implementing this rule the way they tried to get around the OMB rule I just talked about. For that reason, the report language I requested requires HUD to notify both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees quarterly during fiscal year 2017 if they request any waiver from implementing these provisions.

I encourage my colleagues to support this effort to ensure that HUD implements these much needed changes and does its part to provide better oversight of our scarce Federal funding.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

POLICE ACT OF 2016

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am delighted to be here on the floor with the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the ranking member, our colleague from Vermont, whom I have worked with on so many issues, to ask unanimous consent to take up a bill that I talked about a little earlier this morning called the POLICE Act. This bill uses existing funding to support local law enforcement but specifically to make sure funding is available for active-shooter training.

For example, in San Marcos, TX, at Texas State University, they have trained 80,000 local law enforcement officials in active-shooter training. The

time I remember most poignantly when this was put to good use and saved lives was at Fort Hood, TX, when MAJ Nidal Hasan stood up and killed I think about 13 people and then wounded about 30 more. There were two law enforcement officials who crashed the site, put themselves in harm's way, but thanks to the great training they had, they were able to disable Major Hasan before he was able to do any more damage. So this is very important training.

We want to make sure there are funds available—using existing funding streams but available for active-shooter training wherever it might be provided around the country.

Mr. President, as I mentioned earlier today, this week is National Police Week—a time to honor those men and women who have fallen in the line of duty.

One way we can better support our Nation's law enforcement officers is by helping them get the training they need to keep themselves and the communities they protect safe.

The POLICE Act is a bill that would do exactly that.

This bipartisan legislation would allow existing grant money available for police training to be used for active shooter training—a commonsense way to put these funds to good use in a way that does not and will not spend additional Federal money.

Right now, current law will not allow local police departments and first responders to use a substantial amount of grant funding through the Justice Department for this kind of critical training. Our bill would change that.

With all the threats they face every day on the job, we have an obligation to equip as many officers as possible with the skills and training they need to respond to an active shooter situation.

I would like to thank Senator LEAHY for working with me on this legislation. I also would like to thank Chairman GRASSLEY for his effort in getting this bill passed out of committee last week. I express my gratitude to Senator GRASSLEY and Senator LEAHY.

At this time, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 464, S. 2840.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2840) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds for active shooter training, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 2840) was passed, as follows:

S. 2840

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting Our Lives by Initiating COPS Expansion Act of 2016'' or the ''POLICE Act of 2016''.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZED USE OF COPS FUNDS.

Section 1701(b) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (16), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (17) as paragraph (18);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (16) the following:

''(17) to participate in nationally recognized active shooter training programs that offer senario-based, integrated response courses designed to counter active shooter threats or acts of terrorism against individuals or facilities; and''; and

(4) in paragraph (18), as redesignated, by striking ''(16)'' and inserting ''(17)''.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CORNYN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I had a chance to speak on this earlier. I would defer to my colleague, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, or Senator LEAHY from Vermont, my principal cosponsor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week is National Police Week, and many of us have paused to thank our Nation's law enforcement officers for their important work. But it is not enough for us to simply pay tribute to these men and women. We must also provide them with the training and the resources they need to remain safe while they protect our communities.

That is why I pushed for years to enact legislation to reauthorize the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program, which President Obama signed into law on Monday. I authored this legislation with Senator GRAHAM because every single law enforcement officer deserves to be protected by a lifesaving vest. Since its inception in 1998, this program has provided more than 1.2 million vests to more than 13,000 law enforcement agencies. The reauthorization signed into law this week ensures that hundreds of thousands more officers will be similarly protected. I have personally met with officers who were saved by vests purchased through this program. They will confirm that these vests are worth every penny.

Today the Senate passed the Protecting Our Lives by Initiating COPS Expansion Act, or the POLICE Act. This legislation will provide law enforcement officers with training to handle active shooter situations. The bill is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National District Attorneys Association, Major County Sheriffs Association, and the Sergeants Benevolent Association. I was proud to join Senator CORNYN as the lead Democratic sponsor of this legislation.

I thank Senator CORNYN for this. We have worked together on many law enforcement things over the years, and I think both Senator CORNYN and I have tried to demonstrate that law enforcement should not be a partisan matter, and we have done this in a bipartisan fashion.

So many officers have heroically responded to active shooter situations. This week the President bestowed upon several officers the Medal of Valor for their response to active shooters, including three California officers who confronted a gunman during a rampage at a community college that left five people dead in 2013; a New York officer who arrested, at a crowded hospital, a gunman who already had killed another officer; and a New York sheriff's deputy who confronted and subdued a gunman who had wounded others and posed a threat to students at a nearby school.

But I think we cannot rely on heroism alone. Senator CORNYN mentioned the training that helped end an active-shooter incident in Texas. Unfortunately, active-shooter incidents have become all too common, occurring in shopping malls and schools, the workplace, anywhere people gather. No State is immune, including my own State of Vermont. All of our Nation's officers should receive training on how to handle such situations so they can respond effectively to protect the public and to protect themselves. The POLICE Act will help make such training available.

However, the burden of protecting the public from active shooters should not fall solely on the shoulders of our law enforcement officers. Congress must do more to prevent active shooter situations. That means preventing criminals and those who seek to cause harm from acquiring firearms in the first place. That is why the Senate should pass the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act that I sponsored with Senator COLLINS, which would provide law enforcement the tools they need to investigate and deter straw purchasers and gun traffickers. Congress must not become so numb to tragedy after tragedy that we fail to fulfill our duty to legislate, even when the issue involves firearms.

As I said, Senator CORNYN and I have made it very clear that supporting our Nation's law enforcement officers in reducing gun violence is not a partisan issue. While we are making progress, much more remains to be done. I stand ready to work with anyone—Republican or Democrat—on commonsense

ways to keep our law enforcement officers and communities safe.

I applaud the Senate for passing this, I urge the House to quickly pass it, and I know the President will sign it.

I yield the floor.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in 1867, when the naturalist John Muir first walked into the Cumberland Mountains, he wrote: ''The scenery is far grander than any I ever before beheld. . . . Such an ocean of wooded, waving, swelling mountain beauty and grandeur is not to be described.'' In January, Apex Clean Energy announced that it would spoil that mountain beauty by building twenty-three 45-story wind turbines in Cumberland County.

I can still recall walking into Grassy Cove in Cumberland County one spectacular day in 1978 during my campaign for Governor. I had not seen a prettier site. Over the last few decades, pleasant weather and natural beauty have attracted thousands of retirees from Tennessee and across America to the Cumberland Plateau.

The proposed Crab Orchard Wind project would be built less than 10 miles from Cumberland Mountain State Park, where for half a century Tennesseans and tourists have camped, fished, and canoed alongside herons and belted kingfishers and around Byrd Lake. It will be less than 5 miles from the scenic Ozone Falls State Natural Area, where the 110-foot waterfall is so picturesque, it was filmed as scenery in the movie ''Jungle Book.''

So here are my 10 questions for the citizens of Cumberland County and the people of Tennessee:

How big are these wind turbines?

I have a picture somewhere; maybe it will show up in the next few minutes. Each one is over two times as tall as the skyboxes at the University of Tennessee football stadium, three times as tall as Ozone Falls, and taller than the Statute of Liberty. The blades on each one are as long as a football field. Their blinking lights can be seen for 20 miles. They are not your grandma's windmills.

Question No. 2: Will they disturb the neighborhood?

Here is what a New York Times review of the documentary ''Windfall'' said about New York residents debating such turbines:

> Turbines are huge . . . with blades weighing seven tons and spinning at 150 miles an hour. They can fall over or send parts flying; struck by lightning, say, they can catch fire . . . and can generate a disorienting strobe effect in sunlight. Giant flickering shadows can tarnish a sunset's glow on a landscape.

Question No. 3: How much electricity can the project produce?

A puny amount—71 megawatts. But that is only when the wind is blowing, which in Tennessee is only 18.4 percent of the time, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Question No. 4: Does TVA need this electricity?

The answer is no. Last year TVA said there is ''no immediate need for new base load plants after Watts Bar Unit 2 comes online.'' That is a nuclear reactor. And just last week TVA put up for sale its unfinished Bellefonte nuclear plant.

Question No. 5: Do we need wind power's carbon-free electricity to help with climate change?

No, we don't. Nuclear power is a more reliable option. Nuclear produces over 60 percent of our country's carbon-free electricity, which is available 92 percent of the time. Wind produces 15 percent of our country's carbon-free electricity, but the wind often blows at night when electricity is not needed.

Question No. 6: How many wind turbines would it take to equal one nuclear reactor?

To equal the production of the new Watts Bar reactor, you would have to run three rows of these huge wind turbines along I–40 from Memphis to Knoxville. And don't forget the transmission lines. Four reactors, each occupying roughly 1 square mile, would equal the production of a row of 45-story wind turbines strung the entire length of the 2,178-mile Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine. Relying on wind power to produce electricity when nuclear reactors are available is the energy equivalent of going to war in sailboats when a nuclear navy is available.

Question No. 7: Can you easily store large amounts of wind power and use it later when you need it? The answer is no.

Question No. 8: So even if you build wind turbines, do you still need nuclear, coal, or gas plants for the 80 percent of the time when the wind isn't blowing in Tennessee? The answer is yes.

Question No. 9: Then why would anyone want to build wind power that TVA doesn't need?

Because billions of dollars of wasteful Federal taxpayer subsidies allow wind producers in some markets to give away wind power and still make a profit.

The 10th question: Who is going to guarantee that these giant wind turbines get taken down when they wear out in 20 years and after the subsidies go away?

Good question. The picture that was just put up—and I have another slide as well—is what Palm Springs, CA, looks like after it has been littered with these massive wind turbines. My question for the people of Tennessee is, Do you want Cumberland County and Tennessee to look like that? That is the question we need to ask ourselves.

Many communities where wind projects have been proposed have tried to stop them before they go up because once the wind turbines and new transmission lines are built, it is hard to take them down. For example, watch the documentary ''Windfall'' that I mentioned earlier.

In October, the residents of Irasburg, VT, voted 274 to 9 against a plan to install a pair of 500-foot turbines on a ridgeline visible from their neighborhood.

In New York, three counties opposed 500- to 600-foot wind turbines next to Lake Ontario. People in the town of Yates voted unanimously to oppose the project in order to ''preserve their rural landscape.'' Take a look, and you can see why.

In Kent County, MD, the same company that is trying to put turbines in Cumberland County—Apex Clean Energy—tried to put down twenty-five to thirty-five 500-foot turbines a quarter to a half mile apart across thousands of acres of farmland where the air serves as a route for migratory geese.

According to the Baltimore Sun, Stephen S. Hershey, Jr., a local State legislator, had introduced a bill that would give county officials the right to veto any large-scale wind project in their jurisdiction. Hershey said he put the bill in after learning that the turbines would be nearly 500 feet tall and spread across an area of thousands of acres. He called that a ''massive'' footprint ''in a relatively rural and bucolic area.''

William Pickrum, president of the Board of County Commissioners, wrote the Senate committee that the project ''will certainly have a negative effect'' on farming, boating, and tourism in the county and hurt property values. The legislation had the support of local conservation groups and of Washington College in Chestertown. The school's interim president, Jack S. Griswold, warned in a letter to school staff and supporters that the turbines would ''despoil this scenic landscape.''

I mentioned a little earlier how big these wind turbines are. These are not your grandma's windmills. I happen to know, even though the Presiding Officer is from North Carolina, he was born in Tennessee and knows a little bit about the football stadium in Knoxville.

This is one wind turbine, when placed in Neyland Stadium in Knoxville, which will hold 102,000 people. The turbine is over twice as tall as the skyboxes. Its blades go the whole length of the football field. Its blinking lights can be seen for 20 miles. These are not your grandma's windmills.

As a U.S. Senator, I voted to save our mountaintops from destructive mining techniques. I am just as eager to protect mountaintops from unsightly wind turbines. I have voted for Federal clean air legislation and supported TVA's plan to build carbon-free nuclear reactors, phase out its older, dirtier coal plants, and put pollution control equipment on the remaining coal plants. Already the air is cleaner and our view of the mountains is better.

I hope citizens of Cumberland County—and all Tennesseans—will say a loud ''no'' to the out-of-State wind producers that are encouraged by billions in wasteful taxpayer subsidies to destroy our mountains and make them look like that.

Some say tourists will come to see the giant turbines. They may—once. But do we really think tourists or most Tennesseans want to exchange a drive through the natural beauty of the Cumberland Mountains for a drive along 23 towers that are more than twice as tall as Neyland Stadium and whose flashing lights can be seen for 20 miles? If you do, just take another look at the photograph of what has happened in Palm Springs, CA.

If there is one thing Tennesseans agree on, it is the pride in the natural beauty of our State. There are few places more beautiful than Cumberland County. We should not allow anyone to destroy the environment of our State in the name of saving.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

OPIATE EPIDEMIC

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise, as I have for the past few weeks, to bring stories of the opiate crisis that we have throughout my State, the Presiding Officer's State of North Carolina, and all over this country.

This epidemic is something we have to face because it affects every person in America right now. There is not a person I know of and not anyone, I believe, in America who doesn't know somebody in their immediate family, extended family, or close friend who hasn't been affected by prescription drug abuse or illicit drug abuse.

I have been dealing with this since my days as Governor of the great State of West Virginia. As the Presiding Officer knows, it has ravaged my State. We have been hit harder than any other State in the country. Drug overdoses have soared by over 700 percent since 1999. Just last year alone, we lost over 600 West Virginians to opioids. These are legal prescription drugs that are made legally in the country by a legal manufacturer of pharmaceuticals. They are approved by the Food and Drug Administration, a Federal agency that is supposed to look out for our well-being. They are being prescribed by the most trusted person next to our family members, our doctors, and they are killing us.

Our State is not unique in that it has hit everybody. Fifty-one Americans are dying every day—every day. We have lost over 200,000 Americans. Two hundred thousand Americans have died since 1999. If we think about that in epidemic proportions—we are talking about Zika. We just put $1.1 billion toward Zika. We spent $500 million on Ebola. All of these horrible epidemics that can cause devastation in America, we will rise up and face. We haven't done a thing in this line. We need a serious culture change to get through the problem, and we need to change approval of opiate drugs. Basically, FDA does not need to be putting out these powerful drugs. We don't need them. Think about the United States of America. Less than 5 percent of the world's population lives in our great country. Yet we consume over 80 percent of the opiates produced in the world. How did we become the most addicted? How did we become so intolerant to pain that we have to have the most powerful drugs ever produced? We have to treat the way we look at this drug coming to the market.

Also, 10, 20 years ago, anybody who did drugs, if they committed a crime, we put them in jail. We have spent over $500 billion in the last two decades incarcerating people for nonviolent crimes. They come out as bad as they went in. We haven't cured anything. We have to change. We are looking at sentencing guideline changes on nonviolent crime—nonsexual, nonviolent crime. Most addicts commit thievery. That is a theft. It is larceny. That is where they get their sentencing from. So they get sentenced, they get a criminal record, and they can't get a job. They are out of the market.

My State of West Virginia has the lowest workforce participation. Only three things take you out of the workforce if you are an adult: If you have an incarceration record, people will not hire you; if you have a lack of skill sets; if you are addicted, you can't pass a drug test—or a combination of those three.

Something is going on. We can't fill jobs. People are telling me how bad the economy is. Then I talk to the employers who say: We can't get people to pass a drug test. We can't get people into the marketplace. So it is something we have to do.

My office continues to get flooded. I get letters from all over the country now because I invite that. I want them. Let me read your letter. Let's put a face and let's put a family on it. It is not just a hardship, it is not just poverty, it is basically every walk of life in America. They are writing stories.

I want to read another story to you right now. This is Carolyn's story. This is the grandmother writing to me:

> Dear Senator Manchin,
>
> I am enclosing a copy of the letter I sent to ''The Journal'' in Martinsburg concerning the death of our son's step-daughter. She died of a heroin overdose.
>
> I consider myself Devon's grandmother, and at my age words are my best weapon to fight the scourge that killed her.
>
> Please, Senator, read my letter and then use it in any way you see fit in the fight for the passage of ''Jessie's Law.''

We have talked about Jessie's Law. The Presiding Officer has been helpful, and I appreciate it very much. It basically says: If you go to the hospital and you know your child or a loved one in your family is addicted and the child is trying to overcome the addiction, then the hospital has the responsibility to stamp on their record ''addiction'' so they will be watching how they discharge them and the type of opiates they give them. You can't reaffirm an addiction by giving more pills. So this is what we are fighting against.

She said:

> Our granddaughter, Devon, that tall exuberant redhead who laughed her way into our hearts, is now a statistic. Several days ago our son called us to tell us that she had died the night before from a heroin over-dose.
>
> It wasn't her first over-dose by far, but the other times someone had always managed to get her to the hospital. That last time the friend shooting up with her couldn't help. He died at her side. She still held the needle in her hand [that killed her].
>
> It was that quick.
>
> Devon started her drug journey with prescription opiates.

She had been injured, she had an ailment, and she had pain.

> When those pills weren't enough anymore, heroin stepped in, and the downward spiral began.

Heroin steps in every time.

> It isn't just the problem kids from poor neighborhoods who get hooked, you know.

Everybody thinks it is because of the economic downturn. That is a part of it but not all of it.

> Our granddaughter came from a stable, affectionate upper-middle class home. Even though her parents tried their best to save her with countless sleepless nights, multiple trips to rehab, tough love and loving persuasion, that drug won the battle.
>
> Now, we are not even allowed to grieve. We must also contend with the many forms of our anger; impatience with Devon for not being stronger, rage at those who sold her the drugs, frustration with the authorities for not doing more to stop the trafficking or establishing more treatment centers, and self-recrimination for maybe not doing enough. We also are trying to cope with the guilt of feeling relief that her hell has finally ended. There is nothing more we can do for her now, no more treatments that we can try.

Can you imagine living with that? You tried everything, and then, finally, when the end comes like that, you have a feeling of relief—and then you feel remorse for that. Can you imagine grandparents going through this?

Finally:

> She's just gone. Just . . . gone . . .

People are now coming out. Before, people didn't want to tell me. They were afraid. They had a son or a daughter in rehab, and they felt that would be a scourge on their family. They didn't want to be embarrassed. So we never knew about it. It was a silent killer.

Then we saw young people—going through the obituaries, it doesn't give the cause of death, but we can pretty much figure it out.

People are now saying: If we don't come out of the closet and talk about it, we are not going to fix it. There is a lot that needs to be done.

I am going to read another story that has a happy ending. I am going to read Chelsea's story, which I have read before.

This is a young girl from Boone County, WV. This young girl had started using drugs when she was 12 years

old—12 years old. Anything and everything that could happen to a human being—her dad was mayor of the town. He was mayor. She had gone through everything, hit bottom as far as bottom could be. The person she went through drug court and drug rehab with died, couldn't get out. She made it.

I am going to read hers now so we see a happy ending. Most of these stories are about the pain and heartache associated with opiate abuse, but Chelsea's story is a little different. In February, on the Senator floor, I read Chelsea Carter's powerful story on how she has overcome her opiate addiction, and today I am proud to say she just received her master's degree in social work from Concord University.

She said:

After being addicted to drugs since I was 12 years old [by a neighborhood friend], I decided to go back to school and teach others what I have been taught my whole life.

I received my bachelor's degree from West Virginia University in the Art of Psychology in May of 2013 and last Saturday May 7, 2016 I graduated with my Masters in Social Work from Concord University.

I am currently working on my Alcohol and Drug Counseling Licensure and also myself and seven other people are in the process of opening up a Sober Living home in Danville, West Virginia [her home area] called the Hero House.

They get no funding. They don't qualify for Medicaid, Medicare—nothing. What they are going to do is all going to be on love and kindness. Also, with the record she has now—because she has a felony record for grand larceny—it will be hard for her to get a job. We are taking a person now with a master's degree out of the workforce. It is unbelievable.

She said:

I currently work for Appalachian Health Services as an addiction therapist—

They went beyond that and hired her anyway. Most people will not.

—but my dream is to one day open my own inpatient treatment facility and help other people who are just like me.

A message I would like people to know is that recovery is possible, but you have to be willing to work at it.

It is a lot easier to go out on the streets and buy drugs instead of trying to change your life, but the one thing that recovery gives you that the drugs will never is your life back.

I am living proof that if you want something bad enough you can change.

We have to give them hope. We have to give them reasons. We have to give them the ability to get back in the mainstream. This is the best example of what can be done if we make investments, and the investments we make are investments in human capital in the United States of America and the spirit of America. This is what we are doing.

For the many stories I read that have such horrible endings, this has a happy ending, and it helps many people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from West Virginia. He has been a tiger on this issue, and I hope we will answer his call. The epidemic is no better in Connecticut, where most of our cities are on track to see a doubling of overdose deaths this year from last year, and last year was quadruple the number it was 3 or 4 years ago. I say thank you very much to my colleague from West Virginia.

AMENDMENT NO. 3897

Mr. President, I am on the floor today to talk about an amendment to the pending bill. It is an issue that a lot of us thought was decided by this body decades ago; that is, the prohibition of discrimination in housing based on race, sex, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, and family status. It is the Fair Housing Act.

In many ways, the Fair Housing Act was the culmination of the legislative fight for civil rights in the 1960s. It was the first effective Federal law guarding against discrimination in the sale and the rental of housing in the United States. For nearly 50 years, it has been employed to ensure that every American can choose where to live, free from discrimination and the immoral and unconstitutional consequences of residential segregation.

We have come a long way since the 1960s, but we are by no means all the way there. Today, discrimination is still a reality in housing markets across the country. In every single State, there are cases of landlords misrepresenting the availability of housing or outright refusing to sell or rent to certain protected individuals or groups of people. There are others who are given different terms and conditions on a mortgage or on a rental contract, based on their race, their gender, or their physical disability. I hear these stories even in my State of Connecticut, which is a pretty progressive State.

For instance, Crystal Carter was a homeless single mother living in Hartford, CT, with her five children, one of whom is developmentally disabled. This is what she said, in her own words:

For two years, my family had jumped between homeless shelters and staying with family and friends. I had searched for affordable housing for several hours a day, every day, and submitted dozens of applications. Then, I found out about an open waiting list for rental vouchers in a suburban area. I was excited at the chance to move to a safer area with better schools for my children. But when I called the suburban housing authority that managed the program, I was told I couldn't even have an application because I didn't already live in one of the approved nearby towns. I was also told that it was someplace I wouldn't want to live anyway and that I should be looking in Hartford or Bridgeport instead.

Johnnie Dailey is another victim of housing discrimination. Here is Johnnie's story:

In 2013, I was searching for a new home for my family, including my young niece and grandson. I found a single-family home that would have been perfect for my family. It was on a quiet street where my niece and grandson could play outside, and the rent was less than my current apartment. My real estate agent called the listing agent for the property and told her that I was very interested in renting the property and that I had a Section 8 voucher. The listing agent responded that the owner of the property, a Boston-based company, would not rent to me because they were not interested in accepting a Section 8 voucher. I was discriminated against and denied the opportunity to rent the property solely because I am someone who uses a Section 8 voucher to pay part of my rent. To this day, when I think about the discrimination I experienced, I feel upset and embarrassed.

Crystal's and Johnnie's stories are two of tens of thousands of stories from across the country that underscore the need for the Fair Housing Act. We have made progress, but we aren't done. While the Fair Housing Act rose out of the fight for civil rights for African Americans, we also need to remember today that over half of all reported complaints of housing discrimination are initiated by people with disabilities. There are veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with debilitating injuries that have altered their lives completely. These individuals also include a growing number of elderly Americans who are living with disabilities.

As a Nation, we know we are stronger and better when we assure access and opportunity for all Americans, including the 57 million Americans who are living with disabilities today.

Unfortunately, civil rights laws are under attack today. It is not a position that is endorsed wholesale by the Republican Party, but there is a coordinated effort on the right to use every tool possible to strip civil rights protections from African Americans, Hispanics, the disabled, and the poor. We saw this in the successful campaign to get the Supreme Court to invalidate portions of the Voting Rights Act.

Now on the floor of the Senate, we are talking about an amendment that would gut the enforcement of the Fair Housing Act. This amendment, which is offered by my friend Senator LEE, would effectively stop the Department of Housing and Urban Development from being able to enforce the Fair Housing Act. The law would stay on the books, but the Department couldn't enforce some of the most important elements.

One of the elements, passed in the 1960s, is an affirmative requirement that States and cities take steps to remedy discrimination that exists in their community. The Fair Housing Act, which is a bedrock of our civil rights laws, has held for decades that it isn't enough to band discrimination based on race, disability, or gender. Local jurisdictions have to do something to make discrimination less likely for renters and home buyers. This isn't new; this has been on the books since the 1960s. But a few years ago, GAO discovered in a report that most localities weren't doing this; they were ignoring that aspect of the law. Appropriately, HUD clarified the obligations

under this section of the Fair Housing Act so that cities and towns know exactly what they need to do to assess the scope of discrimination in their area and to better understand their obligations under the act to fix the problems.

Senator LEE's amendment would strip from HUD the ability to enforce this part of the law, and that is a shame. We can close our eyes, box our ears, and pretend discrimination doesn't exist, but if that is what my Republican friends want to do, it is a grievous mistake. We aren't in a postracial world. We don't live in a society where the disabled always get a fair shake. Discrimination exists, and the Federal Government, since the beginning of this Republic, has taken seriously its moral and constitutional responsibility to ensure that everyone living under the protection of this government gets an equal chance at success—no matter their race, their gender, their ability, or their disability.

I am dismayed that 50 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Fair Housing Act, the fundamental civil rights that have been granted to every American still need to be continually shielded from attempts to dismantle them. Any limitation or reversal on HUD's ability to enforce the Fair Housing Act would for us, as a Senate, be to ignore the moral compass that has guided our Nation's commitment to civil rights over decades and decades of progress.

I am encouraged that Chairwoman COLLINS and Ranking Member REED both intend to oppose the Lee amendment. I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I am waiting on Senator REID, who will be coming here to make a motion with regard to the Zika crisis. While we have a moment, I want to set the table.

Can you imagine being a pregnant woman in the southern part of the United States this summer in a poor county that does not have the funds for mosquito control? That pregnant woman knows that if she gets bitten by the aegypti mosquito carrying the Zika virus, there is a good chance the virus is going to infect the baby in her womb and could have consequences, all of which we have seen in these very disturbing photos of children born with deformed heads.

As a matter of fact, the doctors in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tell us that the baby can be born with no abnormalities but the abnormalities appear later in the child's development after birth. Can you imagine being a pregnant woman in the southern part of the United States in a poor county—a poor county such as counties in the State of the Presiding Officer—that doesn't have the funds for mosquito control? What about a rich county that has run out of funds budgeted for mosquito control?

If you are going to control the Zika virus, you either have to have a vaccine, which they are working on, or you have to be able to stop the mosquito from being able to reproduce. They are working on genetic alterations, but both of those take time. In the meantime, there is only one thing to do.

Mr. CORNYN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. NELSON. I want to finish my statement.

In the meantime, if you don't have a vaccine and you don't have the ability to stop the mosquito population, the particular strain that carries the virus, there is only one thing to do, and that is mosquito control. That is what local counties, cities, and States are begging us now, as was indicated by the letter that I introduced from Osceola County, which is right next to the county of Orlando, Orange County. It is a relatively well-off, affluent county, but they don't have any more mosquito control funds. As we go into this summer with the rains, that raises the concern that it doesn't have to be a pond with stagnant water; it can be a bottle cap that is filled with water where the mosquito lays her larvae and they hatch.

Yes, I will yield to the distinguished Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Florida yielding for a question.

I wish to ask the question, Is the Senator aware that $580 million of unspent Ebola funds has been reprogrammed by the Obama administration as a down payment on dealing with this impending crisis?

Mr. NELSON. Indeed, this Senator is aware of that. Thank goodness there was this pot of money so that the administration could start this because we haven't been doing anything in Congress to produce the emergency appropriations. Thank goodness there was a pot of money they could borrow.

Did you know that there is Ebola that is erupting in Western Africa right now? Don't we have a responsibility to replenish that Ebola fund?

Mr. President, I said I was going to talk until Leader REID arrived. He is here, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have had a long, pleasant relationship with the senior Senator from Florida. We served in the House together. We have served in the Senate together. I have great admiration for him and his loving wife Grace, and I am happy to be on the floor with him today. People in Florida are so fortunate to have this good man representing them.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3038

Mr. President, look at this map behind me. There are two types of mosquitoes that carry this disease—this condition, this virus. We see this map here, which covers 39 States. It goes without saying that they are not subtropical States. They are not Florida. They are not Louisiana or southern Texas. They are places like Boulder, CO, and Las Vegas, NV. Are those States subtropical? No, I don't think so. We get 4 inches of rain a year. It goes up into Maine.

This is a serious issue which will affect 39 States. As the weather warms, the mosquitos will multiply and people will be bitten by these vicious little insects.

Mosquitos have been causing problems in the world for centuries, but never to anyone's knowledge has a mosquito caused the types of birth defects that are now happening with the Zika virus.

The virus was discovered in 1947 or 1948 in Uganda. In fact, ''Zika'' is the name of a forest there and means ''overgrown.'' Over the decades, something has happened and these mosquitos have become so dangerous.

This virus is a threat to people living in these areas, and it is as real as it gets. Right now, the focal point is on two places, but it is changing as we speak. The American citizens of Puerto Rico have been hammered. That poor territory of ours has had so many problems—all the money problems they are having, compounded by the fact that tourism is being damaged significantly as a result of this Zika virus.

It is not only the birth defects this virus causes, which are so repugnant and scary, but this virus also has the ability to create very serious problems with paralysis in human beings. It has happened, and there are already reported cases of that.

This is a ravaging problem. Puerto Rico now has almost 1,000 reported cases, which include at least 128 pregnant women and probably more. One citizen died in Puerto Rico as a direct result of the Zika virus. It is estimated that 20 percent of the Puerto Rican people—or 3½ million—will be infected with this virus. We are talking 700,000 American citizens.

As of May 11, there were 1,200 Zika cases on the mainland, and Senator NELSON has talked about that in detail—as well he should as a representative of that State. No State is on the frontlines of this ravaging problem more than the State of Florida. It is a nightmare, and who knows how long before this map becomes our national nightmare. No one is making this up. This is serious.

Somehow, the Republican-controlled Congress still hasn't sent a bill to the President's desk to provide emergency funding so we can fight this devastating virus.

If we were here talking about a national emergency—floods, fires, earthquakes, all of the many issues we often come to the floor to talk about—my friend from Texas is on the floor. How many times have we come to this floor to help the State of Texas? We have helped Texas so many times, and we were all glad to do it, to pass emergency supplemental bills to help the citizens of the State of Texas. There is no reason that I can understand why we don't have a piece of legislation on the floor just like we would if there were a flood, fire, or some other emergency in a State. But, no, we are going through a process that will never end in time to take care of the problem.

Under the present process we have, this emergency spending is part of the appropriations bill. Everyone knows that the House can't even get a budget. They can't do their appropriations bills. How are we going to take these issues to conference when the House can't even come up with a budget? I don't know how we can do it any sooner than sometime toward the end of this fiscal year, which is September or October. By then, the summer will be beginning to be gone, but the mosquitos and the devastation they have left will not be gone.

Experts tell us they need this money and they need it now. Yesterday I met with the President's Director of Management and Budget, Sean Donovan, and it is clear that they desperately need this money.

It sounds as if my friend from Texas is saying: We have the Ebola money; use that. They are still working on Ebola. What was the emergency we had here 2 years ago? It was Ebola. What did we do? We provided the money so they could do the research to alleviate the spread of this scourge, and they are doing that now. We are robbing Peter to pay Paul. That is actually what we are doing.

The $1.1 billion for Zika that we invoked cloture on yesterday is a bandaid. It is not enough. Congress isn't moving fast enough to give the researchers, doctors, and public health officials what they need to combat this virus.

Now the House is going to make it even worse by passing a bill for $622 million. What would you guess they are going to use to fund this money? Let's see. What could it be? Oh, maybe ObamaCare, which they have tried to defeat 67 times, and each time it ends up the same. Einstein's definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. That is what we have with the House Republicans, and I am sorry to say this, but it has spilled over here too. They haven't tried to eliminate it over here that many times but as many times as they could. They are going to come up with a bill to provide $622 million, which will come from a number of resources, but it will principally be ObamaCare money. And $622 million is a fraction of what is needed. It is approximately 25 percent of what is really needed.

To say that the appropriations process is too slow is a gross understatement. We need to get this done now. I don't know when, if ever, these appropriations bills will be signed into law.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has been at the forefront of all of these dreaded problems we have had in recent decades. He was a leading advocate scientifically during the AIDS epidemic we had. Here is what he said: ''When you've got an emergency situation, you really need to get funding as quickly as possible.''

The time to act is now. This summer, when Zika is on the news every day, which it will be, Senators will regret that they did not act quickly to address this crisis.

I urge my colleagues to take care of this today and provide the $1.9 billion in emergency money, just as we have done with any other national emergency we have taken care of on this floor numerous times, and do it in a procedural way that will get the money to them the quickest.

Mr. President, at this time I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 157, H.R. 3038; that all after the enacting clause be stricken; that the Nelson substitute amendment to enhance a Federal response and preparedness with respect to the Zika virus, which is at the desk, be agreed to; that there be up to 1 hour of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, and there be no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, our Democratic colleagues won't take yes for an answer. Yesterday the Murray-Blunt language, which now the Democratic leader calls a bandaid, actually obtained cloture, and I expect it will pass tomorrow as part of the underlying appropriations bill.

Mr. President, $1.1 billion on top of the $585 million that has already been reprogrammed from the Ebola fund to be used to combat the Zika virus is not a bandaid; it is a serious effort in a nonpartisan way to address a public health challenge.

As we can see from the map, Texas is right in the crosshairs. We are ground zero in the United States, along with Florida, Louisiana, and other Southern States where this mosquito is present. Thank goodness no mosquito-borne transmission has occurred yet. But I agree with my colleague from Florida. This is a serious matter, and we need to treat it seriously, but that is not what is happening now.

This is a bill that the Senate defeated cloture on yesterday, and this is an attempt to end run that defeat of a vote before the entire Senate. I am compelled to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. I don't know what my friend from Texas is going to tell the people from Texas this summer when there is no money available. We heard the Senator from Florida talk about the need for local governments to prepare for this virus. Some of this stuff is pretty straightforward.

How do you get rid of mosquitoes? You can't wish them away. They don't go away that way. We get rid of mosquitoes by mosquito control, and that takes money. Where does that money come from? It comes from local governments. That is why Florida is desperate for money, and they will be desperate for that money in Texas and everyplace else. Using the logic of my friend from Texas, don't worry about it. We will get you some money this fall. The money we voted on yesterday at the very earliest will not come until we wrap up our appropriations bills.

I remind everyone that the House is stuck. They can't do appropriations bills because they don't have a budget. They can't get people to agree to what they want to do. My friend PAUL RYAN has seen what John Boehner had to put up with all of those years before they ran him away from the Speakership, and he is having the same problem. This man who talked about budgeting—that was his key. He was the idea man. PAUL RYAN can't get a budget with his own Republicans in the House.

I think that my friend is saying: We got a downpayment. We took the money from Ebola. We will worry about Ebola later, and maybe we will borrow that money from someplace else to continue our research on Ebola.

Senator SCHUMER mentioned in a meeting we had a short time ago that the one thing he remembered about the last time Dr. Fauci came to our caucus and talked about this dread problem was that he said that the National Institutes of Health is very close to coming up with a vaccine for this. But we take this money—just like when we had sequestration, they were close to a flu vaccine, and that is gone. You have to do it when you can, and right now is an opportunity for us to do something to save the lives of people and especially these unborn infants.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I apologize to the Democratic leader. Apparently I wasn't able to communicate my point, which is that there is already $580 million available today to combat the Zika virus. Finally, the administration took the advice of those on this side of the aisle and said: Let's take the unused Ebola funds to fight it today while we have an orderly process by which we appropriate the money in a responsible way.

I think the Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, and Senator BLUNT, the chairman and ranking member of the appropriations subcommittee, have done a good job of winnowing down the $1.9 billion request to the $1.1 billion which I agree is the right figure. While we have some other differences, I think the Senate is acting in a responsible and bipartisan way, which is the only way things can actually get done around here.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it wasn't because of the good graces of the Members of the Republican Senate that President Obama took the money from Ebola and put it into fighting the problems we have with Zika. The President asked for this money 3 months ago. They took that money out of desperation because they had no other place to go for the money. That money is not sitting there waiting to be spent; it has been spent.

They need money. They are out of money. There is no more robbing Peter to pay Paul. This is an emergency, and it should be handled now because under the process we have, the earliest there will be help for this will be this fall.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3038

I have to say that I am really disappointed that Republicans once again rejected the administration's full emergency supplemental package.

It has been more than 3 months since President Obama first put forward a proposal to fight this Zika virus. He laid out what he thought he needed to respond to a crisis in a way that protected our families the best. His administration was here. They testified at hearing after hearing after hearing about the details of this proposal and made it clear that there was absolutely no reason for Congress to wait.

But, for months, our Republican leaders did nothing. They delayed. They came up with one excuse after another. They ignored the experts, ignored the scientists, and ignored the facts.

Some Republicans were saying that Zika wasn't something they were willing to give the administration a penny more for. Others said they would think about more money to fight Zika but only in return for partisan spending cuts. And others spent more time thinking about how to get political cover rather than actually trying to address this enormous problem.

But many of us knew how important this was, and we were not going to give up. We kept the pressure on. We kept pushing to get serious about dealing with this emergency, and we made sure that the mothers and fathers across the country who are scared and who wanted their government to fight this horrific virus had a voice in this process.

So while it shouldn't have taken so long, I am glad that this week many of our Republican colleagues in the Senate did finally join us at the table to open up a path for an important step forward. This was a compromise proposal, and it certainly isn't what I would have written on my own.

For example, I want to note that throughout this process, I have made it clear that a top priority of mine is making sure that women do have access to reproductive health care in light of the impacts of this virus. So I was disappointed that the Republicans insisted on including unnecessary language that simply reiterates the preexisting ban on Federal funding for abortions.

But this bipartisan agreement that we voted on yesterday would support community health centers and other providers in making sure that women have access to contraception and other critical health care. It would help make sure that women in Zika-affected areas have the ability to plan their families and prevent these tragedies, like so many we have already seen, especially compared to the House legislation that includes no support for preventive health care or outreach for family planning. I believe these resources are extremely critical, and I am going to keep fighting to continue getting us to expand this to the full range of reproductive health care that women need.

We also didn't get the full amount we had hoped for in this compromise. Democrats still believe that Congress should give the President the full funding this administration has asked for and needs.

But I am glad that, with every Democrat and 23 Republicans willing to do the right thing, we are going to pass a $1.1 billion down payment on the President's proposal and do it as an emergency bill without offsets—the way it ought to be.

So I want to thank Senator BLUNT, who worked with me to get this done, as well as my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who voted for it. Our bipartisan agreement will provide direct investments with a Zika response in Puerto Rico. It will ramp up prevention and support services for pregnant women and invest in foreign aid for Latin America and the Caribbean. It will help accelerate development of a vaccine and backfill nearly $100 million in funding the administration was forced to reprogram due to the Republicans' refusal to act.

Our agreement would accelerate the administration's work and allow money to start flowing to address this crisis, even as we continue to ask for more as needed.

Unfortunately, now we know that House Republicans have gone in a very different direction. They released an underfunded, partisan—and, frankly, in my opinion—mean-spirited bill that would provide only $622 million, which is less than a third of what is needed for this emergency, without any funding for preventive health care or family planning or even outreach to those who are at risk of getting the Zika virus.

They are still insisting that funding for this public health emergency be fully offset and that the administration should siphon the money away from the critical Ebola response and from other essential activities in order to fund Zika efforts.

The choice between the Senate and the House Zika bills is a choice between acting to protect women and families and doing nothing at all. It is a choice between a bipartisan compromise that takes an important step forward to address this emergency and a partisan embarrassment that is intended to do nothing more than provide Members with political cover. That doesn't solve this emergency.

The partisan House bill is a nonstarter, but we do have a path forward. The Senate bill has the support of Democrats and Republicans. It can move through the House, it can be signed into law, and it can get resources moving quickly to tackle this emergency quickly.

So let's get this bill to the House as quickly as possible. Every Democrat and a little less than half of the Republicans supported the bill. Let's send it to the House right now and urge them to pass it as quickly as possible.

There is no reason to keep it attached to this bill we are on and allow House Republicans to get it and slowwalk it into the fall, as our leader suggested would happen. There is no reason this funding cannot be approved and signed into law next week in time for the summer and the peak of mosquito season, which the Senator from Florida knows is coming very rapidly.

It has the support of the Senate on its own. Let's send it to the House on its own. Women and families in this country have been looking to Congress for action on Zika for months, and we here in the Senate—and House Republicans—should not make them wait any longer.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 157, H.R. 3038; that all after the enacting clause be stricken; that the Blunt-Murray substitute amendment to enhance the Federal response and preparedness with respect to the Zika virus be agreed to; that there be up to 1 hour of debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, again, our colleagues won't take yes for an answer. The amendment of the Senator from

Washington, along with Senator BLUNT, the chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee responsible for this, actually obtained cloture and will pass tomorrow—tomorrow—as part of this underlying appropriations bill, assuming that there are no other objections or that people want to finish that legislation. So I don't really understand why they continue to refuse to take yes for an answer.

I would say to my friend from Washington: Would the Senator modify her request to include my language at the desk, which has the exact same funding levels as the Blunt-Murray amendment but includes a pay-for using the prevention fund in the Affordable Care Act?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Washington so modify her request?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me just say that the spending bill that this has now been attached to may take months—into the fall or even into the winter months—before it is approved. The Zika virus isn't going to wait for the winter months. The mosquitoes are here now, and they will continue to move very rapidly across the country, as our leader has outlined before. So taking it out of this bill—it has now been approved by a number of Senators on a bipartisan basis—and moving it quickly to the House and getting it to the President's desk means they will have the resources as quickly as possible to deal with this and to begin to deal with this in a responsible way.

Secondly, let me just say that the request that the Senator from Texas has just broached means that we are going to have to fight over cuts—cuts to women, cuts to families, cuts to critical health care efforts in order to fight the Zika virus. That is objectionable. This is an emergency supplemental, as we agreed to yesterday, and it needs to move forward that way. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to respond briefly to my friend from Washington. The prevention fund that was created by the Affordable Care Act that is part of the President's signature health care bill has more than adequate money in it to pay for the research, the mosquito eradication, and the other services that are necessary. It is not depriving anyone of money that they otherwise would have coming.

What it does do is it alleviates the financial burden on future generations to actually pay the money back that we insist on spending without providing for adequate offsets. So increasing deficits is why the national debt has almost doubled under this President because of the reckless spending.

We are trying to do this in a responsible, bipartisan, and, indeed, I would say, nonpartisan sort of way, but apparently that is not acceptable to our friends on the other side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator object?

Mr. CORNYN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I have listened attentively to the debate over the last 15 minutes about Zika, and it has been very entertaining to me. But it has also been interesting just to hear the numbers being thrown around. There is a series of numbers being thrown around as if it is an apples-to-apples comparison.

So let me try to break down a few things with an apples-to-apples comparison about Zika and the funding.

The President has asked for $1.9 billion for Zika. The Senate has now responded back to say: We will do the $500 million the President has already moved over from Ebola funding and add to it $1.1 billion to come up with about $1.6 billion—almost $1.7 billion—so about $200 million short, which is being declared as grossly inadequate. That is 0.2 short from what the President had asked for.

There is also being thrown around the House proposal, saying the House proposal is grossly inadequate to be able to cover what is being discussed there because it is a little over $600 million. The President wants $1.9 billion, and the House is offering $600 million. But what is not being stated is that what the Senate has done and what the President has asked for is $1.9 billion over 2 years. The House has said a little over $600 million this year and added to the Ebola funding that was already there—meaning $1.1 billion this year and then in our normal appropriations process to take it up again next year. It may be the same amount.

It has become very fascinating to me to hear some say: Well, they are cutting it in half, and it is insulting and it is all these things.

I think to myself: It is the same numbers. They are just cutting the times to be able to break it down into different numbers.

So all of these number games are very interesting, but they still don't drive at one essential thing. We do need to deal with Zika, but we also need to deal with Zika in a fiscally responsible way. The assumption that to deal with Zika means we have to throw the budget out and there is no way we can find $1 billion in a $4 trillion budget to cover Zika is laughable.

So what I propose is something very simple. Right now, the Department of State, HHS, and USAID have $86 billion in unobligated balances—right now. There is absolutely no reason $1 billion of that could not be moved to deal with Zika right now. It would be the exact same proposal that Senator MURRAY and Senator BLUNT have proposed but actually doing it with unobligated balances. There is absolutely no reason that wouldn't occur.

We know that $500 million had already been moved over from Ebola funding. That would be $1.6 billion moving over to help fight Zika.

The real issue to fighting Zika is three simple things. CDC is actually tracking the movements so we can stay attentive to it. The second thing is dealing with the mosquito population, which is aggressive spraying. The third thing is working on a vaccine. All three of those things we can do, and all three of those things have already begun. The research has already begun on the vaccine. The mosquito spraying has already begun, and working through the tracking and the movement of the disease has already started. The implication that nothing can start until this body acts is not true.

The administration, starting in January and February, came in and said: This is urgent. We need to be able to move funds, and we need to be able to have funds to do it.

Ironically, in January and February, they came and held hearings on that, but in March of this year—2 months ago—this same administration took half a billion dollars out of the economic support fund that Congress had allotted to them last December, which was earmarked especially for—get this—infectious diseases. So in March of this year, the administration took half a billion dollars out of the infectious diseases account for international infectious diseases and moved that over and gave it to the U.N. for the Green Climate Fund. Now they come to us, high and mighty, and say we need $1 billion, when the one-half billion dollars we already allotted that can be used right now along with the one-half billion from Ebola, equaling $1 billion, was already allotted by Congress—was already there—and could be in operation right now. They chose to reallocate to a different priority. So it disturbs me to hear the administration saying, ''Why aren't you doing anything about this,'' when we did last year, and then they spent that money on green climate funds rather than spending it on Zika—what it was allotted for—infectious disease control.

So here is my issue. We need to do both. We need to deal with Zika, and we need to do it in a fiscally responsible way, and we can. I understand the term ''emergency'' means one simple thing, spend more—spend more and add more debt because it is an emergency.

I don't think Americans believe that with a $4 trillion budget, we cannot cover $1 billion from previous accounts. In fact, if we want to be specific, the three accounts the Blunt-Murray amendment puts money into—they are putting $1.1 billion into a set of accounts. If we took those accounts alone, those accounts alone that they are adding $1 billion to already have $15 billion in unobligated balances in those accounts right now.

We can be efficient in what we do and still treat things seriously, and I think we should. I think it is fiscally responsible to not just say the Zika virus is

moving quickly so we need to add more debt to our children to respond to it. I think we can take care of our debt and take care of Zika.

For anyone who would say it is unheard of to be able to move funds for an emergency like this, may I remind you in 2009, this same Obama administration facing the H1N1 virus moving around the world, asked for permission to move unobligated balances out of some of these same accounts to deal with the H1N1 virus. We are just saying, if it is OK for the H1N1 virus, why is it suddenly not allowable now dealing with Zika? This is not about Zika anymore; this is about breaking the budget caps.

We need to be responsible in our spending and responsible in how we deal with Zika. Both things can be done.

With that, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside so that I may offer my amendment No. 3955 to the Blunt amendment No. 3900.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I like the Senator from Oklahoma. He is a great friend, and it pains me to reserve the right to object because I do consider him an excellent Senator.

However, the issue he raises in his unanimous consent request is to take the emergency funding of $1.1 billion out of the appropriations bill and replace that emergency funding by raiding a number of funds that would cut medical research and public health in order to address the Zika virus. What I am talking about is raiding money from cancer research, children's immunizations, and the CDC's efforts to fight other infectious diseases that are already so important to the health and welfare of this country.

The Senator, whom I consider a friend and a good Senator, is from Oklahoma in the heart of the country. Oklahoma is covered with these two strains of mosquitoes, both of which carry the Zika virus. This one is the real culprit. This is the one that gets inside your house. This is the one that lurks in the dark corners of the house. This is the one that lays larvae in a rain-filled bottle cap that is sitting upside down.

I would say to the Senator from Oklahoma that this Senator has probably been bitten by more mosquitoes than any other Senator. There was a time when I was a kid that I was bitten so much that I was almost immune, but I do not want to be bitten by this critter carrying that Zika virus.

The truth is, if you have an earthquake in the State of Oklahoma, that is an emergency, and we are going to respond in kind. If the Senator from Texas has a hurricane coming into Galveston, that is an emergency, and we are going to respond. Likewise, this is an emergency. If you don't realize it now in May, the summer months are coming.

I want to make sure everybody understands why we need to get this separate from the appropriations bill that the Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, is talking about. In order to get an appropriations bill, we have to get an agreement with the House. The House just passed a bill for $622 million, and they are going to raid ObamaCare to pay for it. There is no way we are going to get an agreement that the President is going to sign going through that appropriations process. The summer is going to be long gone, and the aegypti is going to be biting all the more, sucking the blood of Americans, and therefore, while doing that, transmitting the virus into the bloodstream of Americans.

This Senator has already described the disastrous consequences for a pregnant woman. We ought to be petrified if they are in a county where either it is poor and they don't have the funds for mosquito control or it is a well-off county and it is not budgeted and they are not ready.

It pains me to have to clash with my friend, the Senator from Oklahoma. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, there is one clarification I would like to be able to make. This amendment I have proposed—and would still stand by—allows us to be able to continue what is going on with mosquito eradication right now. That doesn't stop. I would hate for anyone in this body to promise every American that if we give DC enough money, we will make sure they are never going to be bitten by a mosquito. I am not sure that is a promise we would ever want to make because we can't keep that promise, but the amendment I propose gives the administration the latitude to be able to select which accounts this money would come from. We are talking about $86 billion of options on multiple accounts from the State Department, USAID for international aid, and also HHS. That is not for medical research and not for children getting immunizations. There is enough money in those accounts.

I will repeat back the same thing I said before. This administration transferred one-half billion dollars just 2 months ago from the infectious diseases account, noting, apparently, that we didn't need money in the infectious diseases account and moved that money to the Green Climate Fund. So for the administration to say it is more important that the U.N. get green climate funds than dealing with the Zika virus is a different set of priorities than where we are in this Congress and a different set of priorities than we put into place in December of last year.

This is an issue this administration already has the authority to deal with. It doesn't have to come from cancer research. It can come from allocating accounts. But there is no reason to add debt to our children to also deal with mosquito eradication in the United States. We can do both, and we should do both.

I yield back.

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. ISAKSON. 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. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise to address the subject before the Senate with regard to the HUD proposed rule, the Lee amendment, and the amendment proposed by the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS. I do so as one who has 35 years of experience in the housing business affected by the Civil Rights Act, affected by the 1968 Fair Housing Act, and one who has a good deal of working knowledge about what that accomplished. What that accomplished was the end of prejudice against African Americans in the South and ethnic minorities in the Northeast and around the country to ensure that everybody had an equal opportunity—underline the word ''opportunity''—to have safe, affordable housing. That took place in 1968.

It has been a long time since 1968. Prejudice in America, although never eradicated, is almost gone. Housing access is almost universal, but there is one group of people in America who had very little access to housing because there is none available to them. We can identify them not by their name, not by their region but by their ZIP Codes. They are the neighborhoods of America that have contributed to the decline of many families and much hope and opportunity for individuals. Show me a school system or a school that is not performing, and I will show you rough neighborhoods. Show me an individual community that doesn't have the tax base it needs, and I will show you a community that doesn't have neighborhoods that are employed.

I want to bring to the attention of the Senate what I spoke on a year ago on this floor—a gentleman by the name of Thomas G. Cousins from Atlanta, GA, who founded Cousins Properties, the most successful developer in the history of Atlanta, GA; one of the leading developers in the United States of America and a man who gives back more than he ever takes.

He created the Cousins Foundation and set out in the early 1990s to find a way to address the problems of poverty, ignorance, and crime in inner-city neighborhoods. He bought something called East Lake Meadows. Some of you have watched the Fed-Ex Championship on TV and seen $10 million prizes won by professional golfers. That is on a golf course that 25 years ago

had trees growing up in the fairway, dilapidated houses around it, and was described as Little Vietnam.

But it is an area that Tom Cousins changed by changing minds, by changing attitudes, and by talking about the things that could be done, rather than what could not be done. He knew that the best way to bring those people out of poverty was to provide them with a good education. So he came to the State Board of Education, which I chaired, and asked for a waiver to create the first charter school in the Atlanta, GA, public school system's history in East Lake.

He leased the school for $1 a year for 25 years and then built for that neighborhood its own elementary school, called Drew Elementary.

Twenty-five years ago, Drew Elementary was the poorest testing school in the State of Georgia. This year, it is one of the top 10 in the State of Georgia out of 1,400. He changed the minds and attitudes of people—not their race. But he changed their minds and their attitudes about opportunity and about hope. He went into the community of dilapidated houses, crack houses, and meth houses, and bought those houses up and raised housing prices. He fixed them up and began to create a market for those houses.

The kids that formed gangs on the streets became caddies at the new country club named East Lake Country Club. They went to Georgia State University on Panther grants, granted to kids who are in need to get an education. Many of the kids in Atlanta, GA, who are getting MBAs today were educated in East Lake Meadows at Drew Elementary and had their job at the East Lake Country Club.

People do not associate golf courses, golf tournaments, and country clubs with areas of poverty and no housing, but East Lake is such a place. Because they built a blend of all types of housing—section 8 housing, rental housing, low- and moderate-income housing, midlevel housing, upper level housing, and shopping centers and the like—they took all of the things that the community did not have and then created a market for them to come.

They created a movement with Warren Buffett called Purpose Built Communities. Now, the HUD rule, which I have read, which is the issue of discussion today on the floor, is a rule that portends gathering more information to try and find ways we can end the lack of housing availability for certain Americans by bringing in data and trying to create new ways to do that.

Tom Cousins did it with private sector money. He did it in cooperation with the banking industry. He created an idea and a dream and an investment. He began to bring down the barriers of discrimination and a lack of hope and brought prosperity to a community that had not seen it—better educated kids, better developed communities, better schools, and the like.

I ask unanimous consent to have this article from the Wall Street Journal about Thomas G. Cousins and Purpose Built Communities printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 13, 2013]

THOMAS COUSINS: THE ATLANTA MODEL FOR REVIVING POOR NEIGHBORHOODS

(By Thomas G. Cousins)

America's greatest untapped resource isn't hidden in the ground but is sitting in plain sight: the human capital trapped in poor neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. The people living where crime and incarceration are rampant represent trillions of dollars in potential economic activity. Investing in their well-being can be a social and economic game-changer, but only if done in a way that produces results.

For a half-century, charities, nonprofits and local and federal governments have poured billions of dollars into addressing the problems plaguing these Americans. But each issue tends to be treated separately—as if there is no connection between a safe environment and a child's ability to learn, or high-school dropout rates and crime. This scattershot method hasn't worked. A better approach is to invest comprehensively in small, geographically defined neighborhoods.

That's what our East Lake Foundation has discovered, focusing on one corner of southeast Atlanta. Fifteen years ago, East Lake Meadows, a public-housing project with 1,400 residents, was a terrifying place to live. Nine out of 10 residents had been victims of a crime. Today it is a safe community of working, taxpaying families whose children excel in the classroom.

How did this happen to a place that police officers once wouldn't go without backup? We targeted a single neighborhood in 1993 and worked with community and city leaders on every major issue at the same time: mixed-income housing, a cradle-to-college education program, job readiness, and health and wellness opportunities.

The results are stunning. Violent crime is down more than 90%. Crime overall is down 73%—a level 50% better than the rest of Atlanta. Employment among families on welfare has increased to 70% from 13% in 1995. (The other 30% are elderly, disabled or in job training.)

The income of these publicly assisted families has more than quadrupled. In the surrounding area, home values have risen at 3.8 times the city average (to over $250,000 per home). A Wells Fargo bank, Publix grocery and Wal-Mart have moved in, and restaurants, shops and other services have returned.

The foundation started by focusing on housing. In 1996 and 1997, the Atlanta Housing Authority helped us secure temporary housing for the East Meadow occupants while AHA and the foundation rebuilt the place as Villages of East Lake. With city and federal government approval, we reserved half the units for families on welfare and the rest for those able to pay the market rate. This was key: A mixed-income community ensures that children are around role models—employed adults who take care of property and spend time with their children.

After negotiating with Atlanta Public Schools to secure the city's first public charter, we built Charles R. Drew School. The K–8 school, which opened in 2000, offered longer school days and an extended school year. It now serves 90% of the children in the East Lake neighborhood. Based on measures by the Georgia Department of Education, Drew is the top performing elementary school in the Atlanta school system.

The foundation also bought up surrounding residential and commercial properties, including the old East Lake golf course, once home to Grand Slam champion Bobby Jones. We restored the golf course, which created 179 jobs. Then came a smaller public course and a golf academy, where young people now learn the caddy trade and golf course agronomy. Today, East Lake Golf Club is the home of the annual PGA Tour Championship and final playoff for the FedExCup.

Thanks to private investors, such as Warren Buffett and Julian Robertson, we created Purpose Built Communities, which helps other neighborhoods adapt the East Lake model. The Meadows Community in Indianapolis and the Bayou District in New Orleans have achieved considerable gains by emulating the method in Atlanta.

Other organizations have slowly begun to adopt our approach. Habitat for Humanity, which once focused on putting up one house at a time, now partners with neighborhood associations, churches, business groups and the like to help lift up entire neighborhoods.

A better house by itself doesn't make children feel safe. East Lake's charter school alone doesn't make children eager to learn. But a decent place to live, a secure environment with adult role models, and a great school with specially trained teachers together produced change. Recently, a young woman whose life began in the old East Lake public housing project, where less than 30% of children graduated from high school, graduated summa cum laude from Georgia Tech. She's one of more than 300 Drew graduates since 2008 now heading to college.

On the national level, challenges like the ones we faced in southeast Atlanta are widespread and urgently need to be addressed. More than 25% of American children under age 3 live in poverty. Three million children drop out of school every year, rendering them ineligible for 90% of jobs. Only 59% of students graduate from high school in the 50 largest U.S. cities, and dropouts commit 75% of crimes.

These harsh realities make the way we choose to try to change them all the more important. Charities, foundations and government representatives are welcome to visit East Lake to check out this turnaround story. They won't need to bring backup.

Mr. ISAKSON. Now, the current amendment before us deals with the rule that is being promulgated by HUD dealing with the Civil Rights Act of 1968. But I want to caution everybody. It is not about discrimination because of prejudice. It is about discrimination because of lack of access. You read the testimony that went into a lot of the rule, and that is quite clear. There are a number of paralyzed veterans groups and handicapped groups that have sent letters against this amendment. Let me tell you why are they against it. They don't think anybody discriminates against them because they are handicapped. They just think they have no choice of housing because there is nothing that fits their wheelchairs or the walls in the bathroom are not reinforced or the kitchen countertops are too high.

What has happened in East Lake Meadows and in Atlanta, GA, where Purpose Built Communities set standards, is that 5 percent of all apartment buildings are built with convertible units. So up to 5 percent of the units can be converted to handicapped access: 36-inch doors, not 30-inch doors;

wainscoting on the side walls in the bathroom that allow reinforcement rods to be put in and for handles to be put on the walls; kitchen countertops that can be lowered by 8 inches so that somebody in a wheelchair can work their kitchen.

That is the type of access they want. Through the changes in code, in terms of construction code, and changes in attitude like Mr. Cousins did, we now have handicapped people that have access to affordable housing in Atlanta, GA, that is built to meet their specific needs. It is not discrimination of prejudice. It was discrimination of lack of opportunity.

The way I read the proposed rule, they are looking to take a chance to take advantage of things like Promise Built Communities and try and have private developers use Federal access to funds to create ways to create new housing that will have more accessibility and affordability for people in those type of situations.

Now, I understand that Senator COLLINS and Senator REED have an amendment they are going to offer, either as a side-by-side or as a part of the bill, which will clarify one important point: Nothing in here contains anything that portends to promulgate a rule or regulation or any zoning at a local land use authority by the Federal Government.

None of us ever wants the Federal Government to do that. But we have provided a lot of programs that have passed this Congress, this Senate, and this U.S. Government that promotes housing, such as section 8 housing, FHA housing, and VA housing. I can go on and on. We want to make sure that those finances that are available to finance purchases have houses to be purchased that meet the needs of all Americans, giving them a public accommodation and access that some of them never had before.

So with the amendment adopted by Senator COLLINS, I think you are protected against any nefarious activity that could ever be taken on by HUD, and you are doing a good thing for the State, a good thing for the United States, and a good thing for the Senate. I commend Senators REED and COLLINS on what they are doing.

I rise in support of the Collins-Reed amendment, and I will vote for it on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I just want to thank my friend and colleague from Georgia for his extremely eloquent and persuasive presentation. The example he gave us of the development in Georgia, done by Mr. Cousins, is precisely what the HUD rule is intended to promote. That is why it is called affirmatively advancing fair housing, affirmatively furthering fair housing.

With the amendment that Senator JACK REED, THAD COCHRAN, and I are going to be offering, we will make absolutely clear that it is not HUD's role to dictate or interfere with local zoning ordinances. But what we should embrace in this country is the goals of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. The Senator from Georgia, who knows more about housing than any Member of this Senate, has stated very clearly and very eloquently in the example that he has given us what the goals are of the 1968 Fair Housing Act and the regulation that was issued by HUD last year.

Again, I would note that the regulation issued last year came from a GAO report issued in 2010 that found that HUD was not doing a particularly good job in this area. So it was not something that was devised by some out-of-touch bureaucrat. It was directly the result of the GAO report. The kind of mixed development, which has transformed neighborhoods in Atlanta and throughout this country and given hope and opportunity to those who may feel they are in the shadows of society, is exactly the goal of this regulation and of that famous civil rights era law, the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

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. RUBIO. 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. RUBIO. Mr. President, I wish to talk about housing issues contained in the bill we are debating, and I want to talk specifically about a project in Florida that we became aware of in October. It is named Eureka Gardens. It is a low-income, affordable housing project that uses Section 8 funds to house people of lower income, as you are all aware of that program. It is run and owned by an organization called Global Ministries Foundation. It is run by a reverend, Richard Hamlet. It is organized as a 501(c)(3), the organization that owns this building. Mr. Hamlet, Reverend Hamlet, is the head of the organization.

If you look at the Web site for Global Ministries, there is a link that says: ''What We Do.'' If you go to that section of the Global Ministries Foundation Web site, this is what it says they do: ''Providing affordable housing across the United States and ministering to the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of our residents.'' That is what they state as their business purpose. I imagine that is what they needed to state because of their 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status. However, we have a quote from Reverend Hamlet, who has said that his involvement in housing is purely business-related. He said:

> This is a business. This isn't a church mission. These are business corporations that we set up, but we're no different from a real estate investment trust or a private equity group.

That is how he described his 501(c)(3), not-for-profit Global Ministries Foundation.

Global Ministries has over 40 properties in multiple States—Alabama, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, North Carolina, New York, Tennessee, and Georgia. In all of these States, in all of these properties, they have over 5,000 units that qualify as assisted. In 19 locations across Florida, they have over 2,000 assisted units. This particular project in Jacksonville, FL, Eureka Gardens, has 396 assisted units.

This is the problem we found with some of these properties. In Eureka Gardens, in the last year, the property was found to be in horrifying condition. I have spoken of it on the floor before. I am talking about people living in a place where there was mold on the walls, where the appliances were 15 years old, where the apartments hadn't been painted in 13 years, where windows didn't open, where staircases were literally falling down, and where the city had to come in, evacuate people, and condemn the property.

Those were the conditions in Eureka Gardens. We got involved last October to get those remedied. So there was the thinking, well, maybe this is just one property. Maybe Global Ministries only has one property that is run this way but generally they are a good actor.

This is what we found: They have two properties—Warren and Tulane Apartments in Memphis, TN—that have such poor living companies as well that HUD pulled their Federal funding from the housing.

In Atlanta, we found that their Forest Cove property has been plagued by rodents and sewage. This is what news crews reported about their property in Atlanta. It said ''building, siding, and ceiling tiles peeling from many of the buildings. . . . Garbage and stagnant green water were feet from playing children.''

At Forest Cove, this is what a tenant said to news reporters:

> I'm homeless right now. I moved out to be homeless.

Because the conditions were so bad, the guy moved out of the property. In other words, he would rather be homeless than live in a Global Ministries Foundation property.

So we have two properties in Memphis, TN, we have a property in Atlanta, and then there is another property in Jacksonville that they own. The property is called Washington Heights. It also has been noted for violation. HUD's most recent review resulted in the property barely passing Federal inspections. And I will have more to say about Federal inspections in a moment.

At the Goodwill Village property in Memphis, one resident said that he thought the issue was snakes on the property—snakes on the property. He thought they were being caused because they were coming to ''eat the rats.''

At Goodwill Village, the same property, a resident had an issue with a gas leak. The resident's home had the sink torn out, her stove and hot water disconnected, and a hole put into her wall.

Two months after all of that, no one had come by to fix it.

In Orlando, at the Windsor Cove Apartments owned by the Global Ministries Foundation, reporters saw holes in the walls where roaches and rodents came into the apartment. The same woman has a gap between her bathtub and the wall that lets water leak into the apartment below.

After issues with his properties were exposed, here is what Reverend Hamlet said: ''No one should have to live under these conditions.''

They are your properties. It is not just one property; there are multiple properties across multiple States. I want to focus specifically on the one I visited last week in Jacksonville. It was an amazing experience. Forty-eight hours before we announce we are coming, nothing—literally nothing—is happening at this property. When we announce we are coming to visit the property, suddenly a bunch of contractors show up. They put up a banner welcoming the residents to all the great stuff they do there. Suddenly work crews are walking all over, fixing the place up. All of a sudden, because we are coming to visit, all these work crews mysteriously show up.

Eureka Gardens's problems have been going on for a long time, but they only became known in October of last year when a local television station and other local media began to highlight them.

My Jacksonville office staff toured Eureka Gardens in early 2015 and in October of 2015. I want to report what they found in that one building. As I said, we have now had reports about other buildings with similar conditions run by this Global Ministries 501(c)(3), but I want to share what my staff found when they visited Eureka Gardens. They saw crumbling stairs disguised with duct tape and covered with apparent black mold. When I am talking about the stairs, I mean the stairs that connect the first floor of the building with the second floor of the building, these metal stairs. They would just put duct tape over the areas where the stairs and the wall were cracking and almost falling. They just put duct tape on it. There was mold on these stairs; they spray-painted over it. My staff found faulty electrical wiring. Do you know what they did with the faulty electrical wiring? They covered it up with a garbage bag so no one could see it. They could smell the natural gas odor being sucked from an outdoor piping system into the air-conditioning units of residents, and they found all sorts of other health and safety issues.

At Eureka Gardens, when residents were asked about housing, one resident said, ''Dogs live better than this.'' In fact, there was a 4-year-old living in Eureka Gardens who was suffering from lead poisoning, which her mother has a right to believe she got in her Eureka Gardens apartment—an apartment, by the way, paid for with your taxpayer money. Section 8 housing is Federal taxpayer money going into the hands of these slumlords, and a child now has lead poisoning because of it.

In December of last year, HUD declared Eureka Gardens to be in default of the contract, and it set a February 24, 2016, deadline to meet requirements. In February, Eureka Gardens passed this inspection, but by March HUD had written to Eureka Gardens saying the Department ''does not believe the property would currently pass another REAC inspection.''

Last Friday I visited Eureka Gardens. I saw, for example, an apartment where the window did not open. I saw an apartment where the window did not open. The window had been cracked, and do you know how they fixed it? Somebody came and put a glob of glue where the window connects next to the pane, and if you tried to open the window, it wouldn't go up. That means if there was a fire in that house, the person sleeping in that room would not be able to get out of that window unless they break it. I saw that with my own eyes last week when I was there. I saw an apartment that hadn't been painted in 13 years. I saw a stove where the knobs were unrecognizable because they were covered with glue, basically, and grime. I saw a refrigerator that looked like it was from North Korea. It had to be 15 years old. There was all sorts of rust on the side and they just spray-painted over the rust.

As I said earlier, 48 hours before I visited, Global Ministries started to fix some of these cosmetic issues. By the way, that included putting up a piece of wood with exposed nails and calling it a door. This apartment has two exits—in the front and in the back. This lady gets home from work and she opens her back door. They have boarded up the door, and there are nails sticking through the wood. She has little children. The nails were the kind that if you ran into that door because you didn't know it was there, you would get a nail to the face, to the heart, to the gut.

So you would ask yourself, all right, you have these owners of all these units and they are getting this Federal money under this HUD contract. Where does all the money go? What are they doing with all this money they make? Well, you can look at their 990 tax forms, which are available for all 501(c)(3) organizations.

Let me tell you about the 2014 tax year, which is the most recent one that is available. In the year 2014, the Reverend Richard Hamlet paid himself $495,000 plus $40,000 in nontaxable benefits. Also in 2014, the Reverend Hamlet's family members were paid an additional $218,000.

By the way, he had previously failed to disclose his family members' compensation on tax forms, which is in violation of IRS rules that require CEOs to disclose the compensation of all family members who work for an organization.

The IRS reports also show that between 2011 and 2013, Global Ministries Foundation—the landlord that owns all of these units in all of these buildings that your taxpayer money is paying for—shifted $9 million away from its low-income housing not-for-profit to its religious affiliate. There is no one here who is a more strident proponent of private and public partnerships, of faith-based initiatives, but you have these building that are crumbling. You have these people living in these deplorable conditions. In addition to paying himself half a million dollars and his family another $218,000, they took $9 million, and instead of using it to fix these units, they transferred it to the other entity they had for religious purposes.

They don't seem to want to spend the money—including the taxpayer money—on making repairs, on making sure places like Eureka Gardens are liveable. Let me tell what you they do spend their money on. They spend their money on public relations specialists, because last week when I visited Eureka Gardens, they had a public relations firm on the premises counterspinning me with the media, saying things like: Oh, well, where has RUBIO been all this time? Well, this became available in October, and since October we have been involved in it.

So they have the money to hire a law firm. They have the money to hire a lobbying firm. They have the money to hire a public relations firm. They have the money to transfer $9 million from the not-for-profit sector into their religious uses. They have the money to pay themselves half a million dollars per year, plus $40,000 in nontaxable benefits, plus $200,000 for family members, but they don't have the money to fix these units—and not just in Florida but all across this country.

Let me tell you what this behavior is. Let me tell you what Global Ministries Foundation is. It is a slumlord. They are slumlords. There are people who are living in these deplorable conditions while your taxpayer money is going into their bank account, and they are laughing at us.

By the way, the other day, this minister—he has now put these properties up for sale. He told the press: This is such a profitable business. We have so many bidders who want these properties.

Well, No. 1, if it is such a profitable business, why are you organized as a 501(c)(3)? And No. 2, where is all the money? Where are all the profits? Why aren't they being invested?

I am all in favor of faith-based organizations being involved in the public and civic life of this country, but as an organization that was organized on the principles of caring for others, this is not caring for people. This, my friends, is the stealing of American taxpayer money, subjecting people to slum-like conditions, pocketing the money, living off the money, and transferring the money.

For the life of me, I don't know how they passed any inspections. I am not a building inspector. You don't have to be one to visit this building and know there is no inspection that building should ever pass.

I would just say that this is the most outrageous behavior I have seen in public housing, and now I am hearing that the same conditions exist in Orlando and in other buildings in Jacksonville. We know they exist in Memphis. In fact, they just lost their HUD contract in Memphis. A judge just issued a ruling against them yesterday on another issue in Memphis, TN.

As a result of these conditions and other issues, I have filed four amendments I wish to briefly talk about. The first is amendment No. 3918, which passed. What it does is it shortens the required response time for contract violations from 30 days to 15 days. Within the 30 days that they found that gas leak at Eureka Gardens, four people at Eureka Gardens were hospitalized due to gas leaks. So I am glad shortening the timeframe will be a part of it.

Another amendment we passed is one that basically asks HUD to determine the state of the assessments. Even the Secretary himself has told me it is time to revisit these assessments. If you look at this property, there is no way it should have ever passed any inspections. We need to fix the inspection process in HUD because there is no reason a property like this should pass any inspection.

The third amendment I filed, and that I hope we can pass, would give State and local governments more say when HUD renews contracts for owners who have violated previous contracts. In essence, the amendment would allow the Secretary to refuse to withdraw a notice of default if the Governor of the requisite State petitions HUD to do that.

Currently, the only trigger for the Secretary to withdraw a notice is a REAC score of 60 or above. If this amendment became law, if the property passed the inspection but the Governor of the State in which the property is located requests the Secretary to overturn the result, the Secretary would have the power to do so.

This impacts Eureka Gardens and these other places because flawed inspections led HUD to recertify properties that are not up to standard. The Jacksonville City Council has been engaged and Mayor Curry of Jacksonville is supporting this amendment. It would grant them the ability to seek the Governor's support in having a say over the properties.

The last amendment I filed is Rubio amendment No. 3986, and it is to make temporary relocation assistance available for residents in situations such as those I have just described. This amendment would make tenant protection vouchers available for tenants living in units where the owner has been declared in default of a HUD Housing Assistance Payments contract due to physical deficiencies, allowing the Secretary to consider granting tenant relocation vouchers sooner in the process.

The lack of temporary relocation assistance has kept these tenants trapped in Eureka Gardens. The inability to temporarily relocate resulted in tenants being hospitalized because of gas leaks and other difficult conditions. For example, a man had to sleep in his bathtub for a week at Eureka Gardens, and tenants could not cook because the heat was shut off for days at a time.

One of the things we hear from HUD is: Well, we can take away the contract, but then what happens to all these people? We don't want to do that, and slumlords like Reverend Hamlet and his group know they can get away with this as a result.

There is probably more to be done. I said publicly that I think the Justice Department should look into these people. I think the Justice Department should look into places such as this. I think the IRS should examine their tax status. I think people like this should never again be allowed to have a single HUD contract anywhere in America. This is unacceptable, and it is happening right under our noses.

Today it is Eureka Gardens, but I mentioned all those other States. In fact, I encourage my colleagues who live in the States of Alabama, Indiana, Louisiana, North Carolina, New York, and Georgia to look into the properties that Global Ministries Foundation operates in your States. If the trends continue, if the trends hold up, then I almost guarantee you are going to find slumlike conditions in your State the way they were found in my State and the way they were found in Tennessee.

I hope I can earn my colleagues' support in bringing these reforms as a part of the bill before us today.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

OVERTIME PAY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I believe that real long-term economic growth is built from the middle out, not from the top down, and our government and our economy and our workplaces should work for all of our families, not just the wealthiest few.

Across the country today, millions of workers are working harder than ever without basic overtime protection. That is why I am very proud to come to the floor today to express my strong support for the new overtime rule to help millions of workers and families in our country.

Back in 1938, Congress recognized the need for overtime pay. Without overtime protection, corporations were able to exploit workers' time to increase their profits. So the Fair Labor Standards Act set up a standard 40-hour workweek. By law, when workers put in more than 40 hours, their employers had to compensate them fairly with time-and-a-half pay. But those protections have eroded over the past several decades.

In today's economy, many Americans feel as if they are working more and more for less and less pay, and in many cases, they are. Right now, if a salaried worker earns just a little more than $23,000 a year, he or she is not guaranteed time-and-a-half pay. That salary threshold is much too low. In fact, it is less than the poverty level for a family of four.

Workers should not have to earn poverty wages to get guaranteed overtime protection. It is clear that overtime rules in this country are severely out of date. Consider this: Back in the mid-1970s, 62 percent of salaried workers had guaranteed overtime pay. Today, just 7 percent of salaried workers have that protection. Big corporations use these outdated overtime rules to their advantage. They force their employees to work overtime without paying them the fair time-and-a-half pay. That might be good for a big corporation's profit, but it is a detriment to a working family's economic security.

Today, the Department of Labor has issued a final rule to raise the salary threshold from about $23,000 to just over $47,000 a year. That will restore protections for millions of Americans, and it is especially important, by the way, for a parent. Think about what it would mean for a working mom, who right now works overtime and doesn't get paid for it. By restoring this basic worker protection, she could finally work a 40-hour week and spend more time with her kids or, if her employer asks her to work more than 40 hours a week, she would have more money in her pocket to boost her family's economic security.

That is why this is so important for our struggling middle class. When workers put in more than 40 hours a week on the job, they should be paid fairly for it. That is the bottom line.

I have heard from some of my Republican colleagues who don't want to update these overtime rules. If you listen closely, it sounds as though they are trying to argue that businesses in this country can't operate unless they are able to exploit workers' time and refuse them overtime pay.

Well, Democrats fundamentally disagree. In fact, when workers have economic security, when they are able to make ends meet and succeed, businesses succeed, our economy succeeds. That virtuous cycle is part of what makes America great.

If Republicans want to take away these basic worker protections, they will have to answer to millions of hardworking Americans putting in overtime without receiving a dime of extra pay. They can try, but I know that I and many others are going to be right

here fighting back for the workers and families we represent—families like Meryle's from Bellingham, WA. She said that early in her career she worked low-wage jobs and oftentimes her overtime hours went unpaid.

When Meryle heard about the Obama administration updating overtime protections, she wrote in to comment on that new rule. She said those unpaid overtime hours hurt her pocketbook, but she said she lost more than money. She was working overtime without being paid fairly for it on top of missing out on important time with her daughter.

Boosting wages and expanding economic stability and security is good for our families, and it is good for our economy. By the way, that is exactly what we should be focused on here in Congress to help build our economy from the middle out, not the top down.

For workers who want fair pay for a day's work, for the parents—like Meryle—who have sacrificed family time for overtime and not seen a dime in extra pay, for families who are looking for some much needed economic security, I urge all of my colleagues to support restoring these important overtime protections.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

(The remarks of Mrs. GILLIBRAND and Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2944 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I wish to revisit my discussion with Senator DURBIN yesterday regarding my amendment No. 3925 to the Department of Veterans Affairs funding bill.

As I made clear yesterday, this is a commonsense amendment protecting constitutional rights. It is designed to make every effort to ensure that the Second Amendment rights of veterans are protected under the law. Yet the Democrats have objected. Because of that, our veterans will continue to not be protected by their Second Amendment constitutional rights.

Let me make myself very clear. Senator DURBIN said my amendment ''doesn't solve the problem.'' ''Doesn't solve the problem'' are his words. Well, the Department of Veterans Affairs is reporting names to the Department of Justice which are then placed on the national gun ban list, and the VA is doing so merely when a veteran is appointed a fiduciary—which does not mean he or she is dangerous. That is the problem.

As I explained yesterday, my amendment requires the VA to first determine that a veteran is a danger to self or others before reporting names. That simply solves the problem.

Senator DURBIN also said that under my amendment, ''mental health determinations would no longer count as prohibiting gun possession.'' As I stated yesterday, I do not want people who are known to be dangerous to own and possess firearms. My amendment makes that very clear.

Further, given that plain language, it is obvious that under my amendment, mental health determinations do count because some mental health problems equate to a very dangerous condition. Again, my amendment is centered on forcing the Federal Government to determine whether a veteran is a danger to self or others before revoking his or her constitutional rights to own a firearm.

Senator DURBIN said that ''tens of thousands of names currently in the NICS system''—the gun ban list—''would likely need to be purged, meaning these people could go out and buy guns.'' Now, that is not so. If anything, my amendment would require the Federal Government to look over the VA records sent to the gun ban list and verify that those persons on it are dangerous to themselves or others.

That doesn't have to be purging. Rather, the Federal Government would now have the burden of proving a veteran should not be able to exercise his or her fundamental Second Amendment rights. Since there is no purging, but rather dangerous persons will be identified via a constitutional process, it is not accurate to say that ''these people could go out and buy guns.'' Therefore, Senator DURBIN has not studied my amendment and its outcome. Really, the government should always provide constitutional due process before infringing on a fundamental constitutional right.

Senator DURBIN mentioned 174,000 names were supplied by the VA to the gun ban list and about 15,000 of them had serious mental illnesses. Actually, as of December 2015, the VA has supplied 260,381 names out of the 263,492 in the mental defective category. That happens to be 98.8 percent of the total number of people on the mental defective list that are there because of the VA and not because it has been determined their constitutional rights should be taken away.

Assuming Senator DURBIN is correct about the 15,000 who had a serious mental illness, that leaves about 245,000 who did not. Those are 245,000 people whose constitutional rights are being restricted without due process for no good reason. Not a single individual was determined to be dangerous before the VA submitted their name to this list so their constitutional rights could be violated.

My amendment, and my remarks last night, make clear that if a person is dangerous, they will not be able to possess a firearm. Therefore, Senator DURBIN's concern that my amendment will allow dangerous people to buy firearms is simply inaccurate.

Importantly, Senator DURBIN even admitted that not all the names reported to the VA are dangerous. Senator DURBIN said: ''I do not dispute what the Senator from Iowa suggested, that some of these veterans may be suffering from a mental illness not serious enough to disqualify them from owning a firearm, but certainly many of them do.''

Then, Senator DURBIN said: ''Let me just concede at the outset that reporting 174,000 names goes too far, but eliminating 174,000 names goes too far.'' I am glad that Senator DURBIN acknowledged that many of the names on the gun ban list supplied by the VA do not pose a danger and should be removed.

But again, my amendment is not about purging names from the list. I would be happy to take him up on his offer to work with him on that problem. Surely, we can agree that, going forward, the VA should start affording due process to veterans before they are stripped of their Second Amendment rights. If you really want a solution to this problem, stop objecting to this amendment.

As I stated yesterday, my amendment does three things. First, it makes the ''danger to self or others'' standard applicable to the VA. We all agree that dangerous persons must not own or possess firearms. Second, it shifts the burden of proof from the veteran and back to the Government where it belongs. Third, it fixes the constitutional due process issues by removing the hearing from the VA to the judicial system.

The last thing I will note is something on which I wholeheartedly agree with Senator DURBIN. Yesterday, he said: ''We need to find a reasonable way to identify those suffering from serious mental illness who would be a danger to themselves, their families or others, and to sort out those that don't fit in that category.''

As I have made clear, my amendment does exactly that. Why, then, are the Democrats refusing to fix this problem if they admit the problem exists? This is an outrage. We all know that veterans are being treated unfairly. My amendment fixes the problem, yet Democrats object.

What is dangerous is that Democrats are allowing veterans to be subjected to a process that casts their Second Amendment rights aside. All of this smells of hypocrisy. For months, the Democrats and their allies have been attacking me and the Republicans for not voting on the Supreme Court nominee. But the Democrats will not even allow a simple vote on protecting veterans' constitutional rights.

Can you imagine the chaos that would reign over this Chamber again if the Democrats were to take control over the Senate? I will continue to stand firm in defense of our veteran population. I will continue to fight to protect their constitutional rights from offensive and oppressive government outreach.

Our veterans are a special group. They give life and limb for our safety so that we can sleep in peace at night.

The iron fist of government must submit to the constitutional rights of veterans, and those constitutional rights have been taken away by the VA willy-nilly just because somebody needs a fiduciary—nothing to do with the competence of that veteran to not be able to buy a gun.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to speak about amendment No. 4012. I want to thank my cosponsors—Senators SESSIONS, VITTER, COTTON, and INHOFE. This amendment addresses a very serious public safety threat; that is, the threat posed by sanctuary cities. This is a problem that is not a theoretical abstraction. It is a problem that some Americans know all too well—one father, in particular.

On July 1, 2015, Jim Steinle was walking arm in arm with his daughter Kate on a pier in San Francisco. A gunman opened fire and hit Kate. Within moments, she died in her father's arms. Her last words were: ''Help me, Dad.''

What is maddening about this is that the shooter should never have been on the pier in the first place. He was an illegal immigrant. He was here illegally. He had been convicted of seven felonies, and he had been deported five times. But it gets worse.

Just 3 months prior to his shooting and killing Kate Steinle, the San Francisco police had him in custody. Federal immigration officials knew that the San Francisco police had him in custody. They knew he was here illegally, in violation of multiple deportations—a violent criminal convicted on multiple occasions. They said: Hold him until we get somebody there to pick him up and deport him. But the police refused to hold him. Instead, they released the shooter into the public.

Why did they do that? Because San Francisco is a sanctuary city. That means that they are a city that specifically—and by law, within the city—forbids their police from cooperating with Federal immigration officials. Even when the police wants to cooperate, it is against the law in the city to do so.

The local police and President Obama's administration agree that, with respect to a dangerous person, the Federal and local law enforcement authorities ought to cooperate, but the local politicians—in San Francisco, in this case—have overridden that judgment. Instead, the police, who had every opportunity to prevent this man from being on the pier that night, released him, and he went on to kill Kate Steinle.

As a father of three young children, I can't even imagine the pain that family has gone through. Sadly, the Steinles are not alone. According to the Department of Homeland Security—our current administration's Department of Homeland Security—during an 8-month period that they examined last year alone, sanctuary city jurisdictions released over 8,000 illegal immigrants, and 1,800 of them were later arrested for criminal acts. It included two cities that released individuals who had been arrested for child sex abuse. In both cases, the individuals released sexually assaulted other children again.

In the wake of these tragedies, you would think that elected officials across America would end this practice of having these dangerous sanctuary city policies. Sadly, that is not the case.

In the biggest city in my State, Philadelphia, they have taken the opposite approach. In fact, they imposed one of the most extreme versions of sanctuary cities anywhere in America. Two weeks ago, President Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security visited Philadelphia for the specific purpose of trying to persuade the city government to make a tiny exception to their sanctuary city policy. He wanted to change the policy so that the Philadelphia police would be able to notify Federal immigration officials if they are about to release from their custody a person who has been convicted of a violent felony or convicted of a crime involving a gang or is a suspected terrorist. The mayor of Philadelphia refused.

Even under those circumstances, the police of Philadelphia are forbidden from cooperating and sharing the information with Federal immigration officials.

What are the kinds of consequences for this? Consider the case of Alberto Suarez. In 2010, Alberto Suarez kidnapped and raped a girl from Montgomery County, which is just outside of Philadelphia. He bragged to the girl that the police would never be able to catch him because he is here illegally. Five months later, he kidnapped a 22-year-old woman from a Philadelphia bus stop, and he raped her. He has been apprehended, he has plead guilty, and he is awaiting sentencing. But some day, he will be released. Under the current Philadelphia city policy of being a sanctuary city, the police cannot inform Federal immigration officials when they are releasing him. This is ridiculous.

Imagine that the Philadelphia police have in their custody an illegal immigrant whom the FBI suspects of plotting a terrorist attack. The Department of Homeland Security might very reasonably say to the police: Hold on to him until we can get an agent down there to take him into custody and ask him some questions because we suspect that he is involved with a terrorist plot. The Philadelphia police's response—not by their choice but by virtue of Philadelphia's being a sanctuary city—to the Federal official is this: Could you come back again after he has actually committed the terrorist attack and been convicted of it, and then we will see if we can help you?

This makes no sense at all. This is not partisan. This policy has been criticized by the former Philadelphia mayor, former Pennsylvania Governor, and Democrat Ed Rendell. It has been criticized by President Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security and Pennsylvania law enforcement officials across the political spectrum.

Let me be very, very clear. This is not principally about immigration. It is not about immigration at all. It is about violent and dangerous criminals. Everybody knows—I certainly know—that the vast majority of immigrants are never going to commit a violent crime. It isn't about them. It is about the fact that if you have any significant population—and, certainly, 11 million people are here illegally—some subset of that population will be violent criminals. We know that.

I have an amendment. It is modeled on a bill that the Senate voted on last October. It was supported by a bipartisan majority of Senators in that vote. It deals with this problem. First of all, there is an understandable reason why some communities have become sanctuary communities, and that is because a court decision has created a legal liability for the cities if they, at the request of the Department of Homeland Security, detain someone who later turns out to have been the wrong person. That legal liability has scared a number of communities. It is understandable.

This amendment changes that. It makes it clear that when the local police are in compliance with a Department of Homeland Security detainer request, the local police have the same authority as the Department of Homeland Security. If that person has been identified wrongly, then the liability still exists. If the person's civil rights have been violated, they can sue. But the liability is with the Department of Homeland Security, as it should be, and not against local law enforcement officials who are temporarily acting on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security.

Having corrected that problem, if this amendment passes, what we say is this: If you want to, nevertheless, be a sanctuary city and refuse to allow the local police to cooperate with Federal immigration officials, then we are going to withhold community development block grant funds from such a community. As you know, these are the funds that have great discretion in the hands of local elected officials to spend on various projects.

The fact is that sanctuary cities impose a very real cost—a real cost for the Federal Government. The most important cost, by far, is the danger to society that it imposes. It is entirely reasonable for the Federal Government to withhold some of these grants in the event that a city chooses to inflict that cost on the rest of us.

This legislation is endorsed by the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the National Sherriffs' Association, the National Association of Police Organizations, and the International Union of Police Associations,

which is a division of the AFL–CIO. It is a simple, commonsense amendment, and it stands for the simple principle that the safety of the American people matters, and the life of Kate Steinle matters.

Right up front, I want to debunk some of the misinformation that is occasionally promulgated about this amendment. One is the idea that it would discourage people from coming forward and reporting crimes or reporting that they witnessed a crime or that they were a victim of crime, and that, therefore, it is a bad idea. The fact is that our legislation has been drafted in such a way that if a local community has a law that says that local law enforcement shall not inquire about the immigration status of a crime victim or witness, according to our legislation, that doesn't make you a sanctuary city. Any city would still be free to offer that protection to people so that they would not have to fear deportation for disclosing a crime.

The fact is that this amendment is germane, and it was timely filed. It satisfies all of the relevant rules. This is the right time, and this is the legislation to consider this. It is time to stop with this politically correct nonsense and being so worried that we can't offend anyone that we are going to risk the safety of our communities.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside so I may offer my amendment No. 4012.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I reserve my right to object. The Senator from Pennsylvania has very thoughtfully pointed to significant issues with respect to immigration law and public safety, but I believe the remedy of cutting off CDBG funding is not the appropriate response to these very serious problems. Indeed, CDBG funding is available throughout the Nation to large communities and small communities, and in many cases it provides support for public safety projects, such as infrastructure that protects people, and on and on and on.

With all due respect to the Senator from Pennsylvania, I object to making the amendment pending at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, with all due respect to my friend and colleague from Rhode Island, I just have to say that this is exactly what Americans are so fed up with. There is a real problem out there with public safety, and they know it. This is a ridiculous and indefensible policy, but I am willing to have a debate about it. I did not ask for unanimous consent to have my amendment adopted. I asked unanimous consent to have it debated and have a vote. If a majority of Senators disagrees with me, then I don't know why they can't come down here and cast a vote and let us know. It is germane, it is in order, and it complies with all the rules.

The status quo means dangerous criminals are being released onto our streets. That is a fact.

I will tell you what is going on here. We have colleagues who are afraid to cast a vote. They are afraid of having to make a choice. They are afraid that if they vote with me to put pressure on cities to end sanctuary cities, it will offend some people, and they don't want to do that. If they vote against it, they know they are endangering their own constituents, and they don't want their constituents to know that. Rather than standing up and making a decision, what do they do? They say: Let's not allow the debate; let's not allow the amendment. This is exactly what the American people are so fed up with.

I am not giving up on this. This is a very important issue. We have a responsibility to be stewards of the money that we give these cities. I think the vast majority of Pennsylvanians, the people whom I represent, want me to be a steward who is looking after their safety, and the status quo doesn't do that. This amendment would solve a very important problem. It is outrageous that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are afraid to have this debate, afraid to go on record, and afraid to let their constituents know whether they support sanctuary cities or not. We are not finished with this issue.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on Tuesday, Senator GRASSLEY came to the floor advocating for an amendment. His amendment dealt with access to guns for those who have been determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be mentally incompetent due to injury or disease.

Senator GRASSLEY's amendment was 10 lines long. It would simply cut off funds for the VA to ''treat'' any person who the VA has determined to be mentally incompetent under its current administrative process as a prohibited gun purchaser under Federal firearms laws.

On behalf of myself and other Senators, I objected to this amendment. I pointed out that Senator GRASSLEY's amendment would likely require purging the NICS background check database of thousands of records of people who have already been diagnosed with serious mental illness and referred to NICS by the VA.

As Senator GRASSLEY no doubt knows, current law requires a Federal agency that submits a record to NICS to notify the Attorney General if the basis upon which the record was submitted to NICS no longer applies. The Attorney General is then obligated to remove the record from NICS within thirty days.

If the Grassley amendment were to pass and prohibit the VA from continuing to ''treat'' a mentally incompetent person as a prohibited gun purchaser, then it casts into doubt the basis upon which tens of thousands of NICS mental health records were submitted.

So Senator GRASSLEY's amendment would likely purge those records from NICS. Tens of thousands of people with serious mental illnesses would become able to buy guns.

Senator GRASSLEY came to the floor earlier this afternoon to criticize my objection. He made two main points that I want to respond to.

First, he said that Democrats were being hypocritical for not allowing a vote on this issue.

Senator GRASSLEY must have only started paying attention to this issue recently. I can remember at least three votes we have had on the Senate floor on this issue.

In April 2013, when the Senate was under Democratic control, an amendment offered by Senator BURR that was very similar to Senator GRASSLEY's amendment was voted upon and failed to pass.

An alternative and more sensible proposal for addressing the issue of VA referrals to the NICS database was included in the Manchin-Toomey legislation which the Senate voted upon in April 2013 and again last December.

In contrast to the Burr and Grassley amendments, which specified no process for reviewing the thousands of VA mental health referrals that have already been made to NICS, the Manchin-Toomey amendment set up a notification, review, and appeal process. It wasn't perfect, but it was very credible process, and I voted for it.

That is how we should be approaching this issue, with thoughtful authorizing legislation, not 10-line appropriations riders that are airdropped in on the Senate floor.

Second, Senator GRASSLEY said that the VA has been depriving veterans of their constitutional rights willy-nilly.

I would urge Senator GRASSLEY to look at the actual process the VA undertakes.

In connection with an award of veterans benefits, the VA formally may determine as ''mentally incompetent'' a person who ''because of injury or disease lacks the mental capacity to contract or to manage his or her own affairs, including disbursement of funds without limitation.''

The types of mental disorders that qualify as ''injury or disease '' for this purpose are set forth in 38 C.F.R. 4.130 and include diseases such as schizophrenia, dementia, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and bipolar disorders, among others. Such illness or disease must be responsible for a person's inability to manage his or her own affairs for a VA determination of incompetency.

Like all VA benefit determinations, incompetency determinations are governed by clearly defined procedures to ensure due process.

Where the VA becomes aware that a veteran may be unable to manage his

or her affairs, an incompetency rating is proposed and the individual in question is provided with notice and the opportunity to submit evidence and appear before a VA hearing officer. Determinations are based on all evidence of record. Unless the medical evidence is clear, convincing, and leaves no doubt as to the person's incompetency, no determination is made. Reasonable doubt is resolved in favor of competency.

All VA determinations of incompetency may be appealed within the VA's administrative appeals process, which includes the opportunity to seek review by the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Final BVA decisions may be appealed to the independent United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

Here is the bottom line: All of us respect our veterans, but we know that gun access by those with serious mental illness increases the risk of suicide and violence, and the VA has identified tens of thousands of people with serious mental illness.

We can work on a reasonable process, like the Manchin-Toomey legislation proposed, to make sure that the VA is not submitting mental health records inappropriately, but simply invalidating all the records that the VA has supplied to the background check database is irresponsible and dangerous.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY BILL

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk about the heroin and prescription drug epidemic that is gripping my State and the country. I come to talk about the 200,000 people in Ohio who are addicted. I come to talk about the police officers during National Police Week who are doing their jobs to address this issue and why they need more help from us and how we should provide that to them.

This is the sixth time I have come to the floor since the Senate passed on March 10 the legislation called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. It was voted on by a 94-to-1 vote in this Chamber, which is highly unusual. That never happens around here. It happened because in every single State people are seeing this addiction epidemic, overdose issue. We need to address it.

The House has been working on its own legislation. I have come here every single week we have been in session since we passed our legislation to urge the House to act. I come this week to thank the House for acting because on Friday of last week the House of Representatives passed legislation—again, a large bipartisan vote—18 different bills that were combined into one bill to deal with this opioid epidemic.

In some respects, it is very similar to the legislation we passed in the Senate. In other respects, it has additional provisions that I think are very helpful. In other respects, it doesn't pick up everything that is in the Senate legislation.

Our focus in the Senate would be to have a comprehensive approach, and I believe, by including some of the provisions in the House-passed version, we will come up with a more comprehensive approach, and that is what is needed. In fact, in the Senate we spent 3 months working with the House on companion legislation. We had a number of conferences here in Washington, DC—five different conferences to deal with this issue—and we came up with legislation that took best practices around the country and included them in the legislation to deal with a very real problem in our communities.

It has to be comprehensive. Yesterday I had the opportunity to speak with the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Michael Botticelli, as well as Dr. Kana Enomoto, who is the Acting Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. It was a hearing of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. We were talking about how to come up with the right response to this issue in so many different respects. The bottom line is, both of them strongly agree it has to be a comprehensive approach if we are going to make a difference, if we are going to begin to turn the tide and begin to save lives and get people back on track to deal with this level of drug addiction and overdose that is happening in our communities. We have to provide the resources, but we also have to ensure that the resources are wisely spent. In other words, we have to be sure we are spending the money on things that are going to be effective. I was grateful that both Director Botticelli and Dr. Enomoto said they would work with us to try to get this conference between the House and Senate done as quickly as possible. The House and Senate bills coming together is important so we can get it to the President and, more importantly, so we can get it to the communities to begin to help. They offered to continue to work with us going forward, and I appreciate that, and we will need them. Everybody needs to pull together on this.

It has been 67 days since the Senate acted. In those 67 days, if we assume that about 120 Americans are lost every day to drug overdoses, about 8,000 Americans have lost their lives through drug overdoses since the Senate passed this legislation on March 10. Think about that. That is what I call an epidemic.

Unfortunately, my State of Ohio has been particularly hard hit. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that Ohio had the second most overdoses of any State in the Union, and the fifth highest overdose death rate. On average, we are losing about five Ohioans every day to overdoses. We lost 330 since the Senate passed the CARA legislation on March 10.

Unfortunately, since March 10 the headlines have continued to show that families are being torn apart, communities devastated. These headlines make it clear this is not slowing down. I talked to some experts on this in Ohio last week, and I asked: Tell me, are things getting better? Are we beginning to change the attitudes to turn the tide? The answer was, no, the hotline is lighting up more than ever, more people are coming for treatment, and there is more crime than ever related to this. Sadly, I do not believe, at least in my home State of Ohio, that we have begun to make the progress we have to make.

It is happening everywhere—in the cities, suburbs, and rural areas. Addiction is affecting everybody of every age no matter where you are from, no matter what neighborhood you live in. It knows no ZIP Code.

Just in the time since I spoke on the floor this last week, in the past week in Ohio, here are some things that have happened. In Northeast Ohio, in the city of Lorraine, police searched three different drug houses. This happened last Thursday. They arrested seven people possessing more than 120 grams of heroin. In Southwest Ohio, in a rural area in Brown County, a couple was arrested for possession of heroin. They have four children between the ages of 3 and 6. This happened last week. In the suburbs of Dayton, OH, this time in the suburbs, Harrison Township, police say a man was driving under the influence of heroin, veered into the wrong lane and struck a vehicle head-on, killing an innocent woman and injuring her husband. More and more traffic accidents are being linked to addiction.

In Central Ohio, in the Columbus area, the city has now spent $144,000 last year alone on Narcan, which is a miracle drug that will be able to deal with overdoses and save people's lives. Paramedics in Columbus spent 10 percent of their entire budget just on Narcan last year, reversing over 100 overdoses. Paramedic Pete Bolen says that sometimes he takes up to four overdose calls per day. I have been to police stations and firehouses around Ohio, and they tell me they are responding to more overdoses than they are fires.

Dr. Eric Adkins of Ohio State's Wexner Medical Center says that their emergency room sees two to four overdose patients every day. Last year, Wexner spent $1.2 million treating overdose patients. That is one medical center in one city.

In Chillicothe, Assistant Fire Chief Jeffrey Creed says that overdose calls are on pace to double this year compared to last year. Again, they will tell you there are more overdoses than fires.

Rita Gunning of Grove City, OH, lost her daughter Sara, who was just 30

years old, to a heroin overdose. Last year, Sara was trying to fight an opioid addiction and managed to stay clean for 50 days, but she relapsed, and 3 days later she died of an overdose. Rita is now raising Sara's three children and trying to increase the availability of naloxone across Ohio. She is on a mission because she believes this miracle drug naloxone could have saved her daughter. She said: ''Maybe if they had it that night, they could have saved Sara's life.'' She shouldn't have to say that. By the way, making naloxone more available is one thing the legislation does that was passed in the Senate. We have to be sure the House and Senate legislation does that and also provides the training that goes along with it.

Our legislation also says that when they provide naloxone, or Narcan, they provide not only training with it but also information about where to get treatment because it is not enough to apply Narcan, we need to get these people into treatment so we don't have to apply Narcan again and again and again.

Karen Young of Columbus lost her daughter Kayla when she was just 22. She had surgery when she was 20, and she was prescribed pain pills, as many of us have after surgery. She became addicted to those pain pills, and like so many others, when the pills ran out, she switched to a less expensive and more accessible alternative—heroin. She went to rehab for about 7 weeks, but she relapsed, overdosed, and died—just like that. In the span of 2 years, she developed an addiction because she went in for surgery and she died from it. As Karen put it, ''her Dad will never get to walk down the aisle with Kayla.''

Unfortunately, that is true with so many thousands of people whose lives are cut short across Ohio and across the country. The stories are heart-wrenching. You hear about kids who go in to have their wisdom teeth pulled. They are given prescription pain pills. They get addicted to the pain pills. They then turn to heroin—or maybe not. Maybe they even die of an overdose from the pain pills themselves, which has happened.

This should not be happening. Overprescribing of pain medication is obviously one of the huge issues. Four out of five of the heroin addicts in Ohio started with prescription drugs. People need to know that. By the way, our legislation would allow people to know that through an awareness campaign about that very issue.

Unfortunately, these overdoses are just the tip of the iceberg in the sense that in addition to the 8,000 we have lost since March 10 in this country, there are hundreds of thousands more who are among the wounded. What do I mean by that? They have lost their jobs. They have been driven to theft or fraud to pay for their habit. They have gone to jail. They have broken relationships with loved ones because of an addiction.

I hear this time and again from recovering addicts saying: When I had this addiction, the drug was everything. It was everything. That is how my family broke up. That is how I lost my job. That is how I lost my self-respect.

I have seen the consequences firsthand. In Ohio on Monday, I visited a treatment center that was for women only. It is an extraordinary place, the only place in my hometown of Cincinnati where women can take their kids and get treatment, which has been very effective. I got the chance to meet with a number of women who are in recovery. Each had a heart-wrenching story to tell about how they got there. Each was absolutely committed to dealing with their addiction not only for their sakes but also for their baby's sake because these women were pregnant.

In the last 12 years in Ohio, there has been a 750-percent increase of babies born with addiction. This syndrome, babies born with addiction, requires babies to be taken through the same kind of rehab that adults are taken through, of course at different levels of treatment. It is a very sad situation. Many doctors and nurses, who are incredibly compassionate, tell me they don't know what the long-term consequences are.

At this treatment center called First Step Home, which is in my home town, they are doing impressive work. They are teaching women how to be better moms in addition to providing the treatment they need. They don't just get medication, they get a sense of home and security. Talking to these women and listening to their stories inspires me to make the Federal Government a better partner with First Step and other nonprofits around the country to ensure that we are, indeed, beginning to turn this tide.

Today and tomorrow, the Addiction Policy Forum, which is a coalition of advocacy groups, is leading a CARA Family Day on Capitol Hill here in Washington, DC. I will be joining them in that effort. I thank them for calling attention to this pressing issue and for their strong support of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, CARA.

With this being National Police Week, I would also like to thank our police officers who are confronting this epidemic on the frontlines every single day. Police, other first responders, and medical personnel confront this epidemic more than anyone else. I have been told by prosecutors back home that in some counties in Ohio, more than 80 percent of the crime is directly related to this issue of heroin and prescription drug addiction. I am told that in some areas, nearly all of the thefts that are committed are done by those struggling with addiction to pay for their habit.

The Fraternal Order of Police has been incredibly helpful to us in this legislation. They contributed valuable advice and feedback during the 3 years we were crafting CARA. I am grateful for their help and for their endorsement of CARA, which was very important to getting such a strong vote on the floor of the House and Senate.

Police officers across Ohio have told me about the extent of the epidemic. They have told me about the need for the Federal Government to take action that is comprehensive.

Major Jay McDonald, who is the president of Ohio's Fraternal Order of Police has told me that ''heroin mixed with fentanyl is the most deadly drug cocktail I've witnessed in my entire career.'' I visited a place called Jody's House with him. It is a residential house for women in recovery in Marion, OH. Major McDonald told me that our response should include enforcement, prevention, and treatment. In other words, it has to be comprehensive. He is absolutely right.

Our police want CARA for a lot of reasons. For example, CARA would authorize new law enforcement task forces around the country to investigate trafficking in heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamines, and prescription drugs. Police know that these extra resources will help them to do their job. By the way, these task forces are not included in the House-passed legislation. We have to get that in conference to ensure that we are helping our police officers who are out there on the frontlines.

Another reason I think the law enforcement community wants CARA passed is that they are using naloxone more and more every day. First responders used it 16,000 times in Ohio last year—16,000 times. CARA would increase access to naloxone. It would improve the training so that they could be more effective in administering this miracle drug in time to save a life.

It would also insist, again, as it is being administered, that the drug treatment programs in the community locally are made available—information available to people—so that we are not just seeing this revolving door. If we give our police the tools they need, they will be able to save even more lives and get more people into treatment.

Our police are also helping to take drugs off the street. Since 2014, DEA agents in Ohio, working with local police departments, have seized more than 171 kilograms of heroin. Federal agents have now arrested more than 70 drug traffickers or drug dealers in Ohio in the last year alone.

Sometimes the intervention of a police officer is exactly what it takes to get somebody into treatment. I have found that again and again. Two weeks ago, there was a heartbreaking story of a woman in the Miami Valley area—Dayton area—named Cheri, who said she was glad her son was in jail because ''I would rather have him sitting behind bars in jail than have to carry him out in a body bag.''

Two weeks ago in Wellington, OH, there was a town meeting held about

the crisis. Nicole Walmsley told the story of how, after postpartum surgery at age 19, she was prescribed a prescription pain killer. She became addicted. She ended up being arrested 18 times and convicted of two felonies. ''I sold my morals; I sold my soul. Drugs became everything.''

After an overdose in Youngstown, she begged her probation officer to send her to jail. That is how bad it is. That is how difficult it is sometimes to find treatment. She asked the police officer and the judge to send her to prison because that is the best way to get good treatment, to be convicted of a felony. Even then, sometimes the best treatment is not available.

That is the status quo today. Unless and until we get a more comprehensive bill to the President and signed into law, this continues. Too many are going without treatment. Too many are afraid to come forward. Too many are treating this not as a disease that needs to be treated, which it is, but instead are concerned about the stigma.

We need to get people to come forward and come into treatment. But thanks to help from police, in the case of Nicole, as I mentioned, she did get treatment. For 3 years now, she has been living a clean and productive life and helping others do so too. Police across Ohio have been offering treatment to those struggling with addiction.

I am impressed with what is going on in Lucas County, Ohio, which is in the Toledo area. Sheriff Tharp has started a drug abuse response team that offers addiction counseling, free rides to treatment for those who need it, and followup visits for those who have overdosed. In talking to Sheriff Tharp and some of his deputies about this, they have made an incredible difference in people's lives.

In Lodi, OH, anyone can simply turn themselves in to the police, and they will get treatment with no questions asked. This is done using private donations entirely. This year they have already placed in rehabilitation 28 people who had no insurance and no income. The police there report that since they started the program, overdoses and property crimes have decreased considerably.

In Wellington and in Auglaize County, police make the same offer: Turn yourself in and get treatment. We will not ask any questions. We will get you the help you need. I am told this is also the case in Creston, OH, and Newark, OH. So locally, police departments are taking up this issue and dealing with it effectively. I salute them for that.

I also salute them for putting their lives on the line every day for all of us and for their compassionate care of those they run across who need this treatment. I know the statistics about drug abuse are heartbreaking. They can certainly be discouraging, including the relapse rates. But thanks in part to our police officers and good treatment providers around the country, such as those I visited on Monday, there are a lot of stories of hope, too, that encourage and inspire us. Many of those who are struggling have inspirational stories too.

In Colerain Township, near my hometown, police have started what is called a quick response team of police, paramedics, and addiction counselors. When they arrest someone or save them from an overdose, they get them into treatment—again, not just applying Narcan but getting them into treatment. Last summer, they found Damon Carroll, who was just 22 years old, on his bedroom floor after an overdose. They got him counseling and treatment. Damon is now living a clean and productive life working at a restaurant. You know who stops by his house and stops by the restaurant and makes sure he is okay? The police officers who found him. Thanks to our police, he is beating this. There is hope. They saved a life. They are helping this young man to live out his God-given potential.

I hope we can send comprehensive legislation to the White House as soon as possible because it is needed. It is urgent. It is an emergency. We have lost nearly 8,000 Americans since the Senate passed this Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act. That is the status quo today. Again, that does not begin to tell the story of those who have not died because of an overdose but struggle with addiction every day.

Our police officers and those nonprofits I talked about, those treatment centers, those who are struggling with addiction—all of them deserve better. They deserve us to act. Again, we are not going to solve the problem here in Washington, DC, but we can be better partners with State and local governments, with these nonprofits, with these law enforcement officials around the country who are dealing with this issue every day. They deserve a better partner.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I was pleased to come over here early before I spoke and listen to my colleague from Ohio. We have the same issues in Indiana. I think probably the Presiding Officer's State and every State has serious opioid addiction issues, particularly with our young people. We cannot solve all of the problems here. We have passed a piece of legislation. Hopefully we can reconcile with the House shortly and put it on the President's desk. In a number of ways, that will provide the support for dealing with this problem.

It is a national issue, it is a State issue, it is a city issue, it is a smalltown issue, and it is a rural America issue. It is all hands on deck here. We are losing precious lives through this scourge of addiction that is sweeping through our country.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. President, today I am back, as I have been every week for now 43 weeks for the waste of the week. The ''Waste of the Week'' is where I highlight waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government system that is using hard-earned taxpayer dollars that ought to be able to be used by the taxpayer to pay the mortgage, pay the bills at the end of the week, to put aside some money hopefully for the children's education as they grow, or for any number of needs out there.

We have the responsibility and the duty to be carefully managing the tax money that is assessed to our public. ''Waste of the Week'' has pointed out some significant examples, yet drop-in-the-bucket of expenditures that have not been successful, have not been used for the purpose they are supposed to be used, part of the waste, fraud, and abuse category of now nearly—well, nearing $200 billion. That is not small change.

This week, I am highlighting a Federal program that has a lousy track record and over $7 billion in leftover money—funds Congress has appropriated for this program. Let me explain the program. In 2008, shortly after the economic recession began, Congress created something called the Home Affordable Modification Program; in short, HAMP. This is a new emergency program established to help homeowners facing financial distress to avoid foreclosure by reducing their monthly mortgage payments.

All this occurred at a time when our country truly was in distress—a serious recession. People were working less hours or no hours. Those who owned homes were finding it difficult if not impossible to pay the monthly mortgage payments.

So the HAMP program, which is a voluntary program for homeowners and mortgage lenders—if the two of them get together and agree to restructure their home loan payments, they can stay in their home, and it doesn't have to go through foreclosure. It is a sensible program at a time of real need. Lenders work through the Treasury Department to reduce those monthly mortgage payments to no higher than about one-third of the homeowners' income.

Historically, if you are telling your kids about buying a home or you are graduating from school and you want to buy a home, the solid advice has always been, don't commit yourself to more than 25 percent of the income you are earning to pay on your mortgage. You are going to need the rest of that money to pay the rest of your bills—all the utilities, food, transportation, buying a car, and so forth and so on. Well, this program said all the way up to a third. If you qualified on that, we would use 33 percent instead of 25 percent and restructure your mortgage so that you had a lower payment you had to make each month on that mortgage.

The Department of Treasury put this program in place. It was scheduled to expire at the end of 2012. In 2013, after the program had technically expired,

an inspector general found that the number of participants who ended up redefaulting on their new modified mortgage was ''increasing at an alarming rate.''

What is this word ''redefaulting''? Look, if you don't pay your mortgage payments, you are in default. If you are in default long enough, the bank or the mortgage company that is holding your mortgage says: We are going to foreclosure and take your house back because you are not making payments. This program was designed to help people avoid that catastrophe.

Redefaulting is the process by which the person, having already agreed to—with the mortgage company and with the support of the Federal Government, the person agreed to a program to lower the payments so they could keep their house. They defaulted again, so the technical term is redefaulting, but it is two defaults. So if Joe Smith has problems and he gets with his lender, he gets a new program, but then down the line, he defaults again.

According to the inspector general, this became something that needed to be addressed because we simply cannot continue to proceed with this program with the taxpayers' dollars if the participants aren't doing their share.

Despite the poor performance, the administration unilaterally—and how many times have we seen this happen during the Obama administration?—bypassing Congress, they unilaterally extended the program beyond its December 2012 expiration date. Interestingly enough, even with this extension, the number of applicants steadily declined. People either couldn't meet the measures or they didn't need it. The economy was improving, and they didn't need to do this. According to the Treasury Department, the number of HAMP participants declined because there was a shrinking number of eligible mortgagees.

Given that the outcomes of those receiving help were largely subpar and the number of applicants was declining, you would think we would come to the conclusion that the program needed to be terminated. It was already extended past the deadline, but on the basis of what was happening with the program, essentially we should terminate that.

When HAMP was created, the goal was to help about 4 million homeowners. Unfortunately, as it turned out, the program ended with only 1.3 million homeowners making it through the trial phase and ultimately being accepted into the program. Of those people, about one-third ultimately redefaulted, costing taxpayers an additional $1.5 billion.

We had a broken program. What was left in the fund with the Treasury was $7 billion. Some people call these slush funds. This is money that has been appropriated, put into a program—not expended in the program but sits there. How many times have we heard about government agencies with excess taxpayer money saying: Don't give it back.

Now, of course, this is the Treasury. Sometimes we say: Give it back to the Treasury. This is the Treasury itself. Well, don't terminate this and give it back; we might want to use it for something else.

That is a classic way of describing how Washington often works. Spend all the money that is appropriated to you, or they will reduce the money they give you next year. I previously sat on the Appropriations Committee, and this is not a one-off proposition. Every year, we have to scrub through these agencies' expenditures, and we find that there is excessive spending at the end of the fiscal year so that they don't get a reduced amount of funds sent to them for the next fiscal year.

Think of the ways this money could be used if it was put back into the Treasury. No. 1, it could be used for essential Federal functions. Wouldn't NIH like to have $7 billion to be able to hopefully break through on a wonder drug that would address Alzheimer's or diabetes or something else? Wouldn't the Department of Defense want to have this money for the shortcomings they have had because of the drastic reduction in expenditures for our national defense and security? Wouldn't any number of Federal agencies that produce essential programs that have to be addressed financially want to use that money for the right purposes? Most important of all, wouldn't the taxpayer want to get that money back or not have it spent at all or use it? Wouldn't the Treasury want to use it to reduce our ever-deepening national defense? So there are a lot of uses for this money that is sloshing around in a trust fund—not a trust fund, but sloshing around in the fund held by the Treasury Department.

This is a waste because it is sitting there. It is going to be spent on something that it was not intended to be spent on. For that reason, it becomes the waste of the week. As the waste of the week, we add $7 billion to our ever-growing total of waste, fraud, and abuse, taking our total overall to $170 billion. This is not small change. We have people struggling in America to make ends meet. They live paycheck to paycheck. They want their hard-earned dollars that are taken from their paycheck used for the right purposes. If the money is not used for the right purposes, they don't want to send it; they want it back.

We have an accountability to the American people, the people we represent, to do the best we can to provide the most efficient, effective use of their tax dollars. If we can't provide that—this is just, as I said, a drop in the bucket. I could be standing here every day with a waste of the day. I could be standing here every hour with a waste of the hour. We have a responsibility to be accountable to the people whose money is taken by the Federal Government and used. They don't mind using it for the right things. Maybe a veterans program needs that $7 billion to treat more veterans better than the way they are treated now.

In any event, we add this, and we have $170-plus billion in documented waste, fraud, and abuse.

I will be back next week with the next version, and we will continue to expose funding that is unnecessary and is putting a real burden on our hard-earned tax dollars being paid to the Federal Government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

IRAN'S INFLUENCE ON IRAQ AND SYRIA

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to draw attention to the pernicious and malign impact that the Iranian Government and its intrusion into Iraq and Syria are having on regional security, on the condition of people in those two countries, and on the stability and future of that whole region.

Today, Iraq is riven by sectarian divides, confronted with the presence of barbaric ISIS terrorists in its north and west, and led by a tragically fragile government. Meanwhile, the oppression of the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria has helped create a humanitarian crisis on the scale of nothing we have seen since the Second World War.

Iran claims that it wants to be a legitimate, contributing member of the international community, but despite those claims, Iran has played and continues to play a major role in fomenting instability in Iraq and Syria and in exacerbating security, political, and military crises in both countries.

Today, I wish to give just a brief overview of the tragedies of Iraq and Syria, explain Iran's destabilizing role in each country, and highlight a number of the steps I think the United States can take to counter Iran's dangerous influence.

Let's begin with where we are today in Iraq. In recent months, Iraqi and coalition forces have reduced the territorial presence of ISIS in Iraq by roughly 40 percent. Since taking office in 2014, Prime Minister Haydar al-Abadi has taken concrete steps to reduce corruption, to share power with Kurdish and Sunni leaders, and to form a competent, technocratic government that can deliver real results for the Iraqi people and reduce the many grievances that have forced Iraqis into the arms of extremists. Yet dangerous divides continue to paralyze the Abadi government, hindering Iraq's ability to fight ISIS and to defend against the terrorist attacks that have killed hundreds of people, 200 in the last week alone.

As coalition forces retake land previously captured by ISIS, ISIS appears to be bringing its savage and barbaric tactics to the capital city of Baghdad in brutal attacks in recent days and in other attempts to stoke sectarianism and to distract the Abadi government

from its efforts to retake the major city of Mosul. Sectarian divisions among the Iraqi people and within the government itself make political reconciliation and a coherent national military campaign against ISIS even more difficult.

Syria, meanwhile, faces a nearly unimaginable humanitarian crisis. Since March of 2011, more than 400,000 Syrians have been killed and more than 1 million injured because the Assad regime has engaged in a murderous campaign against its own people in order to cling to power. Some estimates put the number of dead as high as half a million Syrians. Nearly 5 million Syrians have been forced out of their own country, with 6.5 million displaced internally and 13.5 million in need of humanitarian assistance. Even more tragically, a huge number of those Syrians have been unable to receive international aid or relief because the Assad regime blocks access to international aid organizations.

Rather than playing a constructive role in this tortured, difficult region, such as by contributing more meaningfully to the anti-ISIS fight or by moderating conflicting factions, Iran continues to prop up the Assad regime. In fact, without Iran's help, I believe Assad would have likely fallen or come to the table to negotiate peace by now. Instead, Iran continues to foment instability, sectarian violence, and support terrorism.

In Iraq, Iran continues to fund Shia militias who seek to capitalize upon and exacerbate tensions between Iraq's Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish populations. Iranian-backed Shia militias have pushed ISIS out of some areas, but rather than allowing Sunni civilians to peaceably return and rebuild, they have engaged in killings and human rights violations against the very Sunni communities they have just liberated from ISIS.

According to Human Rights Watch, in response to ISIS bombings in the Iraqi town of Muqdadiyah in January of 2016, Shia militias ''demolished Sunni homes, stores, and mosques'' and abducted and killed dozens of Sunni civilians. This is just one of many examples of atrocities committed by Iranian-backed Shia militias in recent months. These killings further raise tensions and drive more recruits to ISIS and other extremist groups.

In Syria, Iran has joined Russia in providing the aid that has kept the Assad regime in power, despite hundreds of thousands willing to fight against Assad and despite the coordinated effort of many countries.

Although Iran's Government denies the presence of its military forces in Syria, it is clear that in addition to financial support and weapons, Iran has sent thousands of its own troops to reinforce the murderous regime of Assad. One estimate puts the number of Iranian forces in Syria at 3,000, including 2,000 of the elite Quds Force, a select group of fighters from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, the hard-line group dedicated to preserving the reactionary Iranian Government. In total, more than 700 Iranians are believed to have been killed in Syria, directly contradicting Iran's claims that it is not involved in the conflict. In fact, Iraq recently doubled down on its support for Assad by sending soldiers from the regular Iranian army to join the IRGC troops on the ground in Syria. There are rumors that they are even mobilizing and deploying Afghans and others from the region to join militias in support of Assad.

Although it remains clear that a lasting resolution to the Syrian conflict will be impossible until Assad leaves power, Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei, said in a recent televised interview that ''the removal of Assad . . . is a redline for us.''

As long as Iran continues to increase its support—its military support, its financial support—for Assad, it will bear direct responsibility for the carnage in Syria, rising extremism on all sides of the conflict, and the humanitarian exodus from Syria that is causing massive suffering and destabilizing countries on three continents.

This behavior from Iran is a clear sign that the regime is not to be trusted, does not intend to comply with international norms, and deserves close scrutiny and constant pushback from the United States and our allies.

Briefly—noting another colleague who stands to speak soon—there are a number of steps the United States and our allies have to take in response. At the very least, to prevent Iran from obtaining the material necessary to advance its nuclear program, we must work with our allies to tightly enforce all four corners of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the nuclear agreement between Iran, the United States, and other world powers.

We must continue to work with our allies and their navies to interdict Iran's ongoing illegal weapons shipments to support the Houthis and other of their terrorist proxies in the region, not just in Yemen, but in Gaza, Bahrain, and Lebanon. Since February, U.S. forces and allied navies have, on at least three occasions, interdicted in international waters shipments of thousands of AK–47s, anti-tank missiles, grenade launchers, sniper rifles, and other weapons destined from Iran to the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The United States must continue to maintain sanctions on Iran for its support for terrorism, its human rights violations, and its continued illegal ballistic missile tests. We must be willing to sanction both individuals and entities linked to the IRGC and Iran's continued and illegal ballistic missile program. In addition to punishing Iran for its dangerous and provocative behavior, these actions send a signal to Iran that the international national community will not tolerate its ongoing bad behavior.

We have to use diplomatic channels to urge countries such as Russia to not sell more dangerous arms to the Iranian regime—allegedly defensive arms that will simply further destabilize the regime—and to press Russia to allow U.N. Security Council action in response to Iran's recent ballistic missile tests.

Finally, we have to continue to make smart investments in training, technology, and innovation, on which our military depends. America's ability to push back on Iran critically depends on maintaining a credible conventional military deterrent.

The United States must do everything we can to support our allies in the Middle East, in particular by strengthening our partnership with the State of Israel, by concluding a new 10-year memorandum of understanding that provides a reliable long-term and significantly enhanced pathway toward support. Senator GRAHAM and I, along with 81 of our colleagues, recently wrote a letter to the President urging the administration to support a stronger MOU to ensure Israel has the resources it needs to defend itself in this chaotic region.

In closing, in the years to come, I hope this body will be just as dedicated to enforcing the terms of the nuclear agreement with Iran and pushing back on Iran's continued dangerous behavior outside the parameters of the deal as we were in the months leading up to its consideration in this body. Iran continues to exercise a malign influence on Iraq, on Syria, and the region. It is our responsibility to use every tool we have to make it clear to Iran that we will contain its bad behavior and we will not tolerate its ongoing actions.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss my amendment with Senator BLUMENTHAL that would extend the Veterans Choice Card Program for 3 years and restore funding that was moved out of the program last year.

Our amendment is critically important. It extends the Veterans Choice Card Program so it does not expire prematurely next year. It restores funding removed from the program last year to pay for other VA programs, provides additional funding to stabilize the VA Choice Card Program for the next 3 years while Congress works on a long-term solution to reform veterans health care, and allows the Secretary of the VA to standardize and modernize the way it pays all the doctors, hospitals, and clinics participating in the many programs the VA offers to veterans to get the care they need in their communities.

I was very proud 2 years ago that Congress acted quickly to pass major VA reform legislation following the scandal in care that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of veterans waiting endlessly for care. We now know that

what was originally uncovered in Phoenix, AZ, had been occurring throughout the country. Fortunately, we acted decisively, and in a bipartisan manner, by passing the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act in near-record time. That law provided extra emergency funding for the VA to hire doctors and nurses and to build more hospitals and clinics.

Perhaps the most important and the most promising piece of the legislation was the $10 billion emergency fund for the Veterans Choice Card Program. This program allows any veteran who has to wait more than 30 days for an appointment or lives more than 40 miles from a VA facility to visit a participating doctor in their community instead of continuing to wait for care with no options. After an extremely difficult start, the Veterans Choice Card Program is now authorizing more than 150,000 appointments for veterans care per month—over 6,000 per workday.

According to the VA, as of the end of March, nearly 1 million appointments for veterans had been scheduled under the Veterans Choice Card Program. Each of these appointments represents a veteran's appointment that would have otherwise been delayed potentially for months in the VA's scheduling system.

An extra advantage of the Choice Card is it also helps veterans who don't use it. By enabling some veterans to receive care in their community, the VA is able to free up its appointment backlog and accommodate veteran appointments sooner.

Over the last year, the number of participating doctors and medical professionals in the Veterans Choice Program in the western region has jumped from around 95,000 to nearly 160,000. The turnover rate is very low. More than 90 percent of all doctors are being paid within 30 days, and the great majority of doctors are choosing to stay in the Veterans Choice Card Program to treat our Nation's veterans.

Unfortunately, under current law, the Veterans Choice Card Program is scheduled to expire in the middle of next year. The Veterans Choice Card Program is capped at $10 billion in emergency spending and 3 years of operation, whichever is reached first.

I know Members on both sides of the aisle don't want to return to the status quo of never-ending wait times for appointments and poor care at the VA. Too many of our constituents have been harmed, too many lives devastated.

I remember standing on the Senate floor in 2014 and urging passage of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act. At that time, we acknowledged the Veterans Choice Program was a first step toward fully reforming the VA. That law created a blue-ribbon Commission on Care that is still meeting and owes Congress recommendations this summer on long-term reform, but we need time for hearings, investigations, oversight and analysis of the Commission's report to get long-term reform right.

As the chairman and ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee will attest, this is the dictionary definition of an emergency. While we cannot rush the reforms the VA health care system needs, we also cannot bring the Veterans Choice Program to a full stop. Too many veterans and VA hospitals depend on the Veterans Choice Program to provide care in a timely fashion.

I have heard from multiple Administrators and VA officials who have told me and my staff that they do not know what they will do if the Veterans Choice Card Program ends. I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment and commit to continuing the hard work of enacting long-term reform to the VA health care system.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment in order to call up amendment No. 4039 with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, JOHN MCCAIN is my good friend for whom I have ultimate respect. I was just informed of this amendment and was informed it would not enable—we have a real problem in Rochester, where they do not have enough VA services. They have to drive very far away to go to a big metropolitan area.

I am going to object, hoping I can talk to my friend from Arizona to see if we can work this out. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I don't know what the credentials are of the Senator from New York as far as veterans are concerned, but I know this. I know that what the Senator from New York is stopping is 160,000 veterans—160,000 veterans—from participating in this program in the western part of the United States.

Mr. SCHUMER. If my colleague will yield. What I am simply asking for is not to block it but to sit and talk with him to see what exactly his amendment does and the effect it will have on Rochester.

I was just told of it. That is all I want to do. I don't know the details. I have great respect for my friend, but I have an obligation to the veterans in Rochester who have come to me about their problem, and so I want to talk to my colleague about it.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 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. BLUMENTHAL. 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. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I hope very strongly that my colleague and friend the Senator from New York and Senator MCCAIN will succeed in resolving this potential roadblock to amendment No. 4039, because I very fervently support it.

The amendment would extend the temporary Veterans Choice Program for an additional 3 years and provide funding to do so. The extension of this program is vital, and the current authorization is coming to an end. At this point, we lack a path forward on any of the proposals to overhaul the VA's care in the community program.

While the Veterans Choice Program has been far from perfect, requiring multiple legislative and administrative changes to make it function for veterans, extending it for an additional 3 years will allow us to address these necessary changes that Senators TESTER and BURR have provided in a bipartisan way in the committee earlier this year. I remain committed to working with them and with Chairman ISAKSON to make further changes to the program as well as continuing to improve access to care within the VA, which is the preferred choice for many veterans.

In addition to extending Choice, this amendment also would allow the VA to move closer to consolidating existing programs for care in the community, eliminating some of the bureaucratic hurdles to smooth contracting for the VA. I thank my colleague from Arizona Senator MCCAIN for championing this cause because this amendment will ensure that all veterans currently using Project ARCH to access care through the VA will be grandfathered into the Veterans Choice Program. This is important for some veterans in rural areas to maintain continuity in care. It is of great interest to our colleagues from Maine and Kansas and other States where these veterans live, primarily, but to all of us who care about veterans health care.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment as well as to support The Veterans First Act, another bipartisan bill I was pleased to work on with Chairman ISAKSON to achieve—that bill makes additional changes to veterans health care to improve opioid therapy, access to chiropractic care, as well as ensuring strong accountability within the Department.

Again, I express my appreciation to my colleague and friend Senator MCCAIN and say that I look forward to working with him closely on this amendment, which would be helpful, in my view, to the Veterans Choice Program. Without this extension, the Veterans Choice Program would expire next year before Congress enacts long-term reform for veterans health. The stability provided by this extension and funding will help ensure maximum participation by doctors, hospitals, and clinics in the community who wish to treat our veterans.

This amendment is one I support, having worked with my colleague Senator MCCAIN on it, and I am very hopeful we can move forward with the support of this body.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would tell Senator SCHUMER's staff that he may want to come back.

What Senator SCHUMER is asking for is a 25-year lease on a clinic in Rochester, NY, according to his staff.

I have been privy to examples of blocking the greater good because of a specific geographic area, but I have to say that I haven't seen anything quite like this one.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I will talk one more time with the Senator from New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. 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. BLUNT. Mr. President, this is an important issue that is being discussed on the floor. I join Senator BLUMENTHAL certainly in my commitment to do whatever we can to extend more choice to veterans.

I believe there are less than a handful of issues in which the VA is, in all likelihood, the best provider. They should be better at post-traumatic stress than anything else. The VA should be better at IED-attack injuries. They should be better at prosthetics. There is no reason they should be the better place to have your heart valve replaced or your kidney cancer dealt with.

More choice for veterans is better for veterans, and will make the VA a better provider than the VA is today. So I am certainly supportive of that discussion.

Mr. President, Senator WARNER and I today have filed an amendment to the transportation bill, which is the part of this debate that deals with transportation. The BRIDGE Act creates new ways to help us fund our Nation's infrastructure.

Last year, Congress was finally able to come together to pass a bipartisan highway bill, the FAST Act. It took a while to get to the FAST Act. We had 37 short-term extensions of the highway bill from 2009 on, but we finally have a 5-year highway bill that provides certainty for the next 5 years. This is a chance when, at every level of government, we can now put extra tools in the toolbox, and we can involve the private sector in ways that it has not been involved as a funding partner. There are many things the private sector can do in partnership with the public sector.

Strengthening our overall infrastructure, especially our transportation network, is vital to boosting economic growth, to creating jobs, and to increasing competitiveness in Missouri, in Senator WARNER's State of Virginia, and across the Nation. Current infrastructure fails to meet our current needs, including our drinking water, highways and ports, and energy transmission.

In addition to all the things we see above ground, there are many things below ground that need to be dealt with. Part of the storm water system in the city of St. Louis was built while Abraham Lincoln was President. It is amazing how long wood will last if you keep it soaked in water for 152 years or so, but that is what a part of that system is all about. We are way short in infrastructure investments. Senator WARNER and I, for three Congresses now, have been trying to find the best way to add more ability to do more of the things that need to be done. We have a transportation system that is interconnected, with an extensive network of highways, roads, and bridges, and of freight and passenger railroads, urban and rural rail transit systems, airports, waterways, and pipelines. All of those things make us more competitive than we would be otherwise, and more competitive means better jobs. It means that people living paycheck to paycheck have an opportunity to have paycheck to paycheck plus savings. They have an opportunity to have paycheck to paycheck plus retirement. They have an opportunity to see those things happen that need to happen in their lives and for their families.

The transportation system links our country. It links urban and rural America. It serves as the backbone for interstate commerce, and it connects the United States to the rest of the world. Our economic competitiveness and our ability to export in the most competitive way is very dependent on our infrastructure.

The American energy revolution is directly related to the ability to access unconventional oil and gas. We have more new American energy than we ever dreamed possible. We can access that energy, but we don't have a way to transport the energy that we need to use it most efficiently.

The Greater Mississippi River Basin—the biggest contiguous piece of agricultural land in the world—is where the waterways of the country come together. These waterways allow us to be more competitive. They allow farmers to easily ship their products to domestic and foreign markets. A modern transportation system will be key to remaining competitive with other grain producers elsewhere in the world. Brazil is a great example of a country whose ability to grow agricultural products has far outgrown its infrastructure. The ability to compete—the ability to get things to market, the ability to get things all over the world—is dramatically impacted by that.

The American Society of Civil Engineers continues to give the United States poor marks on our infrastructure and says that we need billions of dollars in investment over the next several years to bring it up to adequate conditions.

The BRIDGE Act is not a way for Federal taxpayers to become responsible for every local obligation but for States and communities, along with the Federal Government, to have new ways to do the things that need to be done. We can't continue to ignore the infrastructure needs of the country. We particularly can't continue to ignore the infrastructure needs of the country that we can't see.

We just saw appropriate attention in Flint, MI, to a problem that didn't meet the eye because it is underground. The gas lines, the water lines, the storm sewer lines all need attention. The capital markets and private sector investors have growing interest in being a part of meeting that great infrastructure need. The BRIDGE Act will incentivize private sector investment by establishing an independent infrastructure financing authority to provide loans and loan guarantees to critical infrastructure projects, including transportation, water, and energy infrastructure. It is a proposal like the ones we need to help close the gap that needs to be closed.

During this week—a week in which I am not sure how the planning worked here—we have the transportation bill on the floor during infrastructure week. I think we ought to give serious consideration not just to the infrastructure that we appropriate money for but the process and the tools we put in place so that the infrastructure needs of the country can be met.

I am certainly pleased to get to work with Senator WARNER on this project. We have had lots of input from people who understand the infrastructure needs of the country. I hope the Congress will look at this as one of the things that can be done to help meet those needs.

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. 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 ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator WARNER from Virginia and Senator SCHUMER from New York. They are committed to the veterans in their States and in this country.

I believe we have worked out an agreement to try to get the veterans the services they have earned and are not receiving at this time.

AMENDMENT NO. 4039 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3896

Mr. President, the usual calm and quiet conversation has led to a conclusion that now I can ask unanimous

consent to set aside the pending amendment in order to call up amendment No. 4039.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN] proposes an amendment numbered 4039 to amendment No. 3896.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To extend and expand eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs and to establish consistent criteria and standards relating to the use of amounts under the Medical Community Care account of the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

EXTENSION AND EXPANSION OF VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

SEC. 251. (a) EXTENSION.—The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in section 101(p)(2), by striking ''3 years'' and inserting ''6 years''; and

(2) in section 802(d)(1), by striking ''$10,000,000,000'' and inserting ''$17,500,000,000''.

(b) EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Subsection (b)(2) of section 101 of such Act is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C)(ii), by striking ''; or'' and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (D)(ii)(II)(dd), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) has received health services under the pilot program under section 403 of the Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–387; 38 U.S.C. 1703 note) and resides in a location described in section (b)(2) of such section.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—(1) Subsection (g)(3) of such section is amended by striking ''or (D)'' and inserting ''(D), or (E)''.

(2) Subsection (q)(2)(A) of such section is amended—

(A) in clause (iii), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(v) eligible veterans described in subsection (b)(2)(E).''.

(d) EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.—The amounts made available under the amendments made by subsection (a) are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(i)).

(e) QUARTERLY REPORT.—Not less frequently than quarterly until all amounts deposited in the Veterans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) are exhausted, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives an update on the expenditures made from such Fund to carry out section 101 of such Act during the quarter covered by the report.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES UNDER MEDICAL COMMUNITY CARE ACCOUNT

SEC. 252. In using amounts made available in this title for the Medical Community Care account of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish consistent criteria and standards—

(1) for purposes of determining eligibility of non-Department health care providers to provide health care under the laws administered by the Secretary, including standards relating to education, certification, licensure, training, and employment history; and

(2) for the reimbursement of such health care providers for care or services provided under the laws administered by the Secretary, which to the extent practicable shall—

(A) use rates for reimbursement that are not more than the rates paid by the United States to a provider of services (as defined in section 1861(u) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(u))) under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) for the same care or services;

(B) incorporate the use of value-based reimbursement models to promote the provision of high-quality care to improve health outcomes and the experience of care for veterans; and

(C) be consistent with prompt payment standards required of Federal agencies under chapter 39 of title 31, United States Code.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Arizona for working with us on this very important issue of making sure that veterans in a number of our States are able to get quality care in a location that is convenient to them, and I appreciate his partnering with me and Senator SCHUMER and others on this issue.

Mr. President, I was going to rise earlier when the Senator from Missouri spoke to talk about the question around infrastructure investment. This is infrastructure investment week, and stakeholders from across the country are here to continue to raise the question that we need to do more to rebuild our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. We all know that recently we passed a 5-year highway bill, and I supported it. The FAST Act—as it was called—was a good bill, but it included only modest increases in funding. Whether we look at our region's Metro or the Memorial Bridge that many of us travel on a regular basis or airports or water systems all over the country, it is clear that we need to look at additional ways to invest in our Nation's infrastructure.

Senator BLUNT and I have filed an amendment to the current Transportation appropriations bill that we had before us that would establish a National Infrastructure Financing Authority. The BRIDGE Act that is cosponsored by six Republicans and six Democrats is bringing about a new tool to make innovative ways to finance projects. I believe my friend, the Senator from Connecticut, is a supporter of this type of approach.

Our bipartisan BRIDGE Act creates a $10 billion government loan fund—a loan fund that will repay. It doesn't add a single dime to the Federal deficit. All experts say this modest initial investment ultimately could unlock up to $300 billion in private sector capital to invest in our Nation's infrastructure.

Let's be honest. We all know why we are here. The funding mechanisms that our transportation system relies on are simply unsustainable. We spend more money each year just in maintaining our highway trust fund and highway system than our highway trust fund brings in, yet our needs continue to grow.

The American Society of Civil Engineers recently gave the United States a D-plus grade on infrastructure. I don't know about my friend, the Senator from New York, but I am sure that he often preferred grades better than D-plus when he was a student.

If we look over recent times, this is not a Democrat or Republican issue; this is a problem that has been gnawing at this country for some time. There has been a 50-percent decrease in infrastructure investment as a percentage of our GDP since the 1970s. The United States spends less than 2 percent of our gross domestic product on infrastructure.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, underinvestment in our national infrastructure will cost each American family $3,400 a year. That is wasted time. That is a city in gridlock. That is not being able to get to work and not being able to be with one's family. The most significant gap, of course, is not only in water but, obviously, in transportation, where it has been estimated that an additional $1 trillion is needed across the network—including roads, bridges, rail—during the next decade. Again, I point to many of the Members in this body and so many of the folks who work for us simply traveling across the Memorial Bridge, one of our Nation's icons, which is basically in a crumbling state.

Meanwhile, if we look at nations around the world in terms of what they are doing—remember the United States is under 2 percent of GDP investment and infrastructure—Europe and India spend about 5 percent of their GDP on an annual basis in infrastructure. China spends nearly 9 percent. Australia already has a national infrastructure financing authority. China also has a national infrastructure funding authority that is building out national high-speed rail networks.

Think about it. For most of the 20th century, it was American infrastructure that led to America's economic dominance in the 20th century. Today, whether that is flying into our airports, looking at our rail system, or looking at our crumbling roads and systems, in many ways, America's infrastructure is a disgrace and actually retards economic growth.

As we tighten our belts at the State level—and I say that as a former Governor—and at the Federal level, we

need to do everything we can to invest in infrastructure as a means of not only providing jobs but helping the flow of goods and people and services to stay competitive in the global economy.

Despite the recent passage of the so-called FAST Act, only 6 percent of infrastructure funding in the United States is from the private sector. With over $2.2 trillion sitting on private ledgers looking for a place to invest, that meager 6-percent figure, in terms of private sector investment in infrastructure, could be dramatically increased.

The BRIDGE Act, the bill I am working on with Senator BLUNT, establishes such an authority. It complements existing Federal programs scattered across several ages. It allows us to consolidate the expertise it takes to go against Wall Street in putting together infrastructure financing programs.

This new authority could provide an important new tool for State and local governments to partner with the private sector to invest in our Nation's infrastructure.

Let me be clear. Infrastructure financing alone isn't a silver bullet. If you finance, you have to pay those dollars back. But when we are looking at interest rates at record lows, failure to take advantage of accessing these private markets with interest rates at these low levels is the equivalent of political malfeasance. In terms of the BRIDGE Act, this program would complement existing programs such as TIFIA and WIFIA, which already provide good work.

My hope is that joining with Senator BLUNT and 12 of our colleagues—equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans—if not on this bill, we will act on the BRIDGE Act and provide this critically important needed infrastructure tool to our tool kit to make sure that our roads, bridges, airports, water and sewer systems are functioning and allow America to compete in the 21st century economy.

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. SCHUMER. 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. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will be very brief. A number of us have clinics that serve our veterans population. I have one in Rochester. The Senator from Virginia has one in Hampton Roads, and there are others on both sides of the aisle where there is a potential problem because of the way CBO scored it. We have agreed that, rather than piggyback on the McCain amendment, we would figure out a bipartisan way to solve this problem in the NDAA bill. I very much appreciate the commitment of my friend from Arizona to help us solve that problem.

I know we will have the complete cooperation of our ranking member, Senator REED, and I look forward to trying to solve the problem for the benefit of veterans throughout the country who don't get the services they need, and we can move forward at least in 17 areas where they will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, as the ranking member of the VA Committee, I want to join my colleague from New York, and having worked with Senator MCCAIN on this amendment, I am very pleased that the McCain-Blumenthal amendment has been made pending and that we have an agreement to authorize those VA leases that were requested over the last fiscal year when we turned to the National Defense Authorization Act.

I want to stress that these leases have been requested over the last several fiscal years, and this agreement embodies a situation that has to be addressed. I thank my colleague from Arizona for working with me on the amendment and now being so understanding on these requests, at least in committing to make sure that we address this very strongly felt need.

I also want to thank my colleague from Virginia for his work on this issue and for his work on the infrastructure spending measure that he has offered and that I have supported for years. I hope that we can get it done because the infrastructure of our Nation, as well as that of my State, requires that we commit the money as an investment. It is not funding. It is not spending. It is an investment in our future. We can't have a 21st century economy unless we have a 21st century infrastructure—roads, bridges, rail, airports. I am pleased and proud to join him in this effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

AMENDMENT NO. 3897

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, in a piece of legislation of this size, this scope, and this magnitude, there is always much to praise. Unfortunately, from time to time there is much to criticize.

Specifically, I rise today to try to correct one major mistake in this bill. As currently written, it permits the Department of Housing and Urban Development to proceed to the implementation of its radical new regulation, the insultingly misnamed affirmatively furthering fair housing rule, or AFFH.

Proponents of AFFH, including President Obama, claim that AFFH fulfills the original purpose and promise of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. The truth is, HUD's new housing rule isn't the fulfillment but a betrayal of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. The purpose of the Fair Housing Act was to protect the God-given right of individuals and families, regardless of their skin color or their ethnicity, to buy and rent homes where they please. By contrast, the explicit purpose of HUD's new rule is to empower Federal bureaucrats to dictate where a community's low-income residents will live. This is not what progress looks like.

AFFH not only grants unprecedented new powers to HUD—powers that were not contemplated and have no legitimate basis in the Fair Housing Act of 1968—but it will ultimately hurt the very people it purports to help—public housing residents, especially African-American public housing residents who too often find themselves trapped in dysfunctional, broken neighborhoods.

To make matters worse, this new rule will end America's unique and uniquely successful commitment to localism and diversity and make neighborhood-level construction decisions subject to the whims of future Presidents. If this past year has not yet done enough to give you pause about handing over such power to the executive branch, then you are not paying close enough attention.

I am offering an amendment today, No. 3897, that would prohibit HUD from using Federal taxpayer money to carry out the affirmatively furthering fair housing rule. The House of Representatives has already passed this amendment twice and will likely do so again in the near future. We should follow the lead of the House of Representatives in this regard.

Here is how the rule works. AFFH requires cities and towns across the country to audit their own local housing policies under close supervision by HUD regulators who may have never lived anywhere near the city, town, or municipality in question. If any aspect of a community's housing and demographic patterns fails to meet HUD bureaucrats' expansive definition of ''fair housing,'' the local government must submit a plan to reorganize the community's housing practices according to the preferences and priorities set not by the community in question but by the bureaucrats—the bureaucrats in Washington, possibly hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

Critics of AFFH often say and I have said myself that this rule turns HUD into a sort of national zoning board with the power to unilaterally rewrite local zoning laws and land use regulations in every city and town in America. But that is not quite how the rule works, and that is why Senator COLLINS' amendment would not do anything to prevent the implementation of the very things we worry about with AFFH. In the 10 months since the rule was finalized, it has become clear that the mechanics of AFFH are much more underhanded and subversive than critics have often claimed. Under the new rule, HUD doesn't replace local housing authorities, it conscripts them into its service. This gets to the very heart of the difference between my amendment and the amendment offered by my distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS.

The danger of AFFH is not that HUD will direct local governments and public housing authorities to make specific changes to their zoning policies; it will just threaten them by tying obedience to Federal community development block grants. Obedience to the commands of Federal regulators will be a conditional precedent of sorts to the ongoing receipt of Federal funds under the CDBG Program.

CDBG is a Federal grant program controlled by HUD, one that allocates some $3 billion per year to local governments to help them address a variety of community development needs, including providing adequate and affordable public housing for their community. Traditionally, local officials have been more or less free to use their CDBG funds according to their own community's unique needs and specific priorities, but under AFFH, HUD officials will withhold local government CDBG funds unless that local government adopts HUD's preferred housing policies.

Predictably, proponents of the rule claim this will be a collaborative process, with local government officials in the driver's seat while the bureaucrats at HUD merely provide support and guidance, but the 10-month track record of AFFH suggests that precisely the opposite will be true. In fact, I have already heard from the housing authority of Salt Lake County, predicting that the cost of complying with AFFH will stretch their already thin resources, add hundreds of hours of bureaucratic paperwork to their workloads, and eliminate their autonomy to determine the best ways to provide adequate, low-cost housing to their community.

The problem with HUD's new rule has nothing to do with the stated intentions behind it. In a press release announcing the finalization of AFFH, HUD Secretary Julian Castro said: ''Unfortunately, too many Americans find their dreams limited by where they come from, and a ZIP code should never determine a child's future.'' I completely agree. There is no disputing that the neighborhood in which a child grows up might affect his educational, social, and professional outcomes in the future. Nor is there any disagreement that far too many children today are raised in dysfunctional neighborhoods because it is the only place their parents can find affordable housing. The lack of affordable housing is not a new problem in America—just ask anyone who has ever had to pay rent in one of the major metropolitan areas controlled by the Democratic Party—but neither is the solution. The best way to make housing more affordable is to allow more housing to be built, and the best way to help low-income citizens find fair and affordable housing is to empower them to live in a neighborhood that meets their needs.

The history of Chicago is instructive here. In the 2000s, the Chicago city government demolished many of its public housing facilities without any kind of a plan to replace them. Those with the resources and wherewithal to choose where to live moved to places where housing was cheap and economic opportunity was plentiful, but the less fortunate were relocated to more remote, less prosperous towns, towns like Dubuque, IA, at the behest of—who else?—the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In 2008 the city of Dubuque was struggling to meet the needs of its own public housing residents. Yet in stepped the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development declaring that the city's housing policies would fail to meet the agency's fair housing standards and that therefore the city would be ineligible to receive Federal funding from HUD unless the local government actively recruited Section 8 voucher holders from Chicago. Unwilling to lose access to Federal funding on which the city had come to rely, the small Iowa town acquiesced to HUD's demands—aggressive and unacceptable as they were. This imposed an enormous administrative burden on the city's resource-strapped housing agencies, but HUD's real victims were Chicago's public housing residents who were forcibly displaced to an unknown town 200 miles from the city they used to call home. Unless we pass this amendment to defund the disastrously misguided AFFH rule, this is what the future of public housing in America will look like.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment and reaffirming that low-income families are not statistics to be managed by distant bureaucrats; they are human beings—our neighbors in need who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I listened very carefully to the presentation made by my colleague from Utah, Senator LEE, and I wish to respond to the concerns he raised. Indeed, if the picture he drew were accurate, I might be a supporter rather than an opponent of his amendment.

First, let me be clear that there is nothing in our bill that authorizes this rule. This rule was issued pursuant to HUD's normal regulatory authority in response to a report, which I will discuss in a moment, that was issued by the GAO, the Government Accountability Office.

The amendment offered by Senator LEE would prohibit funding for HUD's rule that is known as the affirmatively furthering fair housing rule. It was finalized in July of last year, but it is based on a requirement from the landmark civil rights-era law, the 1968 Fair Housing Act. That law mandates that HUD ensure that recipients of HUD funding not only prevent discrimination but also act to further the goals of fair housing that are outlined in this landmark law. In fact, repeatedly over the years, Congress has reinforced this goal. As recently as 1998, the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act required HUD program recipients to affirmatively further fair housing.

When we talk about fair housing, it is important that we remember we are talking about not only prohibiting discrimination based on race but also discrimination based on disabilities, ethnic origin, and even against families with children. In fact, in fiscal year 2015, 56 percent of all reported complaints of housing discrimination were initiated by people with disabilities, and that is why so many organizations that are representing our disabled citizens are so strongly opposed and concerned about Senator LEE's amendment.

For example, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, an organization that was founded by servicemembers who returned home after World War II with spinal cord injury, believes that HUD's rule will help curb discrimination against people with disabilities, including our veterans and our seniors. According to the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the alarming trend of more than 50 percent of complaints about housing discrimination being initiated by individuals with disabilities will affect Americans returning from conflicts abroad, as well as a growing percentage of our seniors who are suffering from or living with disabilities. The organization also believes that HUD's rule will help local governments identify strategies and solutions to expand accessible and supportive housing choices for our seniors and our veterans.

I wish everyone had heard Senator ISAKSON's eloquent speech on the floor this afternoon when he talked about a wonderful, inclusive mixed-income housing development in Atlanta that has included a charter school and a Y. The children's test scores have gone up and crime has decreased because of the model that was adopted for this particular development.

Earlier I mentioned that it is important to know that HUD issued this new rule in response to a specific 2010 GAO report.

Members in this Chamber are always looking to GAO for information, advice, and recommendations on how we can improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of Federal programs to make sure they are fulfilling the mandates we have written and to make sure they are serving the people they are intended to serve in the manner Congress intended.

GAO took a look at the fair housing requirements and particularly the requirement in the Fair Housing Act that recipients of HUD's grants were to affirmatively advance fair housing. It was very critical of the haphazard nature of HUD's oversight and the fact that communities didn't know whether they were in compliance. There was

also a lack of tools, of community involvement, and of assessments to make sure those goals were being met.

Once HUD issued its final rule, the GAO was satisfied and closed out its recommendations. As the Presiding Officer is well aware, there are times when Federal agencies never implement GAO's recommendations, or take years to do so, and we in the Senate have to hammer the agencies over and over again on why they didn't implement GAO's recommendations. Well, in this case, HUD did so.

So not only was the origin of the rule the GAO report but also communities were seeking better tools and more guidance. Senator KAINE, a former mayor of Richmond and a former Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, was eloquent in describing the fact that he welcomed these rules because it was so hard when he was the mayor to know exactly how to accomplish the goal of affirmatively advancing fair housing. What exactly did that mean to HUD?

Indeed, there is an excellent article that appeared in The Hill today by the director of the PolicyLink Center for Infrastructure Equity and the co-director of the Promise Neighborhoods Institute that talked about the history of this rule. In particular—and I want to quote—the authors say:

> The opposition ignores the fact that the rule was developed in response to city- and state-level requests for better tools and improved guidance; that it involved significant input from local-level innovators and experimenters; and that it was piloted in 74 regions nationwide over five years in the Sustainable Communities Initiative through a tool called the fair housing and equity assessment.

It lists cities across the country, including Salt Lake City, ironically; Denver, St. Paul, and Dallas, which have all invested in affordable housing, in transit-oriented developments to ensure that residents would have access to affordable transit and housing choices, just as examples.

So the idea that this rule came out of thin air is just not accurate. It is based on a law that has been on the books for decades—a law that is a landmark civil rights-era law—the 1968 Fair Housing Act. It is based on a GAO report in 2010 which said HUD wasn't doing a good job. It is based on requests from States and communities for more tools and more guidance from HUD.

So this rule was not developed by our committee. It was not authorized by our committee. It comes from the 1968 law which, as I said, has been reaffirmed in at least three subsequent laws that this body has passed. It comes from a GAO report, and it involved a lot of input.

Now, according to Senator LEE, and we heard him speak about it today, he fears HUD is going to be turned into—I believe he called it a national zoning authority for every neighborhood, and Federal bureaucrats thousands of miles away in Washington will be in charge of our local communities.

First, let me say I do not believe that to be the case, and I believe it is a misreading of the guidance. However, I would never want that either. That is why, along with my colleagues Senator JACK REED and Senator THAD COCHRAN, we have introduced an amendment to ensure that HUD cannot do that, to prohibit HUD from being involved in local zoning decisions so the recipients of Federal dollars will continue to make their own local decisions to address the Federal requirements.

Because there has been so much misrepresentation about our amendment, let me read to my colleagues exactly what it says. It couldn't be more clear: None—none—of the funds made available by this act may be used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to ''direct a grantee to undertake specific change to existing zoning laws as part of carrying out'' the final rule entitled ''affirmatively furthering fair housing.''

I don't know how the amendment could be any clearer than that. We have made sure the worst fear, the worst scenario the sponsor of this amendment has conjured up, cannot occur if our amendment passes.

On the other hand, I want to point out what Senator LEE's amendment would do. It would prevent HUD from providing the necessary technical assistance, guidance, and help that localities have continuously asked HUD to provide to ensure that they don't get sued, that they are not susceptible to costly and unnecessary fair housing litigation brought by individuals or outside groups. They want HUD's help, but under the Lee amendment no funding could be used to give them that kind of help. I don't see how that makes sense. That is how broadly written his amendment is.

I want to correct something else that was said. Senator LEE talked about the enormous burden this rule will impose on the recipients of HUD funds. To be clear, the rule requires the recipients to complete the fair housing analysis only once every 5 years—once every 5 years—similar to all other HUD requirements in their consolidated plans. So that argument, in my judgment, also falls.

Let me say that we are all aware of concerns, despite the tremendous progress that has been made in this country, about the lack of progress in providing housing opportunities to all Americans. That is why in our bill we try to deal with homeless veterans—we do deal with homeless veterans. We put in $57 million for additional vouchers for homeless veterans, even though the administration wanted to eliminate that important program. We are continuing to work on that.

Finally, let me respond to a specific case that Senator LEE mentioned involving Chicago and Dubuque. To begin with, it is simply a mistake in a statement to say that Chicago residents were ''forced to relocate to Dubuque.'' That is just not accurate. It is true that this is a Federal voucher program and, as Republicans, we usually like vouchers because we want Americans to have choices about where they live. So the section 8 program, for example, which is a voucher-based program, doesn't say that you can only use it in Portland, ME, or Providence, RI, or Salt Lake City, UT, or Chicago, IL. It is a program that allows people to live where they want to live, but it is a program with a long waiting list in most cities. Nothing—also, despite what has been written—nothing in the rule requires that Dubuque be considered part of Chicago. That is not a statement that the sponsor of the amendment made today, but it is a statement that has been circulated by some outside groups and it is simply ridiculous. It is absolutely absurd.

The concerns raised with Dubuque are related to a settlement that the city reached with HUD in 2013, which was well before this rule was finalized. The agreement was the result of a compliance review under the Civil Rights Act—title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs receiving assistance. Sadly, the city of Dubuque was found to not be in compliance with the Civil Rights Act because the city was purging and closing wait lists for the section 8 voucher program and creating residency requirements that are not allowed. Indeed, it is sad to say, in the letter of finding, HUD wrote: ''The City of Dubuque knew its actions would limit or deny the participation of African Americans in its Section 8 program.'' I would hope we could all agree—I am sure we could all agree—that is just wrong.

So the Dubuque case, rather than being an example of the bizarre consequences of this rule, as has been portrayed, is in fact yet another reminder that even in this day and age there continue to be some clear violations of the Fair Housing Act.

I hope my colleagues will join me in voting against Senator LEE's amendment. I am sure he is well-intentioned, but the effects of this amendment would be very harmful to the goals we all share of fair housing in America.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to support my colleague, the chairman of the subcommittee, Senator COLLINS of Maine, in opposition to the amendment offered by the Senator from Utah. This amendment would prohibit HUD from implementing or enforcing its Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulations.

I think it is important to remind everyone of the reasoning for and history behind these regulations. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was enacted because banks, landlords, and developers were excluding people from buying or renting in certain neighborhoods based on race. Under the Fair Housing Act, communities are required to take steps to further fair housing in order to prevent discrimination and segregation.

I think we have come a long way since 1968, and I don't think anyone is arguing the premise, purpose, or beneficial aspects of the Fair Housing Act. The law is based on trying to ensure that Americans have fair access to housing, no matter their race, physical ability, family status, or religion.

People should be able to live according to their own choice and resources. I hope that we can all agree that people should not be turned away from a home or neighborhood because of their religion, family status, disability, or race. Frankly, that was the aspiration in 1968 and still, too often, remains an aspiration. HUD is trying to give local communities the tools and resources needed to live up to the legislative mandate that we imposed and continue to impose.

As the chairman said so well, these regulations don't emanate from some person in a room thinking a great thought. In 2010, the Government Accountability Office did an audit to assess compliance with the Fair Housing Act. That is the GAO's job. That office checks whether Federal agencies are doing what we—the Congress—tell them to do. GAO found that many HUD grantees did not analyze impediments to fair housing—that we were giving money to organizations throughout this country and that they were not even making attempts to analyze the impediments that existed to fair housing.

GAO also found that those organizations that did analyze impediments to fair housing often failed to establish any goals or objectives to address them. The organizations just found them and did not act. That is not what the Fair Housing Act requires.

GAO also found that HUD was unable to determine if a community was actually meeting its obligations under the Fair Housing Act. HUD simply did not know whether the requirements of the Fair Housing Act were being implemented at the local level.

HUD is often criticized for not effectively responding to GAO, but here they responded. HUD developed regulations that insist that grantees conduct a fair housing analysis and submit that assessment to HUD for review.

As a result of this proposed regulation, HUD went through a 2-year rulemaking process. This was not some whimsical spur-of-the-moment decision or press release to say: Let's do this.

The process was 2 years long, fully open to public hearing, comment and review, and susceptible to challenge in court if it did not measure up to the Administrative Procedure Act or the Fair Housing Act. This process has resulted in regulations that will actually carry out the intent of the Congress.

To reinforce and clarify what the chairman has said, these regulations do not change existing law and do not in any way dictate local zoning decisions. In fact, these regulations simplify the responsibility of grantees to comply with the Fair Housing Act because they give grantees the data and tools to help communities comply with the law.

These regulations do not require grantees to gather new data because HUD provides the data to them. To help communities comply with the Fair Housing Act, HUD is working closely with grantees, providing technical assistance, and holding training sessions across the country. This is a collaborative effort. It is an effort that does not dictate a national outcome. HUD is helping localities, working with their particular situation, to develop a response to the legislative requirements that we have been emphatically insisting upon since 1968.

We are also working, as we should, to ensure that this process is continually evaluated by HUD, and streamlined and simplified—particularly, when it comes to dealing with small communities that cannot bear the administrative overhead that some larger cities might be able to bear. HUD is providing assistance to ensure that these grantees are complying with the Fair Housing Act.

We all understand—and this principle applies not just to HUD programs, but every program—that grantees have an obligation to use Federal resources responsibly and consistently with legal requirements. The Fair Housing Act requires that access to housing not be denied because of race, disability, or other protected category. This is what we should expect for all recipients of Federal support—that they follow the law.

This improved process, in my view, protects communities and ensures that they still have a choice of how they meet their obligations under the Fair Housing Act. There is nothing in these regulations that undermines the ability of a local community to determine these solutions, but these communities must recognize their responsibilities. Their solutions are ones that will be organic to the community—what works for them, given the objective of ensuring that there are no artificial impediments to access housing.

It is also important to note that, if HUD is prevented from implementing these regulations, there is no change to the obligations that these communities have under the Fair Housing Act. This law has been in place for 48 years. Those requirements will still remain in place and will not only be opportunities, but also obligations to take action in certain cases.

Senator KAINE was on the floor this morning stating that, as a young lawyer in Richmond, VA, he became an advocate for fair housing because people came to him with complaints, and he took those complaints to court. What we are trying to do, interestingly enough, is to avoid all of that by having a process where the impediments have been removed by a local solution.

The amendment that Senator LEE proposes would prevent HUD from satisfying these GAO recommendations to provide guidance, clarity, and support for these grantees. This amendment makes grantees liable for compliance without the tools and data needed to comply. Ironically, it probably puts grantees in a worse position.

So I join the chairman and urge all of my colleagues to reject this amendment.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I want to express my strong support for the 2017 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill. Senator COLLINS and Senator REED deserve tremendous credit for their leadership on this bipartisan bill.

Congress has the basic responsibility to determine how we spend hard-earned taxpayer dollars. It is a responsibility that my colleagues and I on the Appropriations Committee take very seriously. Debating and passing these annual bills provides accountability. It is an important part of setting priorities, making choices, and reducing waste.

Last week, the Senate passed an energy and water appropriations bill crafted by Senators ALEXANDER and FEINSTEIN. While I don't serve on their subcommittee, I was very proud to support their bill, and I congratulate them on moving forward and making the process work.

The 2017 Transportation and HUD appropriations bill is the latest example of the Senate's return to regular order. This process enables all Senators to play an active role in the legislative process and to address concerns that are important to their States. This bill is crafted with bipartisan support, and it helps to drive the growth of our Nation. Senators COLLINS and REED have put in a lot of work to prepare this bill for consideration, as have both of their staffs. The discretionary spending in this bill is within the budget caps, and it reflects a responsible approach. The bill strengthens our country's infrastructure and transportation system.

This week is recognized as Infrastructure Week, and I have heard from several Arkansans that this must remain a priority. Our citizens have opportunities, and our Nation is a powerful economic force, thanks in part to our roads and bridges, airports, waterways, and related structures. We need to maintain our roads because they provide a reliable way to move goods and services around the country and, with the rest of our infrastructure, to countries around the world. These investments lead to job creation and greatly benefit our economy.

The bill provides critical funding to modernize air traffic control. While our current system is second to none in safety, the FAA must accelerate its progress toward operating a more efficient system. A modern air traffic control system will be more convenient for travelers, it will save money, and it will clean the environment by reducing the amount of fuel used by aircraft.

The bill provides critical funding to improve air traffic certification services. These improvements can help aircraft manufacturers, including those in Arkansas, that are fighting to win in a competitive global market.

The bill provides critical highway funding that is consistent with the long-term highway bill we passed last year under the leadership of Senators INHOFE and BOXER. I am pleased that this bill includes a provision I offered to empower the State to designate a portion of Highway 67 in Arkansas, from North Little Rock to Walnut Ridge, as ''Future I–57.'' Arkansas has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to build an interstate-quality road, and we are now calling it what it is. The presence of an official interstate highway is one of the initial key factors that developers consider when determining where to make major investments such as building new factories.

Community leaders along this stretch of road shared their excitement about the future designation. Buck Layne, executive director for the Searcy Regional Chamber of Commerce, says this will improve the transportation network and expand economic development opportunities.

Jon Chadwell, executive director for the Newport Economic Development Commission, says this will open up opportunities to Arkansas business and give companies an even greater access to national and global markets.

Walnut Ridge mayor Charles Snapp says this designation will open a lot of doors, and Walnut Ridge aldermen voted this week to support this designation.

Resolutions of support for the I–57 designation have been passed by the Newport Economic Development Commission, as well as the chambers of commerce in Bald Knob, Cabot, Jacksonville, Lawrence County, Newport, Sherwood, and Searcy. Other expressions of support will be received in communities throughout the central Arkansas and northeast Arkansas regions.

This designation is an important step to make Arkansas a better connected State that is open for business. This bill also sets high priorities and provides critical funding through programs like community development block grants. These programs work because they allow decisions to be made at the local community level.

I appreciate the efforts to make sure rural States like Arkansas are not left behind by housing and development programs.

I compliment the chair and ranking member on working to address Member priorities under these programs.

We are also jointly considering the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill. Senators KIRK and TESTER have worked very hard to put together a good package for the Senate to debate. Their bill funds the VA at record levels and invests in priorities such as veterans health care, benefit claims processing, the Board of Veterans' Appeals, and the VA inspector general, as well as prosthetic research. It includes funding for projects to ensure military readiness and improve the quality of life for our military families.

I grew up in a military family, and I have been honored to serve on the Veterans' Affairs Committee since my first day in the House of Representatives. The needs of veterans are very important to me, and I am proud to support the work that Senator KIRK and Senator TESTER have done to provide funding for 2017. These are funding and policy priorities for both sides of the aisle.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation because it creates an environment that helps grow our economy, reins in spending, and takes care of our veterans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the work of the chairman and ranking member on the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee for their good work on this very important appropriations bill.

I recognize that, while we haven't had a multiple series of votes on amendments on this bill, I know the floor managers have been working aggressively to process amendments and make this appropriations bill—not only the T-HUD bill but also the MILCON bill—a good appropriations measure. So I thank my colleagues for their respective efforts, and I am pleased to see us processing appropriations bills here on the Senate floor.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. President, I wish to take a few minutes this evening to talk about the Affordable Care Act and some of the impacts that we are seeing in my State of Alaska. We referred to this as the ACA, the Affordable Care Act, but most of the folks, when I talk to them back home, call it the ''un-Affordable Care Act'' because we are not seeing how it is making health care insurance—any kind of care—more affordable.

Last year, nationally, we saw a dozen co-ops fail that were created by the ACA, which literally threw people into turmoil, leaving in question if they had any insurance at all.

UnitedHealth, one of the largest providers in the country, has been forced off the exchanges in numerous States.

Just last week we had the news back home that Moda Health was going to be withdrawing from the Alaska market in 2017. What that means is that we will be a State with only one option in the individual market next year. So what that means for the some 14,000 Alaskans who are currently on a Moda plan is that they are going to be forced to change insurers next year. But I guess it is an easy choice when you only have a choice of one on the individual market there.

Then, of course, just last week we saw signs that the administration's payments of the cost-share reduction were unconstitutional. So we can only assume that is going to further exacerbate problems.

This week in the Wall Street Journal, there was an article about the ever-shrinking market for rural areas. The article mentioned a small business owner in Kodiak, AK, a bookkeeper, who is worrying about what the price of premiums will be when you are left with only one option. She made this statement:

> It's going to be a monopoly, basically; ''here's the price, take it or leave it.''

That is what happens when you have just one.

As the market continues to fail in other States, we are seeing other States lose their options as well. Alabama and Wyoming are also now left with only one choice. More States may be facing this in the near future.

The Wall Street Journal article goes on to point out that the ''patchwork of coverage reflects continued instability in the individual market as companies shift their geographic footprints to avoid areas that have turned out to generate steep losses and focus on places that they believe that they can get their ACA business into the black.''

So what that means for States like Alaska that are very rural and that have some of the highest health care costs in the Nation: We are just not attractive enough to foster competition. At the end of the day, who suffers? It is the Alaskans. It is those who are seeking the care.

The administration says the market just needs to ''stabilize and evolve,'' but what about this bookkeeper in Kodiak? What about the educators out there? What about parents who are left wondering: What do we do in the meantime?

It used to be that the Federal Government broke up monopolies and worked to foster competition in order to benefit consumers, but now what we are seeing at least playing out in my State is, through bad law and failed policies, we see that same government creating de facto monopolies in the individual marketplace.

I find it deeply troubling that as these health insurance options continue to shrink, any hope of curbing the rapid increase of premium rates also disappears. We are constantly asked by our constituents: Are my premiums going to continue to increase? We are talking about monthly premiums in the State of Alaska amounting to $3,000 a month for a family. Think about that. That is not affordable in anybody's book. It is not beyond the realm of possibility given what we have already seen. Last year in Alaska, between Moda and Premera, the two that are covering on the individual market, the increases were over 30 percent, somewhere between 32 and 35 percent increases over the previous year.

I have been on the floor, and I have shared stories of hard-working Alaskans who are paying a couple of thousand dollars a month for the cheapest bronze plan that is available on the exchange. I have spoken about how the ACA has been called the single greatest threat to quality public education. The reason for that is our school districts are being faced with hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines under the Cadillac test when it is imposed. I have relayed stories from employers who are saying: I can't afford to expand my business. I won't expand my business because of the employer mandate—harming not only the businesses but the workers themselves.

The bottom line, and I hear it from all corners of the State, is that the ACA is not working for us in Alaska.

I had a group of Realtors from around the State visit me in my office here last week. One woman in the group said that she was paying $2,500 a month. She has a family of four. She has a $6,000 deductible for her coverage. She said: You know, it is really hard for us to keep making these payments every month. They don't qualify for the subsidy.

I talked to another young family from Eagle River who was forced to switch from Premera to Moda after the ACA passed because the premium increases were not sustainable, and even then, when they switched, they were paying $1,200 a month with a $10,000 deductible. So what happens when you have a deductible like that? You put off that health care.

But think about it. It just makes it so hard to run a business. It makes it so hard to pay for your day-to-day experiences.

Worse yet, for that family from Eagle River, they went from Premera to Moda because their premiums were too high. Now Moda is leaving, so they have to go back to the insurer that was too high before. This family is scrambling. What are they going do? How are they going to be able to afford insurance in the future?

As the costs continue to rise, these small businesses are wondering: How long do we keep our doors open if these costs continue at these rates?

In Anchorage, a couple who has Moda has been paying $2,500 a month, with a $10,000 deductible—an increase of $1,000 a month over their premiums for last year. Now they are going to be switching to the only company on the individual market in 2017. They are going to see yet another increase.

A woman in Anchorage whom we talked to has watched year after year as her rates increased from $500 a month to nearly $2,000 a month. She is basically holding her breath for what the 2017 premiums rates will hold. We don't know yet in Alaska. Because of the announcement from Moda, we are not sure what the increase will be coming from the other insurer.

More and more, I am hearing from folks who say that they feel it is just cheaper to simply not buy insurance, to pay the tax penalty and then hope and pray that nobody in the family gets sick. Hoping to not get sick is not a health plan. As more and more Alaskans are dropping out, costs for those who stay in go up, driving more to drop out, and you have this death spiral within the system.

The deeper we get into life under the ACA, the deeper Alaskans fall into a hole. The ACA has failed the people of our State. This one-size-fits-all approach rarely works for a State as diverse as Alaska. It certainly has not worked in the realm of health insurance.

This is not the only place where we are seeing the law failing. There is more that needs to be done to make the Affordable Care Act work for rural parts of the country that have specialized needs thanks to higher medical costs, lack of access, and now fewer insurance options.

We in Congress need to take a serious look at the trends we have seen and work on solutions that will provide the flexibility that is needed for the States to make a difference when it comes to access to affordable care.

I have consistently supported full repeal of the ACA. I voted to do so on several occasions now. But I have also recognized that it was going to be difficult, if not impossible, in this administration to do so. But I have supported steps that will reduce the burdens of the ACA and I think work to address some of the most harmful provisions in the law. One example is full repeal of the Cadillac tax I just mentioned. The Cadillac tax will only worsen conditions in Alaska, with nearly 62 percent of customers who will be facing that tax if the Cadillac tax were to be implemented. Again, I repeat, in our State, not only are our health care costs so high, but our insurance costs are so high.

Whether you are in what would be considered a Cadillac plan because of the benefits or it is just because you are paying so much for it, it is assumed that those benefits are good. Sixty-two percent of the folks in Alaska would be impacted by this tax. It is a prime example of the ACA hurting small, rural States, because so many of us have more expensive health care due to the remoteness and due to our lower population size. Then those States are forced to take money away from things, like our school districts, where they are trying to put the money into public education, into other services, to pay for the cost. So our State suffers, boroughs suffer, our schools suffer, and our Alaskan families suffer.

As we look to the end of this administration and looking to next year, I would hope that we can seriously address the problem that the ACA has created for so many areas of our country.

For rural States like Alaska, the approach to health care needs to focus on more than forcing people to just buy insurance and, unfortunately, buy expensive insurance. We need to work to find solutions to these issues, whether it be through the creation of a nationwide insurance pool so that policies are not limited to one State, as they are currently. Right now, as I say, Alaska is not a very attractive market. We have small numbers. We have high costs. Who is going to come? How are we going to get a greater pool?

We need to look more critically at how we improve the cost of transparency of medical procedures. We need to look critically at these special enrollment periods and see if people are finding loopholes that allow them to game the system.

Expanding both health savings and flexible spending accounts will allow people to save what they think they should and make the choices for themselves instead of the government forcing things on individuals.

When we think about those areas where we can save money through not spending it in the first place—an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure—we should be incentivizing people to live healthier lifestyles in order to prevent and bring down the incidence of chronic disease. Type 2 diabetes—largely preventible through lifestyle changes—costs an estimated $176 billion a year. Obesity-related illnesses cost an estimated $190 billion a year. A recent study found that a 10-percent drop in smokers could save $63 billion in health care costs per year. It makes zero sense to be paying providers to treat these problems after they have arisen rather than trying to focus on the front end, paying for lifestyle changes and case management that would significantly reduce the cost of treating these diseases.

I have been working to find solutions that will help support Alaska's rural needs, especially those related to access and workforce development because if we can improve the overall access to treatment and options to medical providers, we then take steps to reduce the cost of medical procedures.

I have supported the Family Health Care Accessibility Act that will improve the care provided by community health centers by enabling them to utilize volunteer primary care providers. Community health centers—I think so many of us recognize the benefits and the crucial role they serve in meeting the needs of rural and underserved communities, allowing patients to receive local treatment instead of being forced to travel far from home for treatment.

Steps like these that help to improve access are just some of the ways I think we should be rethinking our approach to health care in the broader sense as we seek to alleviate the burdens that have been imposed by the ACA.

I have continued over several Congresses now to introduce the Medicare Patient Empowerment Act. This is legislation that would give patients the

option to negotiate with their provider. Medicare would pay the typical fee the patient negotiates for the difference there, but we face a very unique situation in our State. Again, a one-size-fits-all prescription doesn't work for us. We have incredibly low reimbursement rates for Medicare in Alaska, so you have very few providers that will accept Medicare. When you are newly Medicare eligible or you come into the State, it is tough to find anybody who will see you.

If there is some flexibility to negotiate prices, what we are trying to do with this bill is cut through the red-tape, allow Medicare beneficiaries to benefit from increased access, and enable patients to have the relationships they have built with their physicians. We have a very fast-rising senior population in the State, and it is going to be increasingly important to make sure they have the option to seek the care they need.

I do not support compulsory health insurance but do believe individuals with preexisting conditions should receive care. As we discuss these important issues in the Senate, I continue to work to address—again—these issues that have presented themselves with implementation of the ACA. So working to a place where we fully repeal and replace the ACA is where we need to be.

There have been several Republican proposals that would not only replace this unworkable law but replace it with consumer-based reforms. Senator BURR of North Carolina, Senator HATCH of Utah, and Senator CASSIDY of Louisiana all have been working on important measures that take steps to get us to a place where what we are talking about is affordable health care, a reality that works for all Americans, whether you are in Alaska or you are in North Carolina.

Obviously, there is much work in front of us. Again, it is important to recognize the frustration so many are feeling as they are seeing their costs increase, their access going nowhere, and let them know we continue to work on these very difficult issues. Alaskans deserve it. Americans deserve it.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

MEMORIAL FOR FALLEN EDUCATORS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak for just a few moments about the Memorial for Fallen Educators in conjunction with the National Teachers Hall of Fame located on the campus of Emporia State University in Emporia, KS.

When someone asks the question, ''Other than your family, name a person who has made a difference in your life,'' the answer has never been my Senator, my Congressman. More often the response is a teacher. That answer speaks volumes about the influence of an educator on the lives of young people. Teachers fulfill a variety of roles by encouraging our children, instilling values, and challenging them. Too often we take this profession for granted, and the people who make education possible are teachers.

Each one of us remembers a teacher. We remember in the first grade or second grade when they helped us sound out the big words or guided our hands as we struggled to make out the shapes of letters.

We remember the middle school teacher or the gym teacher who taught us how to spike the volleyball or sink the winning hoop while playing in the playoffs. We remember the high school science teacher who helped us dissect frogs or build a box made of toothpicks that would protect the egg as it dropped from a two-story building.

Our teachers are our friends, our mentors, and our role models. The lessons they teach us stick with us for a long time after we have left their classrooms. Their jobs are never done, and educators know that often the last ringing bell of the afternoon, rather than signaling the end of their workday, begins the beginning of a new kind of work—grading homework, tutoring individual students, or prepping for the next day's lesson plan.

Educators work round-the-clock on behalf of the kids they instruct. They take on a job that requires more hours than there are in the day because they believe in their students and because they know how crucial their efforts are in seeing these students succeed. I believe we change the world one person at a time, and it happens in classrooms across Kansas and around the country every day.

Teachers often forfeit material gain for the thrill of seeing a student's eyes light up when they discover a new concept or grasp a new idea. Teachers have long understood they truly shape the world by their work, and their greatest product is an educated society.

Unfortunately, each day teachers walk into their classrooms they are also subject to threats of bullying or violence. Far too many educators have lost their lives in the line of their professional duty. Teachers have been killed at the hands of students, and many have been killed protecting their students from adults perpetrating violent acts.

To honor these slain teachers, the National Teachers Hall of Fame, under the leadership of the director, Carol Strickland, created the Memorial for Fallen Educators. The memorial, which was dedicated 2 years ago at Emporia State University, stands alongside the National Teachers Hall of Fame. I had the honor of visiting the site last September.

Already built and paid for, the memorial lists the names of educators across the country since 1764 who have lost their lives while working with students. It is owned and cared for by the National Teachers Hall of Fame and Emporia State University.

I introduced legislation last year that would designate the Memorial for Fallen Educators as a national memorial. The more than 100 fallen teachers whose names are etched in marble taught in schools across the country. As a nation, together we should recognize the incredible sacrifices they each made because of their dedication to educating young people—their dedication to caring, loving, and protecting young people.

This legislation has no cost to the taxpayer and private funds will be used to maintain the memorial. It simply brings the site—the only one in the United States dedicated to fallen educators—the national prestige it merits.

As the Senate considers the national memorials proposed for designation, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this worthy tribute to our fallen teachers. Anyone who has ever been inspired by an educator should visit the memorial and recognize and remember those honorable lives which have been lost.

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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 3967, 3992, 4011, 4024, AND 4042 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3896

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up en bloc and reported by number: amendment No. 3967, submitted by Senator PAUL; amendment No. 3992, submitted by Senator JOHNSON; amendment No. 4011, submitted by Senator NELSON; amendment No. 4024, submitted by Senator ISAKSON; and amendment No. 4042, submitted by Senator WARNER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendments en bloc by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS], for others, proposes amendments numbered 3967, 3992, 4011, 4024, and 4042 to amendment No. 3896.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3967

(Purpose: To provide for the identification of certain high priority corridors on the National Highway System and to include and designate certain route segments on the Interstate System)

On page 41, strike lines 12 through 25 and insert the following:

''(89) United States Route 67 from Interstate 40 in North Little Rock, Arkansas, to United States Route 412.

''(90) The Edward T. Breathitt Parkway from Interstate 24 to Interstate 69.''.

(b) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ROUTE SEGMENTS ON INTERSTATE SYSTEM.—Section 1105(e)(5)(A) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 is

amended in the first sentence by striking ''and subsection (c)(83)'' and inserting ''subsection (c)(83), subsection (c)(89), and subsection (c)(90)''.

(c) DESIGNATION.—Section 1105(e)(5)(C)(i) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 is amended by adding at the end the following: ''The route referred to in subsection (c)(89) is designated as Interstate Route I–57. The route referred to in subsection (c)(90) is designated as Interstate Route I–169.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 3992

(Purpose: To ensure timely access for Inspectors General to records, documents, and other materials)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to deny an Inspector General funded under this Act timely access to any records, documents, or other materials available to the department or agency over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), or to prevent or impede that Inspector General's access to such records, documents, or other materials, under any provision of law, except a provision of law that expressly refers to the Inspector General and expressly limits the Inspector General's right of access.

(b) A department or agency covered by this section shall provide its Inspector General with access to all such records, documents, and other materials in a timely manner.

(c) Each Inspector General shall ensure compliance with statutory limitations on disclosure relevant to the information provided by the establishment over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(d) Each Inspector General covered by this section shall report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 5 calendar days any failures to comply with this requirement.

AMENDMENT NO. 4011

(Purpose: To ensure the safety of properties covered under a housing assistance payment contract)

In division A, strike section 225 and insert the following:

SEC. 225. (a) Any entity receiving housing assistance payments shall maintain decent, safe, and sanitary conditions, as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (in this section referred to as the ''Secretary''), and comply with any standards under applicable State or local laws, rules, ordinances, or regulations relating to the physical condition of any property covered under a housing assistance payment contract.

(b) The Secretary shall take action under subsection (c) when a multifamily housing project with a section 8 contract or contract for similar project-based assistance—

(1) receives a Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) score of 30 or less;

(2) fails to certify in writing to the Secretary within 3 days that all Exigent Health and Safety deficiencies identified by the inspector at the project have been corrected; or

(3) receives a UPCS score between 31 and 59 and has received consecutive scores of less than 60 on UPCS inspections.

Such requirements shall apply to insured and noninsured projects with assistance attached to the units under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f), but do not apply to such units assisted under section 8(o)(13) (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(13)) or to public housing units assisted with capital or operating funds under section 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437g).

(c)(1) The Secretary shall notify the owner and provide an opportunity for response within 15 days after the results of the UPCS inspection are issued. If the violations remain, the Secretary shall develop a plan to bring the property into compliance within 30 days after the results of the UPCS inspection are issued and must provide the owner with a Notice of Default with a specified timetable, determined by the Secretary, for correcting all deficiencies. The Secretary must also provide a copy of the Notice of Default to the tenants, the local government, any mortgagees, and any contract administrator. If the owner's appeal results in a UPCS score of 60 or above, the Secretary may withdraw the Notice of Default.

(2) At the end of the time period for correcting all deficiencies specified in the Notice of Default, if the owner fails to fully correct such deficiencies, the Secretary may—

(A) require immediate replacement of project management with a management agent approved by the Secretary;

(B) impose civil money penalties, which shall be used solely for the purpose of supporting safe and sanitary conditions at applicable properties, as designated by the Secretary, with priority given to the tenants of the property affected by the penalty;

(C) abate the section 8 contract, including partial abatement, as determined by the Secretary, until all deficiencies have been corrected;

(D) pursue transfer of the project to an owner, approved by the Secretary under established procedures, which will be obligated to promptly make all required repairs and to accept renewal of the assistance contract as long as such renewal is offered;

(E) transfer the existing section 8 contract to another project or projects and owner or owners;

(F) pursue exclusionary sanctions, including suspensions or debarments from Federal programs;

(G) seek judicial appointment of a receiver to manage the property and cure all project deficiencies or seek a judicial order of specific performance requiring the owner to cure all project deficiencies;

(H) work with the owner, lender, or other related party to stabilize the property in an attempt to preserve the property through compliance, transfer of ownership, or an infusion of capital provided by a third-party that requires time to effectuate; or

(I) take any other regulatory or contractual remedies available as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Secretary.

(d) The Secretary shall also take appropriate steps to ensure that project-based contracts remain in effect, subject to the exercise of contractual abatement remedies to assist relocation of tenants for major threats to health and safety after written notice to and informed consent of the affected tenants and use of other remedies set forth above. To the extent the Secretary determines, in consultation with the tenants and the local government, that the property is not feasible for continued rental assistance payments under such section 8 or other programs, based on consideration of (1) the costs of rehabilitating and operating the property and all available Federal, State, and local resources, including rent adjustments under section 524 of the Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act of 1997 (''MAHRAA'') and (2) environmental conditions that cannot be remedied in a cost-effective fashion, the Secretary may, in consultation with the tenants of that property, contract for project-based rental assistance payments with an owner or owners of other existing housing properties, or provide other rental assistance.

(e) The Secretary shall report quarterly on all properties covered by this section that are assessed through the Real Estate Assessment Center and have UPCS physical inspection scores of less than 60 or have received an unsatisfactory management and occupancy review within the past 36 months. The report shall include—

(1) the enforcement actions being taken to address such conditions, including imposition of civil money penalties and termination of subsidies, and identify properties that have such conditions multiple times;

(2) actions that the Department of Housing and Urban Development is taking to protect tenants of such identified properties; and

(3) any administrative or legislative recommendations to further improve the living conditions at properties covered under a housing assistance payment contract.

AMENDMENT NO. 4024

(Purpose: To direct the Secretary of Transportation to issue a final rule requiring the use of speed limiting devices on heavy trucks not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act)

In division A, on page 49, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

SEC. 142. Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall issue a final rule requiring the use of speed limiting devices on trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating in excess of 26,000 pounds.

AMENDMENT NO. 4042

(Purpose: To provide additional funds for the National Park Service for certain projects)

On page 37, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

SEC. 122. (a) TRANSFER OF AMOUNTS.—

(1) STATE OF VIRGINIA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the total amount apportioned to the State of Virginia under section 104 of title 23, United States Code, for fiscal year 2017, the Secretary of Transportation shall, by the later of November 30, 2016, or 30 days after the enactment of this Act, transfer to the National Park Service—

(i) an amount equal to—

(I) $30,000,000; multiplied by

(II) the ratio that—

(aa) the amount apportioned to the State of Virginia under such section 104; bears to

(bb) the combined amount apportioned to the State of Virginia and the District of Columbia under such section 104; and

(ii) an amount of obligation limitation equal to the amount calculated under clause (i).

(B) SOURCE AND AMOUNT.—For purpose of the transfer under subparagraph (A), the State of Virginia shall select at the discretion of the State—

(i) the programs (among those for which funding is apportioned as described in that subparagraph) from which to transfer the amount specified in that subparagraph; and

(ii) the amount to transfer from each of those programs (equal in aggregate to the amount calculated under subparagraph (A)(i)).

(2) DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the total amount apportioned to the District of Columbia under section 104 of title 23, United States Code, for fiscal year 2017, the Secretary of Transportation shall, by the later of November 30, 2016, or 30 days after the enactment of this Act, transfer to the National Park Service—

(i) an amount equal to—

(I) $30,000,000; multiplied by

(II) the ratio that—

(aa) the amount apportioned to the District of Columbia under such section 104; bears to

(bb) the combined amount apportioned to the State of Virginia and the District of Columbia under such section 104; and

(ii) an amount of obligation limitation equal to the amount calculated under clause (i).

(B) SOURCE AND AMOUNT.—For purpose of the transfer under subparagraph (A), the District of Columbia shall select at the discretion of the District—

(i) the programs (among those for which funding is apportioned as described in that subparagraph) from which to transfer the amount specified in that subparagraph; and

(ii) the amount to transfer from each of those programs (equal in aggregate to the amount calculated under subparagraph (A)(i)).

(3) FEDERAL LANDS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM.—Of the amounts otherwise made available to the National Park Service under section 203 of title 23, United States Code, not less than 10 percent shall be set aside for purposes of this section.

(b) ELIGIBILITY AND FEDERAL SHARE.—The amounts under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) available to the National Park Service only for projects that—

(A) are eligible under section 203 of title 23, United States Code;

(B) are located on bridges on the National Highway System that were originally constructed before 1945 and are in poor condition; and

(C) each have an estimated total project cost of not less than $150,000,000; and

(2) subject to the Federal share described in section 201(b)(7)(A) of title 23, United States Code.

(c) OTHER FUNDS AND OBLIGATION LIMITATION.—Any funds and obligation limitation transferred under subsection (a) shall be in addition to funds or obligation limitation otherwise made available to the National Park Service under sections 203 and 204 of title 23, United States Code.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now vote on these amendments en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on these amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question occurs on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 3967, 3992, 4011, 4024, and 4042) were agreed to en bloc.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 3997; 3998; 3933; 4030; 4008; 3920; 3969; 3935, AS MODIFIED; 4038; 4043; 3980; 3944; 3993; 3910; 4005; 4029; AND 4023 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3896

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up en bloc and reported by number: Kirk No. 3997; Tester No. 3998; Perdue No. 3933; Mikulski No. 4030; Daines No. 4008; Brown No. 3920; Inhofe No. 3969; Boxer No. 3935, as modified; Flake No. 4038; Manchin No. 4043; Flake No. 3980; Feinstein No. 3944; Johnson No. 3993; Klobuchar No. 3910; Heller No. 4005; Durbin No. 4029; and Sasse No. 4023.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS], for others, proposes amendments numbered 3997; 3998; 3933; 4030; 4008; 3920; 3969; 3935, as modified; 4038; 4043; 3980; 3944; 3993; 3910; 4005; 4029; and 4023 en bloc to amendment No. 3896.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3997

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the inspection of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. INSPECTION OF KITCHENS AND FOOD SERVICE AREAS AT MEDICAL FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide for the conduct of inspections of kitchens and food service areas at each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the same standards for kitchens and food service areas at hospitals in the private sector are being met at kitchens and food service areas at medical facilities of the Department.

(b) AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations under which the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations conducts the inspections required under subsection (a).

(2) ALTERNATE ORGANIZATION.—If the Secretary is unable to enter into an agreement described in paragraph (1) with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations on terms acceptable to the Secretary, the Secretary shall seek to enter into such an agreement with another appropriate organization that—

(A) is not part of the Federal Government;

(B) operates as a not-for-profit entity; and

(C) has expertise and objectivity comparable to that of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations.

(c) REMEDIATION PLAN.—

(1) INITIAL FAILURE.—If a kitchen or food service area of a medical facility of the Department is determined pursuant to an inspection conducted under subsection (a) not to meet the standards for kitchens and food service areas in hospitals in the private sector, that medical facility fails the inspection and the Secretary shall—

(A) implement a remediation plan for that medical facility within 48 hours; and

(B) Conduct a second inspection under subsection (a) at that medical facility within 7 days of the failed inspection.

(2) SECOND FAILURE.—If a medical facility of the Department fails the second inspection conducted under paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary shall close the kitchen or food service area at that medical facility that did not meet the standards for kitchens and food service areas in hospitals in the private sector until remediation is completed and all kitchens and food service areas at that medical facility meet such standards.

(3) PROVISION OF FOOD.—If a kitchen or food service area is closed at a medical facility of the Department pursuant to paragraph (2), the Director of the Veterans Integrated Service Network in which the medical facility is located shall enter into a contract with a vendor approved by the General Services Administration to provide food at the medical facility.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) QUARTERLY.—Not less frequently than quarterly, the Director of each Veterans Integrated Service Network shall submit to Congress a report on inspections conducted under this section during that quarter at medical facilities of the Department under the jurisdiction of that Director.

(2) SUBSEQUENT PERIOD.—A Director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network may submit to Congress the report described in paragraph (1) not less frequently than semiannually if the Director does not report any failed inspections for the one-year period preceding the submittal of the report.

SEC. 252. INSPECTION OF MOLD ISSUES AT MEDICAL FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide for the inspection of mold issues at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations under which the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations conducts the inspections required under subsection (a).

(2) ALTERNATE ORGANIZATION.—If the Secretary is unable to enter into an agreement described in paragraph (1) with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations on terms acceptable to the Secretary, the Secretary shall seek to enter into such an agreement with another appropriate organization that—

(A) is not part of the Federal Government;

(B) operates as a not-for-profit entity; and

(C) has expertise and objectivity comparable to that of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations.

(c) REMEDIATION PLAN.—If a medical facility of the Department is determined pursuant to an inspection conducted under subsection (a) to have a mold issue, the Secretary shall—

(1) implement a remediation plan for that medical facility within 48 hours; and

(2) Conduct a second inspection under subsection (a) at that medical facility within 90 days of the initial inspection.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) QUARTERLY.—Not less frequently than quarterly, the Director of each Veterans Integrated Service Network shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Congress a report on inspections conducted under this section during that quarter at medical facilities of the Department under the jurisdiction of that Director.

(2) SUBSEQUENT PERIOD.—A Director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network may submit to Congress the report described in paragraph (1) not less frequently than semiannually if the Director does not report any mold issues for the one-year period preceding the submittal of the report.

AMENDMENT NO. 3998

(Purpose: To provide for coverage under the beneficiary travel program of the Department of Veterans Affairs of certain disabled veterans for travel in connection with certain special disabilities rehabilitation)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. COVERAGE UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFICIARY TRAVEL PROGRAM OF TRAVEL IN CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN SPECIAL DISABILITIES REHABILITATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 111(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(G) A veteran with vision impairment, a veteran with a spinal cord injury or disorder, or a veteran with double or multiple amputations whose travel is in connection with care provided through a special disabilities rehabilitation program of the Department (including programs provided by spinal cord injury centers, blind rehabilitation centers, and prosthetics rehabilitation centers) if such care is provided—

''(i) on an in-patient basis; or

''(ii) during a period in which the Secretary provides the veteran with temporary lodging at a facility of the Department to make such care more accessible to the veteran.''.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the beneficiary travel program under section 111 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), that includes the following:

(1) The cost of the program.

(2) The number of veterans served by the program.

(3) Such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the first day of the first fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 3933

(Purpose: To require a report on modernizing and replacing hangers of the Army's Combat Aviation Brigade)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a detailed description of the age and condition of the aircraft maintenance hangars of the Army's Combat Aviation Brigade;

(2) an identification of the most deficient such hangers;

(3) a plan to modernize or replace such hangars; and

(4) a description of the resources required to modernize or replace such hangers.

AMENDMENT NO. 4030

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide access to therapeutic listening devices to veterans struggling with mental health related problems, substance abuse, or traumatic brain injury)

On page 217, line 4 of Title 2 in Division B, strike the period and insert '': *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide access to therapeutic listening devices to veterans struggling with mental health related problems, substance abuse, or traumatic brain injury.''

AMENDMENT NO. 4008

(Purpose: To require a report on the use of defense access road funding to build alternate routes for military equipment traveling to missile launch facilities)

At the appropriate place in title I of division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall conduct a study and submit to Congress a report on the use of defense access road funding to build alternate routes for military equipment traveling to missile launch facilities, taking into consideration the location of local populations, security risks, safety, and impacts of weather.

AMENDMENT NO. 3920

(Purpose: To extend the requirement of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on the capacity of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the specialized treatment and rehabilitative needs of disabled veterans)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT ON CAPACITY OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE FOR SPECIALIZED TREATMENT AND REHABILITATIVE NEEDS OF DISABLED VETERANS

SEC. 251. Section 1706(b)(5)(A) of title 38, United States Code, is amended, in the first sentence, by striking ''through 2008''.

AMENDMENT NO. 3969

(Purpose: To require that amounts be made available to Directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks to assess, evaluate, and improve the health care delivery by and business operations of medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. From the amount made available in this title under the heading ''Medical Support and Compliance'', up to $18,000,000 shall be made available for Directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks to contract with appropriate non-Department of Veterans Affairs entities to assess, evaluate, and improve the health care delivery by and business operations of medical centers of the Department under the jurisdiction of each such Director.

AMENDMENT NO. 3935, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to treat certain marriage and family therapists as qualified to serve as marriage and family therapists in the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

(a) Not later than 180 days after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall begin an assessment of whether the hiring of marriage and family therapists trained at Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education accredited institutions is adversely impacting the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to hire marriage and family therapists.

(b) The assessment should also include what steps the Department of Veterans Affairs is taking to increase hiring of marriage and family therapists.

(c) Not later than one year after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit the report to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees.

AMENDMENT NO. 4038

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs of an inspection or audit of the use of a grant to renovate a veteran's cemetery in Guam)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Not later than September 30, 2017, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) provide for the conduct by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs of an inspection or audit of the use of Federal award GU1103 in the amount of $3,265,487 that was awarded in 2013 to renovate a veteran's cemetery in Guam under the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including—

(A) an itemized accounting of the use of such award; or

(B) if no such itemized accounting is possible, an explanation of why any amounts in connection with such award are unaccounted for;

(2) submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the results on the inspection or audit conducted under paragraph (1); and

(3) publish the results on the inspection or audit conducted under paragraph (1) on a publicly available Internet website of the Department.

AMENDMENT NO. 4043

(Purpose: To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use amounts appropriated under this Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve the veteran-to-staff ratio for each program of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in this title to ensure that the ratio of veterans to full-time employment equivalents within any program of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, does not exceed 125 veterans to one full-time employment equivalent.

(b) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the programs of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, including—

(1) an assessment of the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program; and

(2) recommendations for such action as the Secretary considers necessary to reduce the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program.

AMENDMENT NO. 3980

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan on modernizing the system of the Veterans Health Administration for processing claims by non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers for reimbursement for health care provided to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Not later than September 30, 2017, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a plan on modernizing the

system of the Veterans Health Administration for processing claims by non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers for reimbursement for health care provided to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary.

AMENDMENT NO. 3944

(Purpose: To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility projects for which appropriations are being made for fiscal year 2016)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. AUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016, which was passed by the Senate on November 10, 2015, without a single vote cast against the bill, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 include the following amounts to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs:

(A) $35,000,000 to make seismic corrections to Building 208 at the West Los Angeles Medical Center of the Department in Los Angeles, California, which, according to the Department, is a building that is designated as having an exceptionally high risk of sustaining substantial damage or collapsing during an earthquake.

(B) $158,000,000 to provide for the construction of a new research building, site work, and demolition at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

(C) $161,000,000 to replace Building 133 with a new community living center at the Long Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which, according to the Department, is a building that is designated as having an extremely high risk of sustaining major damage during an earthquake.

(D) $468,800,000 for construction projects that are critical to the Department for ensuring health care access and safety at medical facilities in Louisville, Kentucky, Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri, Perry Point, Maryland, American Lake, Washington, Alameda, California, and Livermore, California.

(2) The Department is unable to obligate or expend the amounts described in paragraph (1), other than for construction design, because the Department lacks an explicit authorization by an Act of Congress pursuant to section 8104(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code, to carry out the major medical facility projects described in such paragraph.

(3) Among the major medical facility projects described in paragraph (1), three are critical seismic safety projects in California.

(4) Every day that the critical seismic safety projects described in paragraph (3) are delayed increases the risk of a life-threatening building failure in the case of a major seismic event.

(5) According to the United States Geological Survey—

(A) California has more than a 99 percent chance of experiencing an earthquake of magnitude 6.7 or greater in the next 30 years;

(B) even earthquakes of less severity than magnitude 6.7 can cause life threatening damage to seismically unsafe buildings; and

(C) in California, earthquakes of magnitude 6.0 or greater occur on average once every 1.2 years.

(6) On January 20, 2016, the Senate passed this legislation by unanimous consent as S. 2422, 114th Congress.

(b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects, with each project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed the amount specified for that project:

(1) Seismic corrections to buildings, including retrofitting and replacement of high-risk buildings, in San Francisco, California, in an amount not to exceed $180,480,000.

(2) Seismic corrections to facilities, including facilities to support homeless veterans, at the medical center in West Los Angeles, California, in an amount not to exceed $105,500,000.

(3) Seismic corrections to the mental health and community living center in Long Beach, California, in an amount not to exceed $287,100,000.

(4) Construction of an outpatient clinic, administrative space, cemetery, and columbarium in Alameda, California, in an amount not to exceed $87,332,000.

(5) Realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California, in an amount not to exceed $194,430,000.

(6) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, in an amount not to exceed $150,000,000.

(7) Construction of a replacement community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, in an amount not to exceed $92,700,000.

(8) Seismic corrections and other renovations to several buildings and construction of a specialty care building in American Lake, Washington, in an amount not to exceed $16,260,000.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 or the year in which funds are appropriated for the Construction, Major Projects, account, $1,113,802,000 for the projects authorized in subsection (b).

(d) LIMITATION.—The projects authorized in subsection (b) may only be carried out using—

(1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2016 pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (c);

(2) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation;

(3) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation;

(4) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for fiscal year 2016 for a category of activity not specific to a project;

(5) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 for a category of activity not specific to a project; and

(6) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2016 for a category of activity not specific to a project.

AMENDMENT NO. 3993

(Purpose: To ensure timely access for Inspectors General to records, documents, and other materials)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to deny an Inspector General funded under this Act timely access to any records, documents, or other materials available to the department or agency over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), or to prevent or impede that Inspector General's access to such records, documents, or other materials, under any provision of law, except a provision of law that expressly refers to the Inspector General and expressly limits the Inspector General's right of access.

(b) A department or agency covered by this section shall provide its Inspector General with access to all such records, documents, and other materials in a timely manner.

(c) Each Inspector General shall ensure compliance with statutory limitations on disclosure relevant to the information provided by the establishment over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(d) Each Inspector General covered by this section shall report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 5 calendar days any failures to comply with this requirement.

AMENDMENT NO. 3910

(Purpose: To authorize the use of amounts for Medical Services to be used to furnish rehabilitative equipment and human-powered vehicles to certain disabled veterans)

On page 238, line 22, insert after ''equipment'' the following: ''(including rehabilitative equipment for veterans entitled to a prosthetic appliance under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, which may include recreational sports equipment that provides an adaption or accommodation for the veteran, regardless of whether such equipment is intentionally designed to be adaptive equipment, such as hand cycles, recumbent bicycles, medically adapted upright bicycles, and upright bicycles)''.

AMENDMENT NO. 4005

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the progress of the Department of Veterans Affairs in completing the Rural Veterans Burial Initiative)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report that contains an update on the progress of the Department of Veterans Affairs in completing the Rural Veterans Burial Initiative and the expected timeline for completion of such initiative.

AMENDMENT NO. 4029

(Purpose: To make funds available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire Medical Center Directors and employees for other management and clinical positions with vacancies)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Of the funds made available in this title for fiscal year 2017 for medical support and compliance, not less than $21,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire Medical Center Directors and employees for other management and clinical positions that are critical to the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to fill vacancies in such positions.

AMENDMENT NO. 4023

(Purpose: To protect congressional oversight of the executive branch by ensuring individuals may speak with Congress)

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this title may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement related to resolving a dispute or claim with an individual that would restrict in any way the individual from speaking to members of Congress or their staff on any topic not otherwise prohibited from disclosure by Federal law.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now vote on these amendments en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. I know of no further debate on these amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 3997; 3998; 3933; 4030; 4008; 3920; 3969; 3935, as modified; 4038; 4043; 3980; 3944; 3993; 3910; 4005; 4029; and 4023) were agreed to en bloc.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 11:15 a.m. on Thursday, May 19, all postcloture time be considered expired on the Blunt-Murray amendment No. 3900; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Collins substitute amendment No. 3896, the Cornyn amendment No. 3899 and the Nelson amendment No. 3898 be withdrawn; that it be in order for Senator COLLINS or her designee to call up amendment No. 3970, and that there be no second degrees in order to the Collins amendment No. 3970 or the Lee amendment No. 3897.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. For the information of all Senators, at 11:15 a.m. tomorrow, the Senate is expected to proceed to three rollcall votes: a motion to waive the budget with respect to the Blunt-Murray Zika amendment, adoption of the Blunt amendment, and cloture on the pending substitute. Senators should expect additional votes to complete action on the bill and any pending amendments during tomorrow's session of the Senate.

MORNING BUSINESS

CBO COST ESTIMATE—S. 329

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in compliance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has obtained from the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the costs of S. 329, Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Act, as reported from the committee. The full estimate is available on CBO's Web site, www.cbo.gov.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the summary of the estimate be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

S. 329—LOWER FARMINGTON RIVER AND SALMON BROOK WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ACT

(January 15, 2016)

S. 329 would designate segments of the Lower Farmington Rivers and Salmon Brook in Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Under the legislation, the National Park Service (NPS) would administer the river segments in partnership with an advisory committee composed of local representatives. Based on the cost of similar management partnerships in the region, CBO estimates that NPS would provide about $170,000 annually to the advisory committee to manage the river segments. Thus, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost about $1 million over the 2016–2020 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Enacting S. 329 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting S. 329 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year period beginning in 2026.

S. 329 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Marin Burnett. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

CBO COST ESTIMATE—S. 556

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in compliance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has obtained from the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the costs of S. 556, Sportsmen's Act of 2015, as reported from the committee. The full estimate is available on CBO's Web site, www.cbo.gov.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the summary of the cost estimate be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

S. 556—SPORTSMEN'S ACT OF 2015

(May 18, 2016)

Summary: S. 556 would amend existing laws and establish new laws related to the management of federal lands. It would authorize the sale of certain federal land and permit the proceeds from those sales to be spent. The bill also would establish a fund to carry out deferred maintenance projects on lands administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and would permanently authorize the transfer of funds to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

CBO estimates that enacting the bill would increase both direct spending and offsetting receipts (which are treated as reductions in direct spending) by $65 million and $80 million respectively over the 2017–2026 period; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. Enacting S. 556 would not affect revenues. Based on information from the affected agencies, CBO also estimates that implementing the legislation would cost $486 million over the 2017–2021 period, assuming appropriation of the amounts authorized to be deposited into the NPS Maintenance and Revitalization Fund.

CBO estimates that enacting S. 556 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

S. 556 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would benefit state, local, and tribal agencies by authorizing federal grants to support conservation, historic preservation, and recreational activities. Any costs would be incurred by those entities, including matching contributions, would be incurred voluntarily.

CBO COST ESTIMATE—S. 782

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in compliance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has obtained from the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the costs of S. 782, Grand Canyon Bison Management Act, as reported from the committee. The full estimate is available on CBO's Web site, www.cbo.gov.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the summary of the cost estimate be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

S. 782—GRAND CANYON BISON MANAGEMENT ACT

(January 8, 2016)

S. 782 would require the National Park Service (NPS) to publish a management plan to humanely reduce the population of bison in the Grand Canyon National Park within 180 days of enactment of the legislation. Based on information provided by the NPS, CBO expects that publishing the management plan within that timeframe would require the agency to expedite its ongoing planning process and increase discretionary costs by an insignificant amount.

Enacting S. 782 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting S. 782 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year period beginning in 2026.

S. 782 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Marin Burnett. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

CBO COST ESTIMATE—S. 1592

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in compliance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has obtained from the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the costs of S. 1592, a bill to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest, as reported from the committee. The full estimate is available on CBO's Web site, www.cbo.gov.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the summary of the cost estimate be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

S. 1592—A BILL TO CLARIFY THE DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND UNDER THE NORTHERN ARIZONA LAND EXCHANGE AND VERDE RIVER BASIN PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 2005 TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL LAND IN THE KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST

(December 22, 2015)

S. 1592 would amend current law to clarify that the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to convey about 238 acres of federal land to a summer camp in Arizona. Under current law, the Secretary is authorized to convey 212 acres to the camp.

Based on information provided by the Forest Service, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would not affect the federal budget. Because CBO expects that the acreage that could be conveyed under the bill would not generate any income over the next 10 years, enacting S. 1592 would not affect direct spending. Enacting the bill also would not affect revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting S. 1592 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year period beginning in 2026.

S. 1592 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). The bill would modify the terms of a land exchange between the federal government and a private business, which would have a small incidental effect on property taxes collected by the state and local governments in Arizona. That effect, however, would not result from an intergovernmental mandate as defined in UMRA.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Jeff LaFave (for federal costs) and Jon Sperl (for intergovernmental mandates). The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

CBO COST ESTIMATE—S. 2069

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in compliance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has obtained from the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the costs of S. 2069, Mount Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act, as reported from the committee. The full estimate is available on CBO's Web site, www.cbo.gov.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the summary of the estimate be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

S. 2069—A BILL TO AMEND THE OMNIBUS PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2009 TO MODIFY PROVISIONS RELATING TO CERTAIN LAND EXCHANGES IN THE MT. HOOD WILDERNESS IN THE STATE OF OREGON

(January 5, 2016)

S. 2069 would amend current law to modify the terms of a land exchange between the Forest Service and the Mt. Hood Meadows ski area in Oregon. The bill would reduce the amount of land the agency would be authorized to convey to the ski area from 120 acres to 107 acres. The bill also contains provisions aimed at expediting the exchange.

Based on information provided by the Forest Service, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would not affect the federal budget. Because CBO expects that enacting the bill would not affect whether the exchange would occur or when it would take place, we estimate that enacting the bill would not affect direct spending. Enacting the bill also would not affect revenues. Therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting S. 2069 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year period beginning in 2026.

S. 2069 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jeff LaFave. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

FEDERAL MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS AND RESOURCES

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I wish to speak about a column written by Ms. Karen Budd-Falen, a Wyoming attorney, entitled ''Major Regulatory Expansion of ESA Listing and Critical Habitat Designation.'' The article was published in the Wyoming Livestock Roundup on March 19, 2016.

Through a variety of rules, regulations, and seemingly innocuous proposals, agencies under this administration have gone outside their congressionally given authorities and willfully ignored the intent of the very statutes that authorize Federal management of public lands and resources.

In the article, Karen raises a series of concerns, concerns I share, about the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's calculated efforts to change key parts of the Endangered Species Act. Through a series of administrative revisions, the Service has substantially changed the way critical habitat is designated for species listed for protection under the act. Critical habitat, as Karen recognizes in her article, is ''. . . generally habitat upon which the species depends for survival. Importantly critical habitat can include both private and/or federal land and water.'' Karen outlines that, through piecemeal revisions, the Service has effectively removed all limitations of this definition.

No longer will the Service be limited to enact Federal policy on a precise area where a species lives. Now a Federal agency may implement any number of restrictions on a ''significant portion'' of the range a species may or may not inhabit, for an undetermined period of time. The Service has made it clear that even ''potential habitat'' can be controlled, even if it is unclear whether the species will ever use that area.

Karen also raises concerns about notification of private landowners, consideration of economic impacts, and the undeniable link between changes the Service has made and an increase in Federal permitting. The link between these changes and the intent of this administration is clear: any action taken on any land, no matter whether private or public, can now be considered under Federal jurisdiction if the Service so chooses. Not only is this arbitrary, but it is a clear case of Federal overreach.

In Wyoming, we know that the most successful habitat conservation efforts are conducted by people on the ground who have a vested interest in the health of wildlife and the landscape they inhabit. These people are local business owners, local landowners, ranchers, and State experts. These people understand both the needs of the landscape and the scope of appropriate conservation efforts, things that Washington officials seemingly fail to grasp or willfully ignore.

Unfortunately, the alarm that Karen has sounded is one of many currently deafening the American people. Karen has likened the Service's critical habitat reforms to the Environmental Protection Agency's controversial waters of the United States campaign. The comparison is apt. This administration has perpetuated a culture of Big Government by ignoring the biological, economic, and social realities of its irresponsible policies.

Federal actions such as this dilute the effectiveness of successful conservation efforts and create limitless uncertainty for private landowners. I urge my colleagues to continue to stand with rural Americans who must not bear the brunt of irresponsible Federal overreach.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the article written by Karen Budd-Falen.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wyoming Livestock Roundup; Mar. 19, 2016]

MAJOR REGULATORY EXPANSION OF ESA LISTING AND CRITICAL HABITAT DESIGNATION

(By Karen Budd-Falen)

While private property owners were vehemently protesting the EPA's expansion of jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries, collectively FWS, were bit-by-bit expanding the federal government's overreach on private property rights and federal grazing permits through the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This expansion is embodied in the release of four separate final rules and two final policies that the FWS admits will result in listing more species and expanding designated critical habitat.

To understand the expansiveness of the new policies and regulations, a short discussion of the previous regulations may help. Prior to the Obama changes, a species was listed as threatened or endangered based upon the ''best scientific and commercial data available.'' With regard to species that are potentially threatened or endangered ''throughout a significant portion of its range'' but not all of the species'' range, only those species within that ''significant portion of the range'' are listed not all species throughout the entire range.

Once the listing is completed, FWS is mandated to designate critical habitat. Critical habitat is generally habitat upon which the species depends for survival. Importantly critical habitat can include both private and/or federal land and water. Critical habitat is

to be based upon the ''best scientific and commercial data available'' and is to include the ''primary constituent elements'' (PCEs) for the species. PCEs are the elements the species needs for breeding, feeding and sheltering. Final critical habitat designations are to be published with legal descriptions so private landowners would know whether their private property or water was within or outside designated boundaries. Critical habitat designations are also made with consideration of the economic impacts. Under the ESA, although the FWS cannot consider the economic impacts of listing a species, all other economic impacts are to be considered when designating critical habitat, and if the economic impacts in an area are too great, the area could be excluded as critical habitat as long as the exclusion did not cause extinction of the species.

With regard to the critical habitat designation itself, critical habitat determinations are made in two stages. First, the FWS considers the currently occupied habitat and determines if that habitat (1) contains the PCEs for the species and (2) is sufficient for protection of the species. Second, the FWS looks at the unoccupied habitat for the species and makes the same determinations, i.e., (1) whether areas of unoccupied habitat contain the necessary PCEs and (2) if including this additional land or water as critical habitat was necessary for protection of the species. The FWS then considers whether the economic costs of including some of the areas are so high that the areas should be excluded from the critical habitat designation. In simplest terms, FWS would weigh or balance the benefits of designation of certain areas of critical habitat against the regulatory burdens and economic costs of designation and could exclude discreet areas from a critical habitat designation so long as exclusion did not cause species extinction. This was called the ''exclusion analysis.''

Starting with a new 2012 rule and extending to the 2015 rules and policy, those considerations have all changed, and in fact, FWS has admitted that the new rules will result in more land and water being included in critical habitat designations.

The first major change is the inclusion of ''the principals of conservation biology'' as part of the ''best scientific and commercial data available.'' Conservation biology was not created until the 1980s and has been described by some scientists as ''agenda-driven'' or ''goal-oriented'' biology.

Second, the new Obama policy has changed regarding a listing species ''throughout a significant portion of its range.'' Now, rather than listing species within the range where the problem lies, all species throughout the entire range will be listed as threatened or endangered.

Third, based upon the principals of conservation biology, including indirect or circumstantial information, critical habitat designations will be greatly expanded. Under the new regulations, FWS will initially consider designation of both occupied and unoccupied habitat, including habitat with potential PCEs. In other words, not only is FWS considering habitat that is or may be used by the species, FWS will consider habitat that may develop PCBs sometime in the future. There is no time limit on when such future development of PCEs will occur, or what types of events have to occur so that the habitat will develop PCEs. FWS will then look outside occupied and unoccupied habitat to decide if the habitat will develop PCEs in the future and should be designated as critical habitat now. FWS has determined that critical habitat can include temporary or periodic habitat, ephemeral habitat, potential habitat and migratory habitat, even if that habitat is currently unusable by the species.

Fourth, FWS has also determined that it will no longer publish the text or legal descriptions or GIS coordinates for critical habitat. Rather it will only publish maps of the critical habitat designation. Given the small size of the Federal Register, I do not think this will adequately notify landowners whether their private property is included or excluded from a critical habitat designation.

Fifth, FWS has significantly limited what economic impacts are considered as part of the critical habitat designation. According to a Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, although the economic impacts are not to be considered as part of the listing process, once a species was listed, if FWS could not determine whether the economic impact came from listing or critical habitat, the cost should be included in the economic analysis. In other words, only those costs that were solely based on listing were excluded from the economic analysis. In contrast, the Ninth Circuit Court took the opposite view and determined that only economic costs that were solely attributable to critical habitat designations were to be included. Rather than requesting the U.S. Supreme Court make a consistent ruling among the courts, FWS simply recognized this circuit split for almost 15 years. However, on Aug. 28, 2013, FWS issued a final rule that determined that the Ninth Circuit Court was ''correct'' and regulatorily determined that only economic costs attributable solely to the critical habitat designation would be analyzed. This rule substantially reduces the determination of the cost of critical habitat designation because FWS can claim that almost all costs are based on the listing of the species because if not for the listing, there would be no need for critical habitat.

Sixth, FWS has determined that while completing the economic analysis is mandatory, the consideration of whether habitat should be excluded based on economic considerations is discretionary. In other words, under the new policy, FWS is no longer required to consider whether areas should be excluded from critical habitat designation based upon economic costs and burdens.

The problem with these new rules is what it means if private property or federal lands are designated as critical habitat or the designated habitat only has the potential to develop PCEs. Even if the species is not present in the designated critical habitat, a ''take'' of a species can occur through ''adverse modification of critical habitat.'' For private land, that may include stopping stream diversions because the water is needed in downstream critical habitat for a fish species or that haying practices, such as cutting of invasive species to protect hay fields, are stopped because it will prevent the area from developing PCEs in the future that may support a species. It could include stopping someone from putting on fertilizer or doing other crop management on a farm field because of a concern with runoff into downstream designated habitat. Designation of an area as critical habitat—even if that area does not contain PCEs now—will absolutely require more federal permitting, i.e. Section 7 consultation, for things like crop plans or conservation plans or anything else requiring a federal permit. In fact, one of the new regulations issued by Obama concludes that ''adverse modification of critical habitat'' can include ''alteration of the quantity or quality'' of habitat that precludes or ''significantly delays'' the capacity of the habitat to develop PCEs over time.

While the agriculture community raised a huge alarm over the waters of the U.S., FWS was quietly implementing these new rules, in a piecemeal manner, without a lot of fanfare. Honestly, I think these new habitat rules will have as great or greater impact on the private lands and federal land permits as does the Ditch Rule, and I would hope that the outcry from the agriculture community, private property advocates, and our Congressional delegations would be as great.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER WAITES

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Jennifer Waites, a 911 emergency dispatcher from Helena, MT, who was named the 2016 911 Dispatcher of the Year by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Waites has been with Helena's 911 center for the past 7 years, working the 3 a.m. to 11 p.m. shift as the ''first, first responder'' for the medical emergencies in Helena.

Many refer to Waites as a ''silent hero,'' going about her work day-in and day-out performing a wide variety of tasks that are largely completed under the radar. Whether it is responding to multiple calls at once or relaying information to responding units as efficiently as possible, she knows that serving the people who call in is her top priority and is what motivates her to carry out all tasks with timeliness and care.

Waites is humble enough to admit that her job could not be made possible without the joint efforts from the rest of her team. Waites said, ''Just knowing that you're here and you can make someone else's day a little bit better and get the help that they need is really beneficial for everyone involved.''

It is my honor to recognize Jennifer Waites today. And I thank you on behalf of Montana for your exceptional service and responsibility you have undertaken to the people in our great State.•

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF BUENO FOODS

• Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 65th anniversary of Bueno Foods, a New Mexico family-owned business and one of the Southwest's premier producers of New Mexican foods, including our State's iconic chile from Hatch, NM, and the surrounding Rio Grande Valley.

In 1946, when several brothers from the Baca family returned home from serving in World War II, they scraped together enough money to start a small grocery business. Although the business started off successfully, the Bacas soon learned how difficult it was for a small community market to compete with larger grocery store chains, so they decided to specialize, manufacturing corn and flour tortillas and traditional holiday favorites like tamales and posole. The Baca brothers also noticed that more households owned freezers, and they asked themselves around the family dinner table: Why don't we take our heritage and preserve it?

With this idea, Bueno Foods was born in 1951. Today Bueno Foods manufactures a full line of more than 150 authentic New Mexican and Mexican food products and currently employs more than 250 employees.

I commend Buenos Foods for taking an active role in the community and contributing to organizations that serve some of our most vulnerable New Mexicans, including impoverished children, the homeless, and the hungry.

Bueno Foods is a strong partner with New Mexico's renowned chile pepper farmers. The chile industry in New Mexico, including both growers and processors, is an integral part of our agricultural and cultural heritage and New Mexico-grown chile peppers remain the most sought after. New Mexico is a leading producer of American-grown chile peppers, and I am pleased that our State's chile farmers and Bueno Foods have come together to protect authentic New Mexico-grown chile.

I congratulate Bueno Foods on 65 years of success as they work to keep our State's chile industry strong and produce the quality foods that can only be from New Mexico.●

300TH ANNIVERSARY OF STRATHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, the town of Stratham in New Hampshire is celebrating its 300th anniversary this year. Today Stratham is a classic New England community, proud of its family-friendly quality of life and looking forward to its annual town fair in June. The culmination of this year's fair will be the 300th anniversary dinner dance at Stratham Hill Park on June 25, celebrating the establishment of the township of Stratham in 1716.

Of course, the human history of what is now Stratham, located between the Great Bay and Exeter in southeastern New Hampshire, goes back many centuries prior to the arrival of the first English explorers and settlers. The land was originally inhabited by the Pennacook Tribe, Algonquian-speaking Native Americans, who were among the first to encounter European colonists in what is today New England.

In 1640, an Englishman named Thomas Wiggin established the first settlement in what was then called Squamscott Patent, and through the remainder of the 1600s, people continued to arrive in the settlement. By the early 1700s, residents petitioned George Vaughn, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of New Hampshire, to incorporate a new town. On March 20, 1716, he granted their request and ordered that ''Squamscott Patent land be a township by the name of Stratham, and that there be a meeting house built for public worship of God with all convenient speed.'' The town was given authority under King George I to elect selectmen, hold town meetings, collect taxes, build a meeting house and hire a ''learned and orthodox minister.'' At the initial gathering of town leaders, they appointed a committee of five to take care of building a meeting house, which would be used both for church services and meetings of the selectmen. Stratham Community Church now stands on the site of that original meeting house.

As a resident of the Seacoast, I regularly visit Stratham. It is hometown and headquarters to corporate giants Lindt chocolate and Timberland footwear, whose products include the Stratham Heights line of women's high-fashion boots. The town also takes pride in its smaller stores, cafes, and restaurants, places where people know your name and where the small businessowners are right there every day. But Stratham's greatest assets are its citizens, who are unfailingly gracious and friendly.

Of course, the big event in Stratham is its annual town fair, one of the oldest in the Granite State. The fair got its start in 1966, when Stratham held a giant party to celebrate its 250th anniversary. A half century later, that party has evolved into a sprawling fair that draws visitors from across southeastern New Hampshire, nearly tripling Stratham's usual population of 7,250. This year, as I said, the fair's gala dinner dance at Stratham Hill Park will be the culmination of the town's 300th anniversary celebrations.

Stratham's motto is ''inspired by the past, committed to the future.'' The town does indeed have a long and rich history, and it has entered the 21st century as a forward-thinking community with a vibrant economy. Even as Stratham grows, it has preserved its small town charm, hospitality, and lifestyle.

I congratulate all the folks in Stratham on this landmark 300th anniversary. I wish everyone a wonderful celebration in June.●

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 which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13303 OF MAY 22, 2003, WITH RESPECT TO THE STABILIZATION OF IRAQ—PM 49

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, is to continue in effect beyond May 22, 2016.

Obstacles to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Accordingly, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 18, 2016*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:40 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1492. An act to direct the Administrator of General Services, on behalf of the Archivist of the United States, to convey certain Federal property located in the State of Alaska to the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska.

S. 2143. An act 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.

H.R. 4923. An act to establish a process for the submission and consideration of petitions for temporary duty suspensions and reductions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4957. An act to designate the Federal building located at 99 New York Avenue, N.E., in the District of Columbia as the ''Ariel Rios Federal Building''.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

ENROLLED BILLS PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, May 18, 2016, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bills:

S. 1492. An act to direct the Administrator of General Services, on behalf of the Archivist of the United States, to convey certain Federal property located in the State of Alaska to the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska.

S. 1523. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2143. An act 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.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MCCAIN, from the Committee on Armed Services, without amendment:

S. 2943. An original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–255).

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment:

S. 1724. A bill to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–256).

By Mr. COCHRAN, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled ''Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals For Fiscal Year 2017'' (Rept. No. 114–257).

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

H.R. 3114. A bill to provide funds to the Army Corps of Engineers to hire veterans and members of the Armed Forces to assist the Corps with curation and historic preservation activities, and for other purposes.

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with amendments:

S. 2754. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 300 Fannin Street in Shreveport, Louisiana, as the ''Tom Stagg Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE for the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

*Jane Toshiko Nishida, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 2943. An original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Armed Services; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2944. A bill to require adequate reporting on the Public Safety Officers' Benefit program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. FRANKEN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 2945. A bill to promote effective registered apprenticeships, for skills, credentials, and employment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 2946. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to include certain Federal positions within the definition of law enforcement officer for retirement purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL:

S. 2947. A bill to establish requirements regarding quality dates and safety dates in food labeling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2948. A bill to plan, develop, and make recommendations to increase access to sexual assault examinations for survivors by holding hospitals accountable and supporting the providers that serve them; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 2949. A bill to amend and reauthorize the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 1990; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 2950. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to receive, process, and pay certain claims relating to the Gold King Mine spill; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 2951. A bill to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to impose penalties and provide for the recovery of removal costs and damages in connection with certain discharges of oil from foreign offshore units, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. Res. 469. A resolution commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, a seminal moment in the journey of Ireland to independence; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. Res. 470. A resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Portland Cement Association, the national organization for the cement manufacturing and concrete industry; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. Res. 471. A resolution designating the week of May 15 through May 21, 2016, as ''National Public Works Week''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 366

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 461

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 461, a bill to provide for alternative financing arrangements for the provision of certain services and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure at land border ports of entry, and for other purposes.

S. 590

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 590, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act to combat campus sexual violence, and for other purposes.

S. 1082

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) 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. 1139

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1139, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to provide for same day registration.

S. 1176

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1176, a bill to amend the

Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the system of public financing for Presidential elections, and for other purposes.

S. 1428

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1428, a bill to amend the USEC Privatization Act to require the Secretary of Energy to issue a long-term Federal excess uranium inventory management plan, and for other purposes.

S. 1479

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1479, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to grants, and for other purposes.

S. 1883

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1883, a bill to maximize discovery, and accelerate development and availability, of promising childhood cancer treatments, and for other purposes.

S. 1982

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance.

S. 2100

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2100, a bill to prohibit the sale or distribution of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 21.

S. 2279

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2279, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to increase efficiency in the recruitment and hiring by the Department of Veterans Affairs of health care workers that are undergoing separation from the Armed Forces, to create uniform credentialing standards for certain health care professionals of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 2465

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2465, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15 Rochester Street in Bergen, New York, as the Barry G. Miller Post Office.

S. 2483

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2483, a bill to prohibit States from carrying out more than one Congressional redistricting after a decennial census and apportionment, to require States to conduct such redistricting through independent commissions, and for other purposes.

S. 2531

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors 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 Ms. MURKOWSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2531, supra.

S. 2551

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2551, a bill to help prevent acts of genocide and mass atrocities, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States civilian capacities to prevent and mitigate such crises.

S. 2577

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2577, a bill to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA and other forensic evidence samples to improve and expand the forensic science testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of forensic evidence, to provide post-conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to support accreditation efforts of forensic science laboratories and medical examiner offices, to address training and equipment needs, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and for other purposes.

S. 2584

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2584, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 2641

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2641, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, in relation to requiring adrenoleukodystrophy screening of newborns.

S. 2707

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of 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.

S. 2725

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2725, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the ballistic missile program of Iran, and for other purposes.

S. 2750

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2750, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend and modify certain charitable tax provisions.

S. 2779

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2779, a bill to reauthorize the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and for other purposes.

S. 2785

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2785, a bill to protect Native children and promote public safety in Indian country.

S. 2840

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2840, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds for active shooter training, and for other purposes.

S. 2854

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2854, a bill to reauthorize the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007.

S. 2912

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from

Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2912, a bill to authorize the use of unapproved medical products by patients diagnosed with a terminal illness in accordance with State law, and for other purposes.

S. 2921

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2921, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve health care and benefits for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2933

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 2933, a bill to prohibit certain health care providers from providing non-Department health care services to veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2934

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2934, a bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale.

S. 2938

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2938, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to reestablish the Royalty Policy Committee in order to further a more consultative process with key Federal, State, tribal, environmental, and energy stakeholders, and for other purposes.

S. 2941

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2941, a bill to require a study on women and lung cancer, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 35

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 35, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should continue to exercise its veto in the United Nations Security Council on resolutions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

S. RES. 459

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 459, a resolution recognizing the importance of cancer research and the vital contributions of scientists, clinicians, cancer survivors, and other patient advocates across the United States who are dedicated to finding a cure for cancer, and designating May 2016, as ''National Cancer Research Month''.

S. RES. 466

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 466, a resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster-care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system.

AMENDMENT NO. 3923

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3923 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3925

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3925 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3927

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3927 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3933

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3933 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3934

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3934 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3935

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3935 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3941

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3941 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3944

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3944 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3948

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3948 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3951

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3951 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3957

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3957 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3970

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3970 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3981

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Nebraska

(Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3981 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3998

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3998 proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4002

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4002 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2944. A bill to require adequate reporting on the Public Safety Officers' Benefit program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a bill I am introducing along with Senator GRASSLEY called the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act.

When our first responders make the decision to join a police department or a fire department or an EMT squad, they do so knowing they might encounter hazards on the job that threaten their lives or even end their lives. These men and women work in some of the highest pressure and most dangerous environments—shootouts, fires, natural disasters, terror attacks.

Think about your own communities back home. When disaster strikes, when there is an emergency, who shows up first, speeding to the scene and ready to help? It is our police officers, it is our firefighters, and it is our EMT workers. Our public safety officers know that death or serious injury is a real risk in their jobs, but they show up to work anyway, ready to help and willing to sacrifice, if that is what it takes to keep their communities safe.

When first responders die as a result of their work, we all have the responsibility to help take care of their surviving family members. In 1984, more than three decades ago, Congress did the right thing and created a program called the Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program to help these families.

Whenever a tragedy struck and a first responder was killed on the job or passed away because of their job, these grieving families could take a little bit of comfort in knowing they would have the financial support they needed with this program. They knew they would have help from this program, transitioning to a life without their loved one.

In recent years, the families applying to the program have faced confusing and inconsistent requirements. They have faced long delays in receiving compensation. Before, when a loved one died on the job, the family would get compensation from this program without any serious delay. But now the burden to claim these funds and then retrieve them has been placed on the families—the same families this program is supposed to be helping.

As a result, hundreds of families who are already grieving now have to dig through public records themselves. They have to endure an exhausting paper chase with no guidance. And they have to go far beyond a reasonable doubt to prove to the Justice Department that their loved one did, in fact, serve as a first responder and sacrificed his or her life for this job.

Last fall, USA Today reported that of the more than 900 cases they reviewed, the average wait for a decision by the program about compensation was more than 1 year. For some families, it was 2 years, and for some, the wait was 3 years. This even includes our first responders who worked at Ground Zero. Think about the unnecessary stress these delays have placed on our families who lost loved ones.

We know we must fix this program. We must fix this program. These families of our fallen public safety officers are not getting the compensation they deserve, that their loved ones have earned, in the timely manner they need.

This bill—Senator GRASSLEY's and mine—is a bipartisan bill that fixes this problem. The Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act would make this compensation program more transparent and more efficient, and it would make sure it works.

The bill would require the program to report publicly the status of every claim so that families can know if and why their compensation is being delayed. It would give weight to the findings and records of Federal agencies, State agencies, and local agencies about the cause of the public safety officer's death so that families don't have to reproduce records that already exist. And this bill would reduce the wait for our families to receive the compensation they deserve and desperately need.

I thank my colleague Senator GRASSLEY for his strong leadership and his amazing advocacy, and I urge all my colleagues here to support this bill. Let's fix the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. Let's take care of these families—the families of our public safety officers—and let's do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New York for working together on this very important issue to get justice for some of our police officers and their families who have been burdened by too much redtape. She and I have worked together on so many things, and I appreciate this one as well.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation designating this week as National Police Week. As part of that tradition, tens of thousands of law enforcement officers have gathered in our Nation's Capital to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to the service of this Nation.

I rise to join these officers in thanking the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting our communities. We must never take their sacrifice for granted, and we need to appreciate that their surviving families have suffered real loss.

In recognition of this truth, Congress passed the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act in 1976. The goal of the law was to provide death benefits to survivors of officers who die in the line of duty. Over the years, the law has been amended to provide disability and education benefits and to expand the pool of officers who are eligible for these benefits.

Looking at the 40-year history of this law, the overall intent of Congress is very clear: Families of fallen officers deserve a fair and timely consideration of their application for these benefits, and the word ''timely'' is what isn't being carried out right now.

If we were in these officers' shoes, we would like to see an answer—either yes or no—not years of limbo and lingering uncertainty. Unfortunately, that is precisely what too many families have had to endure since at least 2003, all because bureaucrats in the Justice Department failed to do their job and do it on time.

Three weeks ago, I chaired a Judiciary Committee hearing to examine this problem on the lack of timeliness. What we found was troubling. The Justice Department has a goal of processing these claims within 1 year of filing. However, according to the most recent data, the Justice Department is failing to meet its own 1-year deadline in 61 percent of the 693 pending death benefit claims. Those are 423 families who have been waiting for more than 1 year. That rate is unacceptable for a program designed to support families of fallen officers.

Somehow, the delays have gone from bad to worse. The failure rate was 27 percent for claims that were filed between 2008 and 2013. So it is very difficult to understand how that could happen.

For 13 years and counting, since 2003, the delays have persisted despite a 2004

Attorney General memorandum, despite a 2007 Judiciary Committee hearing, and despite three independent audits recommending corrective action. Not surprisingly, there have been periodic improvements in timeliness whenever Congress or watchdogs shine light into these delays. However, these improvements have been very short-lived. For example, in 2007, the Justice Department more than doubled its monthly rate of processing claims in the first 2 months following a Judiciary Committee hearing. However, in the ensuing 5 years, the inspector general found not only significant delays but also a serious lack of documentation and data.

I began looking into this program last January after constituents informed me that families in Iowa waited more than 3 years to get a decision, but the Justice Department's response to my oversight letters confirmed that these delays persist on a nationwide scale. For instance, there are currently 175 pending death and disability claims that were filed on behalf of officers who lost their lives as a result of their September 11 response efforts. That is why I have written six letters to the Justice Department in the last 1½ years asking for status updates on all pending claims. Initially, after I sent my first letters, the number of pending claims went down at a steady pace. However, more recently the Justice Department has simply failed to respond to my letters.

At last month's Judiciary Committee hearing, a claimant from my State of Iowa testified about having waited 3½ years without an answer from the Justice Department, but just 2 days after that hearing, that claimant got a phone call from the Department saying the claim had been approved. What was the Justice Department doing for the past 3½ years on that claim? And what about the 692 other families who are waiting for a decision? Families of fallen officers and advocacy groups agree, transparency leads to accountability, and the Justice Department should be held accountable for its handling of these claims. So based on this 13-year record, I have concluded that the best way to ensure timeliness in these claims is to permanently increase the level of transparency surrounding this program.

Today the Senator from New York, just speaking, and I are introducing a bill that would do just that. It is called the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act. This bill would require the Justice Department to post on its Web site weekly status updates for all pending claims. This way the public can evaluate how well the Department is performing under its goal of processing claims within the 1-year filing deadline they have. The Justice Department is already posting weekly statistics with respect to the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund, which is a similar program. So the Department should be able to do the same with respect to pending public safety officers' benefits claims by posting weekly statistics.

In addition, our bill would require the Justice Department to report to Congress other aggregate statistics regarding these claims at least twice a year, and the bill would make it easier for the Justice Department to process these claims in other ways; for example, by allowing the Department to rely on other Federal regulatory standards and to give substantial weight to findings of fact of State, local, and other Federal agencies.

In short, this is a simple bipartisan bill with narrowly tailored provisions. Each provision is targeted to specific problems that have been identified over the past 13 years by independent audits, by committee hearings, by advocacy groups, and, of course, as we would expect, by families of fallen officers who wonder what is going on at the Department of Justice.

So I thank Senator GILLIBRAND for working with me to develop this commonsense legislation. I urge my colleagues to stand with us in support of these officers and their families and help us get this bill done as our way of saying thank you to these men and women, particularly as we honor them in this particular season we call National Police Week.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 2946. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to include certain Federal positions within the definition of law enforcement officer for retirement purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today I wish to introduce the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act, a common sense bill that would fix a loophole in Federal law that denies many Federal law enforcement officers Federal benefits. This week, as our Nation pauses to honor the sacrifices and services of our men and women in law enforcement, I am glad to introduce legislation to accord them with the benefits they so deeply deserve.

This legislation has been introduced in past Congresses by my friend and colleague, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. I am grateful to her for allowing me to introduce this bill, and I am glad to have her support as an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Law enforcement officers have one of the toughest jobs in America. Twenty-four hours a day and 365 days a year, they work to keep our communities safe and uphold the rule of law. During my tenure as mayor of Newark, I spent countless hours with police officers patrolling the streets, and I saw firsthand how difficult and dangerous their jobs can be. These brave men and women apprehend violent criminals and arrest drug kingpins, which carries with it immense pressure and stress.

The legislation I am introducing today would fix a loophole in our Federal law. Due to the level of training required and greater danger present in their profession, Congress determined years ago that individuals in Federal law enforcement should receive higher salaries and enhanced retirement benefits compared to other Federal employees. Unfortunately, approximately 30,000 Federal law enforcement officers are classified in a way that precludes them for receiving the enhanced retirement benefits they deserve.

As a result of this loophole, certain officers who work for Federal agencies—such as the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Mint, National Institute of Health, and many more—receive lower pensions as compared to other law enforcement officers with similar duties and responsibilities. This problem must be fixed. Correcting this error is not only dictated by fairness, but it is a matter of public safety because of the value of recruiting and retaining experienced and highly trained law enforcement officers is immeasurable.

The Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act would expand the definition of ''law enforcement office'' for retirement purposes to include all Federal law enforcement officers. The change would grant law enforcement officer status to the follow individuals: employees who are authorized to carry a firearm and whose duties include the investigation and/or apprehension of suspected criminals; employees of the Internal Revenue Service whose duties are primarily the collection of delinquent taxes and securing delinquent returns; employees of the U.S Postal Inspection Service; and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are Department police offices. These officers face the same risks and challenges as the men and women currenly classified properly under Federal law as law enforcement officers, and they deserve the same benefits.

The Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act would allow incumbent law enforcement officers' Federal service after the enactment of the act to be considered service performed as a law enforcement officer for retirement purposes.

This legislation has the support of numerous law enforcement groups, including the Fraternal Order of Police, Postal Police Officers Association, National Association of Police Officers, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers' Association, and the National Treasury Employees Union.

According to the Postal Police Officers Association, ''These officers face the same risks and challenges as their federal law enforcement colleagues who currently receive [law enforcement officer] retirement status. This bill will ensure that officers across the country, who put their lives on the line each and every day to protect us, earn the benefits that they deserve.''

And the National Association of Police Organizations has said, ''This bill

will ensure that officers across the country, who put their lives on the line each and every day to protect us, earn the benefits that they deserve.''

Fundamental fairness demands that we close this loophole in Federal law and give all Federal law enforcement officers the retirement benefits they deserve. I ask my colleagues to support the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act, and I urge its speedy passage.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 469—COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1916 EASTER RISING, A SEMINAL MOMENT IN THE JOURNEY OF IRELAND TO INDEPENDENCE

Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. MARKEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 469

Whereas the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising has a particular resonance in the United States;

Whereas since the founding of the United States, Irish people and the millions of United States citizens of Irish descent have helped to shape the history of the United States;

Whereas, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, ''No people ever believed more deeply in the cause of Irish freedom than the people of the United States'';

Whereas 5 of the 7 signatories of the 1916 Proclamation of Independence spent periods of time in the United States that significantly influenced the thinking and actions of those signatories;

Whereas the United States is the only foreign country specifically mentioned in the 1916 Proclamation of Independence;

Whereas the contemporary ties between the United States and Ireland are of extraordinary depth and breadth;

Whereas continued United States engagement in the Northern Ireland peace process is vital to safeguarding the gains made since the Good Friday Agreement;

Whereas the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising offers an opportunity for remembrance, reconciliation, and reimagining of the future;

Whereas, on May 17 and 18, 2016, the Taoiseach, the Prime Minister of Ireland, will visit Washington, D.C., for events commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising; and

Whereas more than 200 other commemorative events will take place across the United States to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recalls the special ties between Ireland and the United States, continually sustained and strengthened throughout the intertwined history of both countries;

(2) welcomes the program of commemorations in the United States marking the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising of Ireland, including the events taking place in Washington, D.C.; and

(3) recognizes the importance of nurturing and renewing the unique relationship between the United States and Ireland, and the people of the United States and Ireland, into the future.

SENATE RESOLUTION 470—RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PORTLAND CEMENT ASSOCIATION, THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE CEMENT MANUFACTURING AND CONCRETE INDUSTRY

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 470

Whereas the first concrete road in the United States was built in 1890, and a portion of the original pavement of that road is still in use as of May 2016;

Whereas, in 1916—

(1) the Portland Cement Association was established as the national organization for the cement manufacturing and concrete industry; and

(2) Congress passed the first Federal-aid highway legislation, setting in motion the development of a network of national highways;

Whereas, in 1921, the Portland Cement Association joined the Bureau of Public Roads and various State agencies to determine the best ways to design and build concrete roads, resulting in the Illinois Division of Highways Bates Test Road, a landmark project that established the most economical design for concrete pavements;

Whereas the Portland Cement Association participated in design and testing for the Hoover Dam, the Grand Coulee Dam, and many other concrete projects;

Whereas 60 percent of the 41,000-mile highway system authorized under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (70 Stat. 374), which established the Highway Trust Fund, was constructed using concrete, based on research and performance data identifying the significance of using concrete throughout the interstate highway system;

Whereas due to new and increasing uses of concrete that required specialized research, the Portland Cement Association added 2 new laboratory facilities in 1958, a structural laboratory and a fire research center, which resulted in the development of more durable and economical buildings and improvements in fire safety for concrete structures and transportation facilities;

Whereas 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Portland Cement Association; and

Whereas the Portland Cement Association advocates in support of sustainability, resiliency, economic growth, infrastructure investment, and overall innovation and excellence in construction throughout the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 100th anniversary of the Portland Cement Association;

(2) commends the Portland Cement Association for its work and dedication to—

(A) the infrastructure of the United States; and

(B) innovative developments;

(3) recognizes the strong initiatives of the Portland Cement Association to improve the state of the cement industry; and

(4) recognizes the members of the Portland Cement Association and all cement manufacturers on the centennial celebration of the establishment of the Portland Cement Association.

SENATE RESOLUTION 471—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF MAY 15 THROUGH MAY 21, 2016, AS ''NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK''

Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 471

Whereas public works infrastructure, facilities, and services are of vital importance to the health, safety, and well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas the public works infrastructure, facilities, and services could not be provided without the dedicated efforts of public works professionals, including engineers and administrators, who represent State and local governments throughout the United States;

Whereas public works professionals design, build, operate, and maintain the transportation systems, water infrastructure, sewage and refuse disposal systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities that are vital to the people and communities of the United States; and

Whereas understanding the role that public infrastructure plays in protecting the environment, improving public health and safety, contributing to economic vitality, and enhancing the quality of life of every community of the United States is in the interest of the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of May 15 through May 21, 2016, as ''National Public Works Week'';

(2) recognizes and celebrates the important contributions that public works professionals make every day to improve—

(A) the public infrastructure of the United States; and

(B) the communities that public works professionals serve; and

(3) urges individuals and communities throughout the United States to join with representatives of the Federal Government and the American Public Works Association in activities and ceremonies that are designed—

(A) to pay tribute to the public works professionals of the United States; and

(B) to recognize the substantial contributions that public works professionals make to the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4005. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

SA 4006. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4007. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4008. Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK,

Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4009. Mr. UDALL (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4010. Mr. DAINES submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4011. Mr. NELSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4012. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4013. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3900 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. LEAHY)) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4014. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4015. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4016. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4017. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4018. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4019. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4020. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4021. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4022. Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. TILLIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4023. Mr. SASSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4024. Mr. ISAKSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4025. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4026. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4027. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4028. Mr. PERDUE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4029. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4030. Ms. MIKULSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4031. Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2943, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4032. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4033. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4034. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4035. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577 , supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4036. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4037. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4038. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4039. Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4040. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4041. Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4042. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. KAINE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4043. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra.

SA 4044. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4045. Mr. ROUNDS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4046. Mr. PETERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4047. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4048. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4049. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4050. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4051. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4039 submitted by Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. BURR) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4052. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4039 submitted by Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. BURR) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4053. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4054. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4055. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4056. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4057. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4058. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4059. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4060. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4061. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3897 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. SHELBY)) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4005. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report that contains an update on the progress of the Department of Veterans Affairs in completing the Rural Veterans Burial Initiative and the expected timeline for completion of such initiative.

SA 4006. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds made available in this Act shall be used to pay any bonus to an individual in a Senior Executive position (as defined in section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code) in the Department of Veterans Affairs who is employed within Veterans Integrated Service Network 16.

SA 4007. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, on page 41, after line 25, add the following:

SEC. 127. (a) All of the unobligated balances of the amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2016 under the headings ''MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE'' and ''BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE'' in titles III and V of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2016 (division K of Public Law 114–113), including funds designated by Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(ii)) are rescinded.

(b) In addition to the amount made available under the heading ''FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS''in this title, an amount equal to the amount rescinded pursuant to subsection (a) shall be made available for the implementation or execution of Federal-aid highway, bridge construction, and highway safety construction programs authorized under titles 23 and 49, United States Code.

SA 4008. Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title I of division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall conduct a study and submit to Congress a report on the use of defense access road funding to build alternate routes for military equipment traveling to missile launch facilities, taking into consideration the location of local populations, security risks, safety, and impacts of weather.

SA 4009. Mr. UDALL (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 102, strike lines 3 through 16 and insert the following:

would otherwise receive: *Provided further*, That grant amounts not allocated to a recipient pursuant to the previous proviso shall be allocated under the need component of the formula proportionately among all other Indian tribes not subject to an adjustment under such proviso: *Provided further*, That the second proviso shall not apply to any Indian tribe that would otherwise receive a formula allocation of less than $8,000,000: *Provided further*, That to take effect, the 3 previous provisos do not

SA 4010. Mr. DAINES submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II in division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this title shall be used in a manner that would interfere with removal by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of employees who have committed felony or misdemeanor offenses, regardless of whether the offense occurred while the employee was at work.

SA 4011. Mr. NELSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

In division A, strike section 225 and insert the following:

SEC. 225. (a) Any entity receiving housing assistance payments shall maintain decent, safe, and sanitary conditions, as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (in this section referred to as the ''Secretary''), and comply with any standards under applicable State or local laws, rules, ordinances, or regulations relating to the physical condition of any property covered under a housing assistance payment contract.

(b) The Secretary shall take action under subsection (c) when a multifamily housing project with a section 8 contract or contract for similar project-based assistance—

(1) receives a Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) score of 30 or less;

(2) fails to certify in writing to the Secretary within 3 days that all Exigent Health and Safety deficiencies identified by the inspector at the project have been corrected; or

(3) receives a UPCS score between 31 and 59 and has received consecutive scores of less than 60 on UPCS inspections.

Such requirements shall apply to insured and noninsured projects with assistance attached to the units under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f), but do not apply to such units assisted under section 8(o)(13) (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(13)) or to public housing units assisted with capital or operating funds under section 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437g).

(c)(1) The Secretary shall notify the owner and provide an opportunity for response within 15 days after the results of the UPCS inspection are issued. If the violations remain, the Secretary shall develop a plan to bring the property into compliance within 30 days after the results of the UPCS inspection are issued and must provide the owner with a Notice of Default with a specified timetable, determined by the Secretary, for correcting all deficiencies. The Secretary must also provide a copy of the Notice of Default to the tenants, the local government, any mortgagees, and any contract administrator. If the owner's appeal results in a UPCS score of 60 or above, the Secretary may withdraw the Notice of Default.

(2) At the end of the time period for correcting all deficiencies specified in the Notice of Default, if the owner fails to fully correct such deficiencies, the Secretary may—

(A) require immediate replacement of project management with a management agent approved by the Secretary;

(B) impose civil money penalties, which shall be used solely for the purpose of supporting safe and sanitary conditions at applicable properties, as designated by the Secretary, with priority given to the tenants of the property affected by the penalty;

(C) abate the section 8 contract, including partial abatement, as determined by the Secretary, until all deficiencies have been corrected;

(D) pursue transfer of the project to an owner, approved by the Secretary under established procedures, which will be obligated to promptly make all required repairs and to accept renewal of the assistance contract as long as such renewal is offered;

(E) transfer the existing section 8 contract to another project or projects and owner or owners;

(F) pursue exclusionary sanctions, including suspensions or debarments from Federal programs;

(G) seek judicial appointment of a receiver to manage the property and cure all project deficiencies or seek a judicial order of specific performance requiring the owner to cure all project deficiencies;

(H) work with the owner, lender, or other related party to stabilize the property in an attempt to preserve the property through compliance, transfer of ownership, or an infusion of capital provided by a third-party that requires time to effectuate; or

(I) take any other regulatory or contractual remedies available as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Secretary.

(d) The Secretary shall also take appropriate steps to ensure that project-based contracts remain in effect, subject to the exercise of contractual abatement remedies to assist relocation of tenants for major threats to health and safety after written notice to and informed consent of the affected tenants and use of other remedies set forth above. To the extent the Secretary determines, in consultation with the tenants and the local government, that the property is not feasible for continued rental assistance payments under such section 8 or other programs, based on consideration of (1) the costs of rehabilitating and operating the property and all available Federal, State, and local resources, including rent adjustments under section 524 of the Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act of 1997 (''MAHRAA'') and (2) environmental conditions that cannot be remedied in a cost-effective fashion, the Secretary may, in consultation with the tenants of that property, contract for project-based rental assistance payments with an owner or owners of other existing housing properties, or provide other rental assistance.

(e) The Secretary shall report quarterly on all properties covered by this section that are assessed through the Real Estate Assessment Center and have UPCS physical inspection scores of less than 60 or have received an unsatisfactory management and occupancy review within the past 36 months. The report shall include—

(1) the enforcement actions being taken to address such conditions, including imposition of civil money penalties and termination of subsidies, and identify properties that have such conditions multiple times;

(2) actions that the Department of Housing and Urban Development is taking to protect tenants of such identified properties; and

(3) any administrative or legislative recommendations to further improve the living conditions at properties covered under a housing assistance payment contract.

SA 4012. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, on page 108, line 7, strike the period at the end and insert the following:

: *Provided further*, That none of the funds made available under this heading may be obligated or expended for any State, or any political subdivision of a State—

(1) that has in effect a statute, ordinance, policy, or practice that prohibits or restricts any government entity or official—

(A) from sending, receiving, maintaining, or exchanging with any Federal, State, or local government entity information regarding the citizenship or immigration status (lawful or unlawful) of any individual other than an individual who comes forward as a victim or a witness to a criminal offense; or

(B) from complying with a request lawfully made by the Department of Homeland Security under section 236 or 287 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1226 and 1357) to comply with a detainer for, or notify about the release of, an individual other than an individual who comes forward as a victim or a witness to a criminal offense; or

(2) whose law enforcement officers and other employees, contractors, and agents are not certified by the Department of Homeland Security (whether under section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1357(g)) or other authority and whether through a memorandum of understanding, regulations, or otherwise) to be acting as agents of the Department of Homeland Security with all the authority available to employees of the Department of Homeland Security when they take actions to comply with a detainer issued by the Department of Homeland Security under section 236 or 287 of such Act.

SA 4013. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3900 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. LEAHY)) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

CHAPTER 4—REVENUE PROVISIONS

ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILD TAX CREDIT

SEC. _____. (a) Subsection (e) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(e) IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—No credit shall be allowed under this section to any taxpayer unless—

''(A) such taxpayer includes the taxpayer's valid identification number on the return of tax for the taxable year, and

''(B) with respect to any qualifying child, the taxpayer includes the name and valid identification number of such qualifying child on such return of tax.

''(2) VALID IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'valid identification number' means a social security number issued to an individual by the Social Security Administration. Such term shall not include a TIN issued by the Internal Revenue Service.

''(B) DATE OF ISSUANCE.—No credit shall be allowed under this section if the valid identifying number of the taxpayer was issued after the due date for filing the return for the taxable year.''.

(b) The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 4014. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or regulation, including section 41713 of title 49, United States Code, the State of Alaska or the State of Hawaii may enact or enforce a law, regulation, or other provision having the force and effect of law that regulates the price, route, or service of an air carrier that provides air ambulance service in that State.

SA 4015. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall require each public housing agency that administers public housing (as defined in section 3 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a)) or housing assisted under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f) to remove and replace, in each dwelling unit in which a child under the age of 9 resides, window coverings with accessible cords exceeding 8 inches in length and window coverings with continuous loops or beads.

(b) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall require public housing agencies to phase out window coverings with accessible cords exceeding 8 inches in length and window coverings with continuous loops or beads that do not contain a cord tension device that prohibits operation when not anchored to a wall from dwelling units in public housing (as defined in section 3 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a)) and housing assisted under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 4016. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I in division A, add the following:

SEC. _____. Section 127 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(u) PILOT PROGRAM.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term 'pilot program' means the pilot program established by paragraph (2).

''(B) STATE.—The term 'State' means the State of Wisconsin.

''(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—Notwithstanding subsection (a) the State may participate in a pilot program relating to certain exceptions to certain vehicle weight limitations applicable to the Interstate System in accordance with this subsection.

''(3) PROGRAM.—Under the pilot program, the State may authorize a vehicle with a maximum gross weight, including all enforcement tolerances, that exceeds the maximum gross weight otherwise applicable under subsection (a) to operate on Interstate System routes in the State, if—

''(A) the vehicle is equipped with at least 6 axles;

''(B) the weight of any single axle on the vehicle does not exceed 20,000 pounds, including enforcement tolerances;

''(C) the weight of any tandem axle on the vehicle does not exceed 34,000 pounds, including enforcement tolerances;

''(D) the weight of any group of 3 or more axles on the vehicle does not exceed 51,000 pounds, including enforcement tolerances;

''(E) the gross weight of the vehicle does not exceed 91,000 pounds, including enforcement tolerances; and

''(F) the vehicle complies with the bridge formula under subsection (a)(2).

''(4) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(A) OTHER EXCEPTIONS NOT AFFECTED.—This subsection shall not restrict—

''(i) a vehicle that may operate under any other provision of this section, or another Federal law; or

''(ii) the authority of the State with respect to a vehicle described in clause (i).

''(B) MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION.—The State may implement this subsection by any means, including statute or rule of general applicability, by special permit, or otherwise.

''(5) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) REPORT.—If the State participates in the pilot program, after the pilot program terminates in accordance with paragraph (10), the State shall submit to the Secretary a report that includes—

''(i) the number of fatalities that occurred in the State involving crashes on the Interstate System in the State of vehicles authorized to operate on that system under the pilot program;

''(ii) the estimated vehicle miles traveled by vehicles described in clause (i) on the Interstate System in the State; and

''(iii) the estimated gross vehicle weight and number of axles of vehicles described in clause (i) at the time of a crash described in clause (i).

''(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make all information required under subparagraph (A) available to the public.

''(6) TERMINATION AS TO ROUTE SEGMENT.—The Secretary may terminate the operation of vehicles authorized by the State under the pilot program on a specific Interstate System route segment if, after the effective date of a decision of the State to allow vehicles to operate under the pilot program, the Secretary determines that operation poses an unreasonable safety risk based on an engineering analysis of the route segment or an analysis of safety or other applicable data from the route segment.

''(7) WAIVER OF HIGHWAY FUNDING REDUCTION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), the total amount of funds apportioned to the State under section 104(b)(1) for any period may not be reduced under subsection (a) if the State authorizes a vehicle described in paragraph (3) to operate on the Interstate System in the State under the pilot program.

''(8) PRESERVING STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY REGARDING NON-INTERSTATE SYSTEM HIGHWAYS.—Subsection (b) shall not apply to motor vehicles operating on the Interstate System solely under the pilot program.

''(9) SAVINGS PROVISION.—The pilot program shall not affect the operation of any vehicle that, as of the date of enactment of this subsection, is permitted under Federal and State law to have a gross vehicle weight of greater than 91,000 pounds, including under subsections (f), (j), and (o).

''(10) TERMINATION.—The pilot program shall terminate on the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this subsection.''.

SA 4017. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to pay a bonus to an individual in a Senior Executive position (as defined in section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code) or leadership position within the Office of Construction and Facilities Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to Congress a report detailing how the Department intends to reduce the designation of the Department by the Government Accountability Office as ''high-risk'' in Federal real property portfolios due to longstanding problems with excess and underutilized property and overreliance on leasing.

SA 4018. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to pay a bonus to an individual in a Senior Executive position (as defined in section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code) or leadership position in the Department of Veterans Affairs until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to Congress a report detailing a plan to address the report by the Government Accountability Office in 2012 concerning savings estimates by the Department that were flawed or lacked analytic support.

SA 4019. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to provide administrative leave to an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs unless the immediate supervisor of the employee specifies

that the administrative leave complies with the guidelines issued by the Office of Personnel Management with respect to administrative leave.

SA 4020. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of artwork, including in new construction by the Department of Veterans Affairs, until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs notifies Congress that the appointment backlog for veterans seeking primary care appointments from the Department has been eliminated.

SA 4021. Mrs. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Funds made available in this Act for purposes of paying bonuses or relocation benefits to individuals in Senior Executive positions (as defined in section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code) at the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be used, in lieu of paying such bonuses or benefits, to reduce the backlog of appeals of disability claims under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SA 4022. Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. TILLIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN PREVENTION, DIAGNOSIS, MITIGATION, TREATMENT, AND REHABILITATION OF HEALTH CONDITIONS RELATING TO EXPOSURE TO BURN PITS AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 7330B. Center of excellence in prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall establish within the Department a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures to carry out the responsibilities specified in subsection (d).

"(2) The Secretary shall establish the center of excellence under paragraph (1) through the use of—

"(A) the directives and policies of the Department in effect as of the date of the enactment of this section;

"(B) the recommendations of the Comptroller General of the United States and Inspector General of the Department in effect as of such date; and

"(C) guidance issued by the Secretary of Defense under section 313 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–239; 10 U.S.C. 1074 note).

"(b) SELECTION OF SITE.—In selecting the site for the center of excellence established under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider entities that—

"(1) are equipped with the specialized equipment needed to study, diagnose, and treat health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures;

"(2) have a track record of publishing information relating to post-deployment health exposures among veterans who served in the Armed Forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom;

"(3) have developed animal models and in vitro models of dust immunology and lung injury consistent with the injuries of members of the Armed Forces who served in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom; and

"(4) have expertise in allergy and immunology, pulmonary diseases, and industrial and management engineering.

"(c) COLLABORATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the center of excellence collaborates, to the maximum extent practicable, with the Secretary of Defense, institutions of higher education, and other appropriate public and private entities (including international entities) to carry out the responsibilities specified in subsection (d).

"(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The center of excellence shall have the following responsibilities:

"(1) To provide for the development, testing, and dissemination within the Department of best practices for the treatment of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures.

"(2) To provide guidance for the health systems of the Department and the Department of Defense in determining the personnel required to provide quality health care for members of the Armed Forces and veterans with health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures.

"(3) To establish, implement, and oversee a comprehensive program to train health professionals of the Department and the Department of Defense in the treatment of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures.

"(4) To facilitate advancements in the study of the short-term and long-term effects of exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures.

"(5) To disseminate within medical facilities of the Department best practices for training health professionals with respect to health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures.

"(6) To conduct basic science and translational research on health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures for the purposes of understanding the etiology of such conditions and developing preventive interventions and new treatments.

"(7) To provide medical treatment to all veterans identified as part of the open burn pit registry established under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

"(e) USE OF BURN PITS REGISTRY DATA.—In carrying out its responsibilities under subsection (d), the center shall have access to and make use of the data accumulated by the burn pits registry established under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

"(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) The term 'burn pit' means an area of land located in Afghanistan or Iraq that—

"(A) is designated by the Secretary of Defense to be used for disposing solid waste by burning in the outdoor air; and

"(B) does not contain a commercially manufactured incinerator or other equipment specifically designed and manufactured for the burning of solid waste.

"(2) The term 'other environmental exposures' means exposure to environmental hazards, including burn pits, dust or sand, hazardous materials, and waste at any site in Afghanistan or Iraq that emits smoke containing pollutants present in the environment or smoke from fires or explosions.

"(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $30,000,000 for each of the first five fiscal years beginning after the date of the enactment of this section.".

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—In carrying out section 7330B of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for any other purpose.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 73 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7330A the following new item:

"7330B. Center of excellence in prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures.".

SA 4023. Mr. SASSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this title may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement related to resolving a dispute or claim with an individual that would restrict in any way the individual from speaking to members of Congress or

their staff on any topic not otherwise prohibited from disclosure by Federal law.

SA 4024. Mr. ISAKSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

In division A, on page 49, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

SEC. 142. Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall issue a final rule requiring the use of speed limiting devices on trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating in excess of 26,000 pounds.

SA 4025. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

DISCONTINUATION BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS TO IDENTIFY VETERANS

SEC. 251. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor, shall discontinue using Social Security account numbers to identify individuals in all information systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs as follows:

(1) For all veterans submitting to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs new claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) For all individuals not described in paragraph (1), not later than five years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use a Social Security account number to identify an individual in an information system of the Department of Veterans Affairs if and only if the use of such number is required to obtain information the Secretary requires from an information system that is not under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

SA 4026. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. PREVENTION OF CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FROM PROVIDING NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall deny or revoke the eligibility of a health care provider to provide non-Department health care services to veterans if the Secretary determines that—

(1) the health care provider was removed from employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs due to conduct that violated a policy of the Department relating to the delivery of safe and appropriate patient care;

(2) the health care provider violated the requirements of a medical license of the health care provider;

(3) the health care provider had a Department credential revoked and the Secretary determines that the grounds for such revocation impacts the ability of the health care provider to deliver safe and appropriate care; or

(4) the health care provider violated a law for which a term of imprisonment of more than one year may be imposed.

(b) PERMISSIVE ACTION.—The Secretary may deny, revoke, or suspend the eligibility of a health care provider to provide non-Department health care services if the Secretary has reasonable belief that such action is necessary to immediately protect the health, safety, or welfare of veterans and—

(1) the health care provider is under investigation by the medical licensing board of a State in which the health care provider is licensed or practices;

(2) the health care provider has entered into a settlement agreement for a disciplinary charge relating to the practice of medicine by the health care provider; or

(3) the Secretary otherwise determines that such action is appropriate under the circumstances.

(c) SUSPENSION.—The Secretary shall suspend the eligibility of a health care provider to provide non-Department health care services to veterans if the health care provider is suspended from serving as a health care provider of the Department.

(d) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation by the Secretary of this section, including the following:

(1) The aggregate number of health care providers denied or suspended under this section from participation in providing non-Department health care services.

(2) An evaluation of any impact on access to care for patients or staffing shortages in programs of the Department providing non-Department health care services.

(3) An explanation of the coordination of the Department with the medical licensing boards of States in implementing this section, the amount of involvement of such boards in such implementation, and efforts by the Department to address any concerns raised by such boards with respect to such implementation.

(4) Such recommendations as the Comptroller General considers appropriate regarding harmonizing eligibility criteria between health care providers of the Department and health care providers eligible to provide non-Department health care services.

(e) NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE SERVICES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''non-Department health care services'' means—

(1) services provided under subchapter I of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, at non-Department facilities (as defined in section 1701 of such title);

(2) services provided under section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note);

(3) services purchased through the Medical Community Care account of the Department; or

(4) services purchased with amounts deposited in the Veterans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014.

SA 4027. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

DIVISION ___—BUILDING AND RENEWING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This division may be cited as the ''Building and Renewing Infrastructure for Development and Growth in Employment Act'' or the ''BRIDGE Act''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this division is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Purpose.
Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING AUTHORITY

Sec. 101. Establishment and general authority of IFA.
Sec. 102. Voting members of the Board of Directors.
Sec. 103. Chief executive officer of IFA.
Sec. 104. Powers and duties of the Board of Directors.
Sec. 105. Senior management.
Sec. 106. Office of Technical and Rural Assistance.
Sec. 107. Special Inspector General for IFA.
Sec. 108. Other personnel.
Sec. 109. Compliance.

TITLE II—TERMS AND LIMITATIONS ON DIRECT LOANS AND LOAN GUARANTEES

Sec. 201. Eligibility criteria for assistance from IFA and terms and limitations of loans.
Sec. 202. Loan terms and repayment.
Sec. 203. Environmental permitting process improvements.
Sec. 204. Compliance and enforcement.
Sec. 205. Audits; reports to the President and Congress.
Sec. 206. Effect on other laws.

TITLE III—FUNDING OF IFA

Sec. 301. Fees.
Sec. 302. Self-sufficiency of IFA.
Sec. 303. Funding.
Sec. 304. Contract authority.
Sec. 305. Limitation on authority.

TITLE IV—TAX EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE AND LOCAL BONDS

Sec. 401. National limitation on amount of tax-exempt financing for facilities.

TITLE V—BUDGETARY EFFECTS

Sec. 501. Budgetary effects.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this division is to facilitate investment in, and the long-term financing of, economically viable eligible infrastructure projects of regional or national significance that are in the public interest in a manner that complements existing Federal, State, local, and private funding sources for

these projects and introduces a merit-based system for financing those projects, in order to mobilize significant private sector investment, create long-term jobs, and ensure United States competitiveness through a self-sustaining institution that limits the need for ongoing Federal funding.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this division:

(1) BLIND TRUST.—The term ''blind trust'' means a trust in which the beneficiary has no knowledge of the specific holdings and no rights over how those holdings are managed by the fiduciary of the trust prior to the dissolution of the trust.

(2) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—The term ''Board of Directors'' means the Board of Directors of IFA.

(3) CHAIRPERSON.—The term ''Chairperson'' means the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of IFA.

(4) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—The term ''Chief Executive Officer'' means the chief executive officer of IFA, appointed under section 103.

(5) COST.—The term ''cost'' has the meaning given the term in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a).

(6) DIRECT LOAN.—The term ''direct loan'' has the meaning given the term in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a).

(7) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ''eligible entity'' means—

(A) an individual;

(B) a corporation;

(C) a partnership, including a public-private partnership;

(D) a joint venture;

(E) a trust;

(F) a State or any other governmental entity, including a political subdivision or any other instrumentality of a State; or

(G) a revolving fund.

(8) ELIGIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''eligible infrastructure project'' means the construction, consolidation, alteration, or repair of the following sectors:

(i) Intercity passenger or freight rail lines, intercity passenger rail facilities or equipment, and intercity freight rail facilities or equipment.

(ii) Intercity passenger bus facilities or equipment.

(iii) Public transportation facilities or equipment.

(iv) Highway facilities, including bridges and tunnels.

(v) Airports and air traffic control systems.

(vi) Port or marine terminal facilities, including approaches to marine terminal facilities or inland port facilities, and port or marine equipment, including fixed equipment to serve approaches to marine terminals or inland ports.

(vii) Transmission or distribution pipelines.

(viii) Inland waterways.

(ix) Intermodal facilities or equipment related to 2 or more of the sectors described in clauses (i) through (viii).

(x) Water treatment and solid waste disposal facilities.

(xi) Storm water management systems.

(xii) Dams and levees.

(xiii) Facilities or equipment for energy transmission, distribution or storage.

(B) AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO MODIFY SECTORS.—The Board of Directors may make modifications, at the discretion of the Board, to any of the sectors described in subparagraph (A) by a vote of not fewer than 5 of the voting members of the Board of Directors.

(9) IFA.—The term ''IFA'' means the Infrastructure Financing Authority established under section 101.

(10) INVESTMENT-GRADE RATING.—The term ''investment-grade rating'' means a rating of BBB minus, Baa3, or higher assigned to an eligible infrastructure project by a ratings agency.

(11) LOAN GUARANTEE.—The term ''loan guarantee'' has the meaning given the term in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a).

(12) OTRA.—The term ''OTRA'' means the Office of Technical and Rural Assistance created pursuant to section 106.

(13) PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.—The term ''public-private partnership'' means any eligible entity—

(A)(i) that is undertaking the development of all or part of an eligible infrastructure project that will have a measurable public benefit, pursuant to requirements established in 1 or more contracts between the entity and a State or an instrumentality of a State; or

(ii) the activities of which, with respect to such an eligible infrastructure project, are subject to regulation by a State or any instrumentality of a State;

(B) that owns, leases, or operates or will own, lease, or operate, the project in whole or in part; and

(C) the participants in which include not fewer than 1 nongovernmental entity with significant investment and some control over the project or entity sponsoring the project vehicle.

(14) RATING AGENCY.—The term ''rating agency'' means a credit rating agency registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a nationally recognized statistical rating organization (as defined in section 3(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78c(a))).

(15) REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE ACCELERATOR.—The term ''regional infrastructure accelerator'' means an organization created by public sector agencies through a multi-jurisdictional or multi-state agreement to provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions that will facilitate the implementation of innovative financing and procurement models to public infrastructure projects.

(16) RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT.—The term ''rural infrastructure project''—

(A) has the same meaning given the term in section 601(15) of title 23, United States Code; and

(B) includes any eligible infrastructure project sector described in clauses (i) through (xvii) of paragraph (8)(A) located in any area other than a city with a population of more than 250,000 inhabitants within the city limits.

(17) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Treasury or the designee of the Secretary of the Treasury.

(18) SENIOR MANAGEMENT.—The term ''senior management'' means the chief financial officer, chief risk officer, chief compliance officer, general counsel, chief lending officer, and chief operations officer of IFA, and such other officers as the Board of Directors may, by majority vote, add to senior management.

(19) STATE.—The term ''State'' means—

(A) each of the several States of the United States; and

(B) the District of Columbia.

TITLE I—INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING AUTHORITY

SEC. 101. ESTABLISHMENT AND GENERAL AUTHORITY OF IFA.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF IFA.—The Infrastructure Financing Authority is established as a wholly owned Government corporation.

(b) GENERAL AUTHORITY OF IFA.—IFA shall—

(1) provide direct loans and loan guarantees to facilitate eligible infrastructure projects that are economically viable, in the public interest, and of regional or national significance; and

(2) carry out any other activities and duties authorized under this division.

(c) INCORPORATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board of Directors first appointed shall be deemed the incorporator of IFA, and the incorporation shall be held to have been effected from the date of the first meeting of the Board of Directors.

(2) CORPORATE OFFICE.—IFA shall—

(A) maintain an office in Washington, DC; and

(B) for purposes of venue in civil actions, be considered to be a resident of Washington, DC.

(d) RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall take such action as may be necessary to assist in implementing IFA and in carrying out the purpose of this division.

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Chapter 91 of title 31, United States Code, does not apply to IFA, unless otherwise specifically provided in this division.

SEC. 102. VOTING MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

(a) VOTING MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—IFA shall have a Board of Directors consisting of 7 voting members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, not more than 4 of whom shall be from the same political party.

(2) CHAIRPERSON.—One of the voting members of the Board of Directors shall be designated by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to serve as Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

(3) CONGRESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the minority leader of the House of Representatives shall each submit a recommendation to the President for appointment of a member of the Board of Directors, after consultation with the appropriate committees of Congress.

(4) SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF RURAL INTERESTS AND GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY.—In making an appointment under this subsection, the President shall give consideration to the geographic areas of the United States in which the members of the Board of Directors live and work, particularly to ensure that the infrastructure priorities and concerns of each region of the country, including rural areas and small communities, are represented on the Board of Directors.

(b) VOTING RIGHTS.—Each voting member of the Board of Directors shall have an equal vote in all decisions of the Board of Directors.

(c) QUALIFICATIONS OF VOTING MEMBERS.—Each voting member of the Board of Directors shall—

(1) be a citizen of the United States; and

(2) have significant demonstrated expertise in—

(A) the management and administration of a financial institution relevant to the operation of IFA; or

(B) the financing, development, or operation of infrastructure projects, including in the evaluation and selection of eligible infrastructure projects based on the purposes, goals, and objectives of this division.

(d) TERMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this division, each voting member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed for a term of 5 years.

(2) INITIAL STAGGERED TERMS.—Of the voting members first appointed to the Board of Directors—

(A) the initial Chairperson and 3 of the other voting members shall each be appointed for a term of 5 years; and

(B) the remaining 3 voting members shall each be appointed for a term of 2 years.

(3) DATE OF INITIAL NOMINATIONS.—The initial nominations for the appointment of all voting members of the Board of Directors shall be made not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(4) BEGINNING OF TERM.—The term of each of the initial voting members appointed under this section shall commence immediately upon the date of appointment, except that, for purposes of calculating the term limits specified in this subsection, the initial terms shall each be construed as beginning on January 22 of the year following the date of the initial appointment.

(5) VACANCIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy in the position of a voting member of the Board of Directors shall be filled by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(B) TERM.—A member appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors occurring before the expiration of the term for which the predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of that term.

(e) MEETINGS.—

(1) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC; NOTICE.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), all meetings of the Board of Directors shall be—

(A) open to the public; and

(B) preceded by reasonable public notice.

(2) FREQUENCY.—The Board of Directors shall meet—

(A) not later than 60 days after the date on which all members of the Board of Directors are first appointed;

(B) at least quarterly after the date described in subparagraph (A); and

(C) at the call of the Chairperson or 3 voting members of the Board of Directors.

(3) EXCEPTION FOR CLOSED MEETINGS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The voting members of the Board of Directors may, by majority vote, close a meeting to the public if, during the meeting to be closed, there is likely to be disclosed proprietary or sensitive information regarding an eligible infrastructure project under consideration for assistance under this division.

(B) AVAILABILITY OF MINUTES.—The Board of Directors shall prepare minutes of any meeting that is closed to the public, which minutes shall be made available as soon as practicable, but not later than 1 year after the date of the closed meeting, with any necessary redactions to protect any proprietary or sensitive information.

(4) QUORUM.—For purposes of meetings of the Board of Directors, 5 voting members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

(f) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each voting member of the Board of Directors shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level III of the Executive Schedule under section 5314 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which the member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Board of Directors.

(g) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—A voting member of the Board of Directors may not participate in any review or decision affecting an eligible infrastructure project under consideration for assistance under this division, if the member has or is affiliated with an entity who has a financial interest in that project.

SEC. 103. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Executive Officer shall—

(1) be a nonvoting member of the Board of Directors;

(2) be responsible for all activities of IFA; and

(3) support the Board of Directors in accordance with this division and as the Board of Directors determines to be necessary.

(b) APPOINTMENT AND TENURE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint the Chief Executive Officer, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(2) TERM.—The Chief Executive Officer shall be appointed for a term of 6 years.

(3) VACANCIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any vacancy in the office of the Chief Executive Officer shall be filled by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(B) TERM.—The person appointed to fill a vacancy in the Chief Executive Officer position that occurs before the expiration of the term for which the predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of that term.

(c) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Chief Executive Officer—

(1) shall have significant expertise in management and administration of a financial institution, or significant expertise in the financing and development of infrastructure projects; and

(2) may not—

(A) hold any other public office;

(B) have any financial interest in an eligible infrastructure project then being considered by the Board of Directors, unless that interest is placed in a blind trust; or

(C) have any financial interest in an investment institution or its affiliates or any other entity seeking or likely to seek financial assistance for any eligible infrastructure project from IFA, unless any such interest is placed in a blind trust for the tenure of the service of the Chief Executive Officer plus 2 additional years.

(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Chief Executive Officer shall have such executive functions, powers, and duties as may be prescribed by this division, the bylaws of IFA, or the Board of Directors, including—

(1) responsibility for the development and implementation of the strategy of IFA, including—

(A) the development and submission to the Board of Directors of the annual business plans and budget;

(B) the development and submission to the Board of Directors of a long-term strategic plan; and

(C) the development, revision, and submission to the Board of Directors of internal policies; and

(2) responsibility for the management and oversight of the daily activities, decisions, operations, and personnel of IFA.

(e) COMPENSATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any compensation assessment or recommendation by the Chief Executive Officer under this section shall be without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 or subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—The compensation assessment or recommendation required under this subsection shall take into account merit principles, where applicable, as well as the education, experience, level of responsibility, geographic differences, and retention and recruitment needs in determining compensation of personnel.

SEC. 104. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The Board of Directors shall—

(1) as soon as practicable after the date on which all members are appointed, approve or disapprove senior management appointed by the Chief Executive Officer;

(2) not later than 180 days after the date on which all members are appointed—

(A) develop and approve the bylaws of IFA, including bylaws for the regulation of the affairs and conduct of the business of IFA, consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and policies set forth in this division;

(B) establish subcommittees, including an audit committee that is composed solely of members of the Board of Directors, other than the Chief Executive Officer;

(C) develop and approve, in consultation with senior management, a conflict-of-interest policy for the Board of Directors and for senior management;

(D) approve or disapprove internal policies that the Chief Executive Officer shall submit to the Board of Directors, including—

(i) policies regarding the loan application and approval process, including application procedures and project approval processes; and

(ii) operational guidelines; and

(E) approve or disapprove a 1-year business plan and budget for IFA;

(3) ensure that IFA is at all times operated in a manner that is consistent with this division, by—

(A) monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of IFA in achieving its strategic goals;

(B) reviewing and approving internal policies, annual business plans, annual budgets, and long-term strategies submitted by the Chief Executive Officer;

(C) reviewing and approving annual reports submitted by the Chief Executive Officer;

(D) engaging 1 or more external auditors, as set forth in this division; and

(E) reviewing and approving all changes to the organization of senior management;

(4) appoint and fix, by a vote of not less than 5 of the 7 voting members of the Board of Directors, and without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 or subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, the compensation and adjustments to compensation of all IFA personnel, provided that in appointing and fixing any compensation or adjustments to compensation under this paragraph, the Board shall—

(A) consult with, and seek to maintain comparability with, other comparable Federal personnel, as the Board of Directors may determine to be appropriate;

(B) consult with the Office of Personnel Management; and

(C) carry out those duties consistent with merit principles, where applicable, as well as the education, experience, level of responsibility, geographic differences, comparability to private sector positions, and retention and recruitment needs in determining compensation of personnel;

(5) serve as the primary liaison for IFA in interactions with Congress, the Secretary of Transportation and other executive branch officials, and State and local governments, and to represent the interests of IFA in those interactions and others;

(6) approve by a vote of not less than 5 of the 7 voting members of the Board of Directors any changes to the bylaws or internal policies of IFA;

(7) have the authority and responsibility—

(A) to oversee entering into and carrying out such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as are necessary to carry out this division;

(B) to approve of the acquisition, lease, pledge, exchange, and disposal of real and personal property by IFA and otherwise approve the exercise by IFA of all of the usual

incidents of ownership of property, to the extent that the exercise of those powers is appropriate to and consistent with the purposes of IFA;

(C) to determine the character of, and the necessity for, the obligations and expenditures of IFA, and the manner in which the obligations and expenditures will be incurred, allowed, and paid, subject to this division and other Federal law specifically applicable to wholly owned Federal corporations;

(D) to execute, in accordance with applicable bylaws and regulations, appropriate instruments;

(E) to approve other forms of credit enhancement that IFA may provide to eligible projects, as long as the forms of credit enhancements are consistent with the purposes of this division and terms set forth in title II;

(F) to exercise all other lawful powers which are necessary or appropriate to carry out, and are consistent with, the purposes of IFA;

(G) to sue or be sued in the corporate capacity of IFA in any court of competent jurisdiction;

(H) to indemnify the members of the Board of Directors and officers of IFA for any liabilities arising out of the actions of the members and officers in that capacity, in accordance with, and subject to the limitations contained in this division;

(I) to review all financial assistance packages to all eligible infrastructure projects, as submitted by the Chief Executive Officer and to approve, postpone, or deny the same by majority vote;

(J) to review all restructuring proposals submitted by the Chief Executive Officer, including assignation, pledging, or disposal of the interest of IFA in a project, including payment or income from any interest owned or held by IFA, and to approve, postpone, or deny the same by majority vote;

(K) to enter into binding commitments, as specified in approved financial assistance packages;

(L) to determine whether—

(i) to obtain a lien on the assets of an eligible entity that receives assistance under this division; and

(ii) to subordinate a lien under clause (i) to any other lien securing project obligations; and

(M) to ensure a measurable public benefit in the selection of eligible infrastructure projects and to provide for reasonable public input in the selection of such projects;

(8) delegate to the Chief Executive Officer those duties that the Board of Directors determines to be appropriate, to better carry out the powers and purposes of the Board of Directors under this section; and

(9) to approve a maximum aggregate amount of principal exposure of IFA at any given time.

SEC. 105. SENIOR MANAGEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Senior management shall support the Chief Executive Officer in the discharge of the responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer.

(b) APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT.—The Chief Executive Officer shall appoint such senior managers as are necessary to carry out the purposes of IFA, as approved by a majority vote of the voting members of the Board of Directors, including a chief compliance officer, general counsel, chief operating officer, chief lending officer, and other positions as determined to be appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors.

(c) TERM.—Each member of senior management shall serve at the pleasure of the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors.

(d) REMOVAL OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT.—Any member of senior management may be removed—

(1) by a majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors at the request of the Chief Executive Officer; or

(2) by a vote of not fewer than 5 voting members of the Board of Directors.

(e) SENIOR MANAGEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each member of senior management shall report directly to the Chief Executive Officer, other than the chief risk officer, who shall report directly to the Board of Directors.

(2) CHIEF RISK OFFICER.—The chief risk officer shall be responsible for all functions of IFA relating to—

(A) the creation of financial, credit, and operational risk management guidelines and policies;

(B) the establishment of guidelines to ensure diversification of lending activities by region, infrastructure project type, and project size;

(C) the creation of conforming standards for infrastructure finance agreements;

(D) the monitoring of the financial, credit, and operational exposure of IFA; and

(E) risk management and mitigation actions, including by reporting those actions, or recommendations of actions to be taken, directly to the Board of Directors.

(f) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—No individual appointed to senior management may—

(1) hold any other public office;

(2) have any financial interest in an eligible infrastructure project then being considered by the Board of Directors, unless that interest is placed in a blind trust; or

(3) have any financial interest in an investment institution or its affiliates, IFA or its affiliates, or other entity then seeking or likely to seek financial assistance for any eligible infrastructure project from IFA, unless any such interest is placed in a blind trust during the term of service of that individual in a senior management position, and for a period of 2 years thereafter.

SEC. 106. OFFICE OF TECHNICAL AND RURAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Executive Officer shall create and manage, within IFA, the ''Office of Technical and Rural Assistance''.

(b) DUTIES.—The OTRA shall—

(1) in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer, provide technical assistance to State and local governments and parties in public-private partnerships in the development and financing of eligible infrastructure projects, including rural infrastructure projects;

(2) assist the entities described in paragraph (1) with coordinating loan and loan guarantee programs available through Federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation and other Federal agencies, as appropriate;

(3) work with the entities described in paragraph (1) to identify and develop a pipeline of projects suitable for financing through innovative project financing and performance based project delivery, including those projects with the potential for financing through IFA; and

(4) establish a regional infrastructure accelerator demonstration program to assist the entities described in paragraph (1) in developing improved infrastructure priorities and financing strategies, for the accelerated development of covered infrastructure projects, including those projects with the potential for financing through IFA.

(c) DESIGNATION OF REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE ACCELERATORS.—In carrying out the program established pursuant to subsection (b)(3), the OTRA is authorized to designate regional infrastructure accelerators that will—

(1) serve a defined geographic area; and

(2) act as a resource in such area to entities described in subsection (b)(1), in accordance with this subsection.

(d) APPLICATION PROCESS.—To be eligible for a designation under subsection (c), regional infrastructure accelerators shall submit a proposal to the OTRA at such time, in such form, and containing such information as the OTRA determines is appropriate.

(e) CONSIDERATIONS.—In evaluating proposals submitted pursuant to subsection (d), the OTRA shall consider—

(1) the need for geographic diversity among regional infrastructure accelerators; and

(2) promoting investment in covered infrastructure projects, which shall include a plan—

(A) to evaluate and promote innovative financing methods for local projects, including the use of IFA;

(B) to build capacity of governments to evaluate and structure projects involving the investment of private capital;

(C) to provide technical assistance and information on best practices with respect to financing such projects;

(D) to increase transparency with respect to infrastructure project analysis and utilizing innovative financing for public infrastructure projects;

(E) to deploy predevelopment capital programs designed to facilitate the creation of a pipeline of infrastructure projects available for investment;

(F) to bundle smaller-scale and rural projects into larger proposals that may be more attractive for investment; and

(G) to reduce transaction costs for public project sponsors.

(f) ANNUAL REPORT.—The OTRA shall submit an annual report to Congress that describes the findings and effectiveness of the infrastructure accelerator demonstration program.

SEC. 107. SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR IFA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) INITIAL PERIOD.—During the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of the Treasury shall serve as the Special Inspector General for IFA in addition to the existing duties of the Inspector General of the Department of the Treasury.

(2) OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL.—Beginning on the day that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, there is established the Office of the Special Inspector General for IFA.

(b) APPOINTMENT OF INSPECTOR GENERAL; REMOVAL.—

(1) HEAD OF OFFICE.—The head of the Office of the Special Inspector General for IFA shall be the Special Inspector General for IFA (referred to in this division as the ''Special Inspector General''), who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(2) BASIS OF APPOINTMENT.—The appointment of the Special Inspector General shall be made on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, or investigations.

(3) TIMING OF NOMINATION.—The nomination of an individual as Special Inspector General shall be made as soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act.

(4) REMOVAL.—The Special Inspector General shall be removable from office in accordance with the provisions of section 3(b) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(5) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—For purposes of section 7324 of title 5, United States Code,

the Special Inspector General shall not be considered an employee who determines policies to be pursued by the United States in the nationwide administration of Federal law.

(6) RATE OF PAY.—The annual rate of basic pay of the Special Inspector General shall be the annual rate of basic pay for an Inspector General under section 3(e) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(c) DUTIES.—The Special Inspector General shall—

(1) conduct, supervise, and coordinate audits and investigations of the business activities of IFA;

(2) establish, maintain, and oversee such systems, procedures, and controls as the Special Inspector General considers appropriate to discharge the duty under paragraph (1); and

(3) carry out any other duties and responsibilities of inspectors general under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(d) POWERS AND AUTHORITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the duties specified in subsection (c), the Special Inspector General shall have the authorities provided in section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(2) ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY.—The Special Inspector General shall carry out the duties specified in subsection (c)(1) in accordance with section 4(b)(1) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) PERSONNEL, FACILITIES, AND OTHER RESOURCES.—

(1) ADDITIONAL OFFICERS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Special Inspector General may select, appoint, and employ such officers and employees as may be necessary for carrying out the duties of the Special Inspector General, subject to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(B) EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION.—The Special Inspector General may exercise the authorities of subsections (b) through (i) of section 3161 of title 5, United States Code (without regard to subsection (a) of that section).

(2) RETENTION OF SERVICES.—The Special Inspector General may obtain services as authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, at daily rates not to exceed the equivalent rate prescribed for grade GS–15 of the General Schedule by section 5332 of such title.

(3) ABILITY TO CONTRACT FOR AUDITS, STUDIES, AND OTHER SERVICES.—The Special Inspector General may enter into contracts and other arrangements for audits, studies, analyses, and other services with public agencies and with private persons, and make such payments as may be necessary to carry out the duties of the Special Inspector General.

(4) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon request of the Special Inspector General for information or assistance from any department, agency, or other entity of the Federal Government, the head of that entity shall, insofar as is practicable and not in contravention of any existing law, furnish the information or assistance to the Special Inspector General or an authorized designee.

(B) REFUSAL TO COMPLY.—If information or assistance requested by the Special Inspector General is, in the judgment of the Special Inspector General, unreasonably refused or not provided, the Special Inspector General shall report the circumstances to the Secretary, without delay.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the Special Inspector General is confirmed, and every calendar year thereafter, the Special Inspector General shall submit to the President and appropriate committees of Congress a report summarizing the activities of the Special Inspector General during the previous 1-year period ending on the date of that report.

(2) PUBLIC DISCLOSURES.—Nothing in this subsection authorizes the public disclosure of information that is—

(A) specifically prohibited from disclosure by any other provision of law;

(B) specifically required by Executive order to be protected from disclosure in the interest of national defense or national security or in the conduct of foreign affairs; or

(C) a part of an ongoing criminal investigation.

SEC. 108. OTHER PERSONNEL.

(a) APPOINTMENT, REMOVAL, AND DEFINITION OF DUTIES.—Except as otherwise provided in the bylaws of IFA, the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board of Directors, shall appoint, remove, and define the duties of such qualified personnel as are necessary to carry out the powers, duties, and purpose of IFA, other than senior management, who shall be appointed in accordance with section 105.

(b) COORDINATION IN IDENTIFYING QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE.—In appointing qualified personnel pursuant to subsection (a), the Chief Executive Officer shall coordinate with, and seek assistance from, the Secretary of Transportation in identifying the appropriate qualifications and expertise in infrastructure project finance.

SEC. 109. COMPLIANCE.

The provision of assistance by IFA pursuant to this division does not supersede any provision of State law or regulation otherwise applicable to an eligible infrastructure project.

TITLE II—TERMS AND LIMITATIONS ON DIRECT LOANS AND LOAN GUARANTEES

SEC. 201. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ASSISTANCE FROM IFA AND TERMS AND LIMITATIONS OF LOANS.

(a) PUBLIC BENEFIT; FINANCEABILITY.—A project is not be eligible for financial assistance from IFA under this division if—

(1) the use or purpose of such project is private or such project does not create a public benefit, as determined by the Board of Directors; or

(2) the applicant is unable to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Board of Directors, a sufficient revenue stream to finance the loan that will be used to pay for such project.

(b) FINANCIAL CRITERIA.—If the project meets the requirements under subsection (a), an applicant for financial assistance under this division shall demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Board of Directors, that—

(1) for public-private partnerships, the project has received contributed capital or commitments for contributed capital equal to not less than 10 percent of the total cost of the eligible infrastructure project for which assistance is being sought if such contributed capital includes—

(A) equity;

(B) deeply subordinate loans or other credit and debt instruments, which shall be junior to any IFA assistance provided for the project;

(C) appropriated funds or grants from governmental sources other than the Federal Government; or

(D) irrevocable private contributions of funds, grants, property (including rights-of-way), and other assets that directly reduce or offset project costs; and

(2) the eligible infrastructure project for which assistance is being sought—

(A) is not for the refinancing of an existing infrastructure project; and

(B) meets—

(i) any pertinent requirements set forth in this division;

(ii) any criteria established by the Board of Directors under subsection (c) or by the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with this division; and

(iii) the definition of an eligible infrastructure project.

(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—The criteria established by the Board of Directors under this subsection shall provide adequate consideration of—

(1) the economic, financial, technical, environmental, and public benefits and costs of each eligible infrastructure project under consideration for financial assistance under this division, prioritizing eligible infrastructure projects that—

(A) demonstrate a clear and measurable public benefit;

(B) offer value for money to taxpayers;

(C) contribute to regional or national economic growth;

(D) lead to long-term job creation; and

(E) mitigate environmental concerns;

(2) the means by which development of the eligible infrastructure project under consideration is being financed, including—

(A) the terms, conditions, and structure of the proposed financing;

(B) the creditworthiness and standing of the project sponsors, providers of equity, and cofinanciers;

(C) the financial assumptions and projections on which the eligible infrastructure project is based; and

(D) whether there is sufficient State or municipal political support for the successful completion of the eligible infrastructure project;

(3) the likelihood that the provision of assistance by IFA will cause the development to proceed more promptly and with lower costs for financing than would be the case without IFA assistance;

(4) the extent to which the provision of assistance by IFA maximizes the level of private investment in the eligible infrastructure project or supports a public-private partnership, while providing a significant public benefit;

(5) the extent to which the provision of assistance by IFA can mobilize the participation of other financing partners in the eligible infrastructure project;

(6) the technical and operational viability of the eligible infrastructure project;

(7) the proportion of financial assistance from IFA;

(8) the geographical location of the project, prioritizing geographical diversity of projects funded by IFA;

(9) the size of the project and the impact of the project on the resources of IFA; and

(10) the infrastructure sector of the project, prioritizing projects from more than 1 sector funded by IFA.

(d) APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any eligible entity seeking assistance from IFA under this division for an eligible infrastructure project shall submit an application to IFA at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Board of Directors or the Chief Executive Officer may require.

(2) REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—IFA shall review applications for assistance under this division on an ongoing basis.

(B) PREPARATION.—The Chief Executive Officer, in cooperation with the senior management, shall prepare eligible infrastructure projects for review and approval by the Board of Directors.

(3) DEDICATED REVENUE SOURCES.—The Federal credit instrument shall be repayable, in whole or in part, from tolls, user fees, or other dedicated revenue sources derived from users or beneficiaries that also secure the eligible infrastructure project obligations.

(e) ELIGIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT COSTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), to be eligible for assistance under this division, an eligible infrastructure project shall have project costs that are reasonably anticipated to equal or exceed $50,000,000.

(2) RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.—To be eligible for assistance under this division a rural infrastructure project shall have project costs that are reasonably anticipated to equal or exceed $10,000,000.

(f) LOAN ELIGIBILITY AND MAXIMUM AMOUNTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amount of a direct loan or loan guarantee under this division shall not exceed the lesser of—

(A) 49 percent of the reasonably anticipated eligible infrastructure project costs; and

(B) the amount of the senior project obligations, if the direct loan or loan guarantee does not receive an investment grade rating.

(2) MAXIMUM ANNUAL LOAN AND LOAN GUARANTEE VOLUME.—The aggregate amount of direct loans and loan guarantees made by IFA shall not exceed—

(A) during the first 2 fiscal years of the operations of IFA, $10,000,000,000 per year;

(B) during fiscal years 3 through 9 of the operations of IFA, $20,000,000,000 per year; and

(C) during any fiscal year thereafter, $50,000,000,000.

SEC. 202. LOAN TERMS AND REPAYMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A direct loan or loan guarantee under this division with respect to an eligible infrastructure project shall be on such terms, subject to such conditions, and contain such covenants, representations, warranties, and requirements (including requirements for audits) as the Chief Executive Officer determines appropriate.

(b) TERMS.—A direct loan or loan guarantee under this division—

(1) shall—

(A) be payable, in whole or in part, from tolls, user fees, or other dedicated revenue sources derived from users or beneficiaries; and

(B) include a rate covenant, coverage requirement, or similar security feature supporting the project obligations; and

(2) may be secured by a lien—

(A) on the assets of the obligor, including revenues described in paragraph (1); and

(B) which may be subordinated to any other lien securing project obligations.

(c) BASE INTEREST RATE.—The base interest rate on a direct loan under this division shall be not less than the yield on Treasury obligations of a similar maturity to the maturity of the direct loan on the date of execution of the loan agreement.

(d) RISK ASSESSMENT.—Before entering into an agreement for assistance under this division, the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and each rating agency providing a preliminary rating opinion letter under this section, shall determine an appropriate Federal credit subsidy amount for each direct loan and loan guarantee, taking into account that preliminary rating opinion letter, as well as any comparable market rates available for such a loan or loan guarantee, should any exist.

(e) CREDIT FEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to each agreement for assistance under this division, the Chief Executive Officer shall charge a credit fee to the recipient of that assistance to pay for, over time, all or a portion of the Federal credit subsidy determined under subsection (d), with the remainder paid by the account established for IFA.

(2) DIRECT LOANS.—In the case of a direct loan, the credit fee described in paragraph (1) shall be in addition to the base interest rate established under subsection (c).

(f) MATURITY DATE.—The final maturity date of a direct loan or loan guaranteed by IFA under this division shall be not later than 35 years after the date of substantial completion of the eligible infrastructure project, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

(g) PRELIMINARY RATING OPINION LETTER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Executive Officer shall require each applicant for assistance under this division to provide a preliminary rating opinion letter from at least 1 rating agency, indicating that the senior obligations of the eligible infrastructure project, which may be the Federal credit instrument, have the potential to achieve an investment-grade rating.

(2) RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.—With respect to a rural infrastructure project, a rating agency opinion letter described in paragraph (1) shall not be required, except that the loan or loan guarantee shall receive an internal rating score, using methods similar to the rating agencies generated by IFA, measuring the proposed direct loan or loan guarantee against comparable direct loans or loan guarantees of similar credit quality in a similar sector.

(h) INVESTMENT-GRADE RATING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) LOANS AND LOAN GUARANTEES.—The execution of a direct loan or loan guarantee under this division shall be contingent on the senior obligations of the eligible infrastructure project receiving an investment-grade rating.

(2) RATING OF IFA OVERALL PORTFOLIO.—The average rating of the overall portfolio of IFA shall be not less than investment grade after 5 years of operation.

(i) TERMS AND REPAYMENT OF DIRECT LOANS.—

(1) SCHEDULE.—The Chief Executive Officer shall establish a repayment schedule for each direct loan under this division, based on the projected cash flow from eligible infrastructure project revenues and other repayment sources.

(2) COMMENCEMENT.—Scheduled loan repayments of principal or interest on a direct loan under this division shall commence not later than 5 years after the date of substantial completion of the eligible infrastructure project, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer of IFA.

(3) DEFERRED PAYMENTS OF DIRECT LOANS.—

(A) AUTHORIZATION.—If, at any time after the date of substantial completion of an eligible infrastructure project assisted under this division, the eligible infrastructure project is unable to generate sufficient revenues to pay the scheduled loan repayments of principal and interest on the direct loan under this division, the Chief Executive Officer may allow the obligor to add unpaid principal and interest to the outstanding balance of the direct loan, if the result would benefit the taxpayer.

(B) INTEREST.—Any payment deferred under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) continue to accrue interest, in accordance with the terms of the obligation, until fully repaid; and

(ii) be scheduled to be amortized over the remaining term of the loan.

(C) CRITERIA.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Any payment deferral under subparagraph (A) shall be contingent on the eligible infrastructure project meeting criteria established by the Board of Directors.

(ii) REPAYMENT STANDARDS.—The criteria established under clause (i) shall include standards for reasonable assurance of repayment.

(4) PREPAYMENT OF DIRECT LOANS.—

(A) USE OF EXCESS REVENUES.—Any excess revenues that remain after satisfying scheduled debt service requirements on the eligible infrastructure project obligations and direct loan and all deposit requirements under the terms of any trust agreement, bond resolution, or similar agreement securing project obligations under this division may be applied annually to prepay the direct loan, without penalty.

(B) USE OF PROCEEDS OF REFINANCING.—A direct loan under this division may be prepaid at any time, without penalty, from the proceeds of refinancing from non-Federal funding sources.

(j) LOAN GUARANTEES.—The terms of a loan guaranteed by IFA under this division shall be consistent with the terms set forth in this section for a direct loan, except that the rate on the guaranteed loan and any payment, prepayment, or refinancing features shall be negotiated between the obligor and the lender (as defined in section 601(a) of title 23, United States Code) with the consent of the Chief Executive Officer.

(k) COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL CREDIT REFORM ACT OF 1990.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), direct loans and loan guarantees authorized by this division shall be subject to the provisions of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

(2) EXCEPTION.—Section 504(b) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661c(b)) shall not apply to a loan or loan guarantee under this division.

(l) POLICY OF CONGRESS.—It is the policy of Congress that IFA shall only make a direct loan or loan guarantee under this division if IFA determines that IFA is reasonably expected to recover the full amount of the direct loan or loan guarantee.

SEC. 203. ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—As soon as practicable after IFA approves financing for a proposed project under this title, the President shall convene a meeting of representatives of all relevant and appropriate permitting agencies—

(1) to establish or update a permitting timetable for the proposed project;

(2) to coordinate concurrent permitting reviews by all necessary agencies; and

(3) to coordinate with relevant State agencies and regional infrastructure development agencies to ensure—

(A) adequate participation; and

(B) the timely provision of necessary documentation to allow any State review to proceed without delay.

(b) GOAL.—The permitting timetable for each proposed project established pursuant to subsection (a)(1) shall ensure that the environmental review process is completed as soon as practicable.

(c) EARLIER.—The President may carry out the functions set forth in subsection (a) with respect to a proposed project before the IFA has approved financing for such project upon the request of the Chief Executive Officer.

(d) CONCURRENT REVIEWS.—Each agency, to the greatest extent permitted by law, shall—

(1) carry out the obligations of the agency under other applicable law concurrently, and in conjunction with other reviews being conducted by other participating agencies, including environmental reviews required under the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), unless such concurrent reviews would impair the ability of

the agency to carry out its statutory obligations; and

(2) formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms to enable the agency to ensure the completion of the environmental review process in a timely, coordinated, and environmentally responsible manner.

SEC. 204. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT.

(a) CREDIT AGREEMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, each eligible entity that receives assistance under this division shall enter into a credit agreement that requires such entity to comply with all applicable policies and procedures of IFA, in addition to all other provisions of the loan agreement.

(b) APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL LAWS.—Each eligible entity that receives assistance under this division shall provide written assurance, in such form and manner and containing such terms as are to be prescribed by IFA, that the eligible infrastructure project will be performed in compliance with the requirements of all Federal laws that would otherwise apply to similar projects to which the United States is a party, or financed in whole or in part from Federal funds or in accordance with guarantees of a Federal agency or financed from funds obtained by pledge of any contract of a Federal agency to make a loan, grant, or annual contribution (except where a different meaning is expressly indicated).

(c) IFA AUTHORITY ON NONCOMPLIANCE.—In any case in which an eligible entity that receives assistance under this division is materially out of compliance with the loan agreement, or any applicable policy or procedure of IFA, the Board of Directors may take action—

(1) to cancel unused loan amounts; or

(2) to accelerate the repayment terms of any outstanding obligation.

SEC. 205. AUDITS; REPORTS TO THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS.

(a) ACCOUNTING.—The books of account of IFA shall be—

(1) maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; and

(2) subject to an annual audit by independent public accountants of nationally recognized standing appointed by the Board of Directors.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—Not later than 90 days after the last day of each fiscal year, the Board of Directors shall submit to the President and Congress a complete and detailed report with respect to the preceding fiscal year, setting forth—

(A) a summary of the operations of IFA for that fiscal year;

(B) a schedule of the obligations of IFA and capital securities outstanding at the end of that fiscal year, with a statement of the amounts issued and redeemed or paid during that fiscal year;

(C) the status of eligible infrastructure projects receiving funding or other assistance pursuant to this division during that fiscal year, including—

(i) all nonperforming loans; and

(ii) disclosure of all entities with a development, ownership, or operational interest in those eligible infrastructure projects;

(D) a description of the successes and challenges encountered in lending to rural communities, including the role of the Office of Technical and Rural Assistance established under this division; and

(E) an assessment of the risks of the portfolio of IFA, which shall be prepared by an independent source.

(2) GAO.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an evaluation of, and submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report on the activities of IFA for the fiscal years covered by the report that includes—

(A) an assessment of the impact and benefits of each funded eligible infrastructure project, including a review of how effectively each eligible infrastructure project accomplished the goals prioritized by the eligible infrastructure project criteria of IFA; and

(B) an evaluation of the effectiveness of, and challenges facing, loan programs at the Department of Transportation and Department of Energy, and an analysis of the advisability of consolidating those programs within IFA.

(c) BOOKS AND RECORDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—IFA shall maintain adequate books and records to support the financial transactions of IFA, with a description of financial transactions and eligible infrastructure projects receiving funding, and the amount of funding for each project maintained on a publically accessible database.

(2) AUDITS BY THE SECRETARY AND GAO.—The books and records of IFA shall at all times be open to inspection by the Secretary, the Special Inspector General, and the Comptroller General of the United States.

SEC. 206. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.

Nothing in this division may be construed to affect or alter the responsibility of an eligible entity that receives assistance under this division to comply with applicable Federal and State laws (including regulations) relating to an eligible infrastructure project.

TITLE III—FUNDING OF IFA

SEC. 301. FEES.

The Chief Executive Officer shall establish fees with respect to loans and loan guarantees under this division that—

(1) are sufficient to cover all the administrative costs to the Federal Government for the operations of IFA;

(2) may be in the form of an application or transaction fee, or interest rate adjustment; and

(3) may be based on the risk premium associated with the loan or loan guarantee, taking into consideration—

(A) the price of Treasury obligations of a similar maturity;

(B) prevailing market conditions;

(C) the ability of the eligible infrastructure project to support the loan or loan guarantee; and

(D) the total amount of the loan or loan guarantee.

SEC. 302. SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF IFA.

The Chief Executive Officer shall, to the extent practicable, take actions consistent with this division to make IFA a self-sustaining entity, with administrative costs and Federal credit subsidy costs fully funded by fees and risk premiums on loans and loan guarantees.

SEC. 303. FUNDING.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to IFA to make direct loans and loan guarantees under this division $10,000,000,000, which shall remain available until expended.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Of the amounts appropriated pursuant to paragraph (1), the IFA may expend, for administrative costs, not more than—

(A) $25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2016 and 2017; and

(B) not more than $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2018.

(b) INTEREST.—The amounts made available to IFA pursuant to subsection (a) shall be placed in interest-bearing accounts.

(c) RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.—Of the amounts made available to IFA under this section, not less than 5 percent shall be used to offset subsidy costs associated with rural infrastructure projects.

SEC. 304. CONTRACT AUTHORITY.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, approval by the Board of Directors of a Federal credit instrument that uses funds made available under this division shall impose upon the United States a contractual obligation to fund the Federal credit investment.

SEC. 305. LIMITATION ON AUTHORITY.

IFA shall not have the authority to issue debt in its own name.

TITLE IV—TAX EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE AND LOCAL BONDS

SEC. 401. NATIONAL LIMITATION ON AMOUNT OF TAX-EXEMPT FINANCING FOR FACILITIES.

Section 142(m)(2)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$15,000,000,000'' and inserting ''$16,000,000,000''.

TITLE V—BUDGETARY EFFECTS

SEC. 501. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this division, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this division, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

SA 4028. Mr. PERDUE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Notwithstanding any other provision in this Act—

(1) the total amount made available on October 1, 2016 under the heading ''TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE'' under the heading ''PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING'' under the heading ''DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT'' shall be $15,740,696,000; and

(2) the amount made available for renewals of expiring section 8 tenant-based annual contributions contracts under the heading ''TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE'' under the heading ''PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING'' under the heading ''DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT'' shall be $17,664,000,000.

SA 4029. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Of the funds made available in this title for fiscal year 2017 for medical support and compliance, not less than $21,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire Medical Center Directors and employees for other management and clinical positions that are critical to the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to fill vacancies in such positions.

SA 4030. Ms. MIKULSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 217, line 4 of title 2 in division B, strike the period and insert ": *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide access to therapeutic listening devices to veterans struggling with mental health related problems, substance abuse, or traumatic brain injury."

SA 4031. Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2943, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title XII, add the following:

Subtitle ____—Human Rights Sanctions

SEC. ____01. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the "Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act".

SEC. ____02. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term "foreign person" means a person that is not a United States person.

(2) PERSON.—The term "person" means an individual or entity.

(3) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term "United States person" means—

(A) a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States; or

(B) an entity organized under the laws of the United States or of any jurisdiction within the United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity.

SEC. ____03. AUTHORIZATION OF IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President may impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person the President determines, based on credible evidence—

(1) is responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against individuals in any foreign country who seek—

(A) to expose illegal activity carried out by government officials; or

(B) to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote internationally recognized human rights and freedoms, such as the freedoms of religion, expression, association, and assembly, and the rights to a fair trial and democratic elections;

(2) acted as an agent of or on behalf of a foreign person in a matter relating to an activity described in paragraph (1);

(3) is a government official, or a senior associate of such an official, that is responsible for, or complicit in, ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, acts of significant corruption, including the expropriation of private or public assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, bribery, or the facilitation or transfer of the proceeds of corruption to foreign jurisdictions; or

(4) has materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, an activity described in paragraph (3).

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) INADMISSIBILITY TO UNITED STATES.—In the case of a foreign person who is an individual—

(A) ineligibility to receive a visa to enter the United States or to be admitted to the United States; or

(B) if the individual has been issued a visa or other documentation, revocation, in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)), of the visa or other documentation.

(2) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The blocking, in accordance with the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), of all transactions in all property and interests in property of a foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(B) INAPPLICABILITY OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.—The requirements of section 202 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701) shall not apply for purposes of this section.

(C) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The authority to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property under subparagraph (A) shall not include the authority to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(ii) GOOD.—In this subparagraph, the term "good" has the meaning given that term in section 16 of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. 4618) (as continued in effect pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.)).

(c) CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION IN IMPOSING SANCTIONS.—In determining whether to impose sanctions under subsection (a), the President shall consider—

(1) information provided by the chairperson and ranking member of each of the appropriate congressional committees; and

(2) credible information obtained by other countries and nongovernmental organizations that monitor violations of human rights.

(d) REQUESTS BY CHAIRPERSON AND RANKING MEMBER OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—Not later than 120 days after receiving a written request from the chairperson and ranking member of one of the appropriate congressional committees with respect to whether a foreign person has engaged in an activity described in subsection (a), the President shall—

(1) determine if that person has engaged in such an activity; and

(2) submit a report to the chairperson and ranking member of that committee with respect to that determination that includes—

(A) a statement of whether or not the President imposed or intends to impose sanctions with respect to the person; and

(B) if the President imposed or intends to impose sanctions, a description of those sanctions.

(e) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OBJECTIVES.—Sanctions under subsection (b)(1) shall not apply to an individual if admitting the individual into the United States would further important law enforcement objectives or is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations of the United States.

(f) ENFORCEMENT OF BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of subsection (b)(2) or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out subsection (b)(2) shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(g) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The President may terminate the application of sanctions under this section with respect to a person if the President determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees not later than 15 days before the termination of the sanctions that—

(1) credible information exists that the person did not engage in the activity for which sanctions were imposed;

(2) the person has been prosecuted appropriately for the activity for which sanctions were imposed;

(3) the person has credibly demonstrated a significant change in behavior, has paid an appropriate consequence for the activity for which sanctions were imposed, and has credibly committed to not engage in an activity described in subsection (a) in the future; or

(4) the termination of the sanctions is in the vital national security interests of the United States.

(h) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The President shall issue such regulations, licenses, and orders as are necessary to carry out this section.

(i) IDENTIFICATION OF SANCTIONABLE FOREIGN PERSONS.—The Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs and other bureaus of the Department of State, as appropriate, is authorized to submit to the Secretary of State, for review and consideration, the names of foreign persons who may meet the criteria described in subsection (a).

(j) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. ____04. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees, in accordance with subsection (b), a report that includes—

(1) a list of each foreign person with respect to which the President imposed sanctions pursuant to section ___03 during the year preceding the submission of the report;

(2) a description of the type of sanctions imposed with respect to each such person;

(3) the number of foreign persons with respect to which the President—

(A) imposed sanctions under section ___03(a) during that year; and

(B) terminated sanctions under section ___03(g) during that year;

(4) the dates on which such sanctions were imposed or terminated, as the case may be;

(5) the reasons for imposing or terminating such sanctions; and

(6) a description of the efforts of the President to encourage the governments of other countries to impose sanctions that are similar to the sanctions authorized by section ___03.

(b) DATES FOR SUBMISSION.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—The President shall submit the initial report under subsection (a) not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall submit a subsequent report under subsection (a) on December 10, or the first day thereafter on which both Houses of Congress are in session, of—

(i) the calendar year in which the initial report is submitted if the initial report is submitted before December 10 of that calendar year; and

(ii) each calendar year thereafter.

(B) CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENT.—Congress notes that December 10 of each calendar year has been recognized in the United States and internationally since 1950 as ''Human Rights Day''.

(c) FORM OF REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(2) EXCEPTION.—The name of a foreign person to be included in the list required by subsection (a)(1) may be submitted in the classified annex authorized by paragraph (1) only if the President—

(A) determines that it is vital for the national security interests of the United States to do so;

(B) uses the annex in a manner consistent with congressional intent and the purposes of this subtitle; and

(C) not later than 15 days before submitting the name in a classified annex, provides to the appropriate congressional committees notice of, and a justification for, including the name in the classified annex despite any publicly available credible information indicating that the person engaged in an activity described in section ___03(a).

(d) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The unclassified portion of the report required by subsection (a) shall be made available to the public, including through publication in the Federal Register.

(2) NONAPPLICABILITY OF CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO VISA RECORDS.—The President shall publish the list required by subsection (a)(1) without regard to the requirements of section 222(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1202(f)) with respect to confidentiality of records pertaining to the issuance or refusal of visas or permits to enter the United States.

(e) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

SA 4032. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall require each public housing agency that administers public housing (as defined in section 3 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a)) or housing assisted under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f)—

(1) to allow, in each unfurnished dwelling unit, residents to anchor furniture, televisions, and large appliances to the wall without incurring a penalty or obligation to repair the wall upon vacating the dwelling unit; and

(2) to securely anchor to the wall all provided clothing storage units covered by the Standard Safety Specification for Clothing Storage Units (ASTM F2057–14) or any successor standard, bookcases, televisions, and large appliances in each furnished dwelling unit in which a child under the age of 6 resides or is a frequent visitor.

(b) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall require public housing agencies to securely anchor all provided clothing storage units covered by the Standard Safety Specification for Clothing Storage Units (ASTM F2057–14) or any successor standard, bookcases, televisions, and large appliances in furnished dwelling units in public housing (as defined in section 3 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a)) and housing assisted under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall use such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

SA 4033. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, on page 49, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

SEC. 142. (a) From amounts made available to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration under this title, the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shall use such sums as may be necessary—

(1) to modify the labeling and owner's manual information requirements under section 571.208 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, to require the owner's manual for any vehicle sold in the United States to include warning language similar to the following: ''If possible, children should be placed behind unoccupied front seats in a rear seating position, as appropriate based on the child's age and size. In rear end crashes, the backs of occupied front seats are prone to collapse under the weight of their occupants. If this occurs, the seat backs and their occupants can strike children in rear seats and cause severe or fatal injuries.''; and

(2) to modify the child restraint systems requirements under section 571.213 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, to require that the label on rear facing child seats depicted in Figure 10 of such section include the following statement: ''Place behind an unoccupied front seat whenever possible.''.

(b) Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shall—

(1) include data in the Crash Investigation Sampling System and the Fatality Analysis Reporting System regarding the presence, location, and consequences of seatback failure or seatback collapse caused by a vehicle crash; and

(2) determine whether local police crash investigators should include photographs of vehicles involved in crashes and the surrounding crash scene in the databases listed in paragraph (1) to provide the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration a better basis for selecting crashes for further investigation.

(c) The Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shall conduct a study to identify the structural adjustments that would be necessary to prevent a seatback from collapsing in a rear end crash based on the rear impact test procedure under section 571.301 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations.

(d) Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shall issue a rule that updates section 571.207 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation), relating to standards for motor vehicle seating systems based on the findings of the study conducted under subsection (c).

SA 4034. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) Section 30120 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(k) LIMITATION ON SALE OR LEASE OF USED PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES.—(1) A dealer may not sell or lease a used passenger motor vehicle until any defect or noncompliance determined under section 30118 with respect to the vehicle has been remedied.

''(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply if—

''(A) the recall information regarding a used passenger motor vehicle was not accessible at the time of sale or lease using the means established by the Secretary under section 31301 of the Moving Ahead for

Progress in the 21st Century Act (49 U.S.C. 30166 note); or

''(B) notification of the defect or noncompliance is required under section 30118(b), but enforcement of the order is set aside in a civil action to which 30121(d) applies.

''(3) Notwithstanding section 30102(a)(1), in this subsection—

''(A) the term 'dealer' means a person that has sold at least 10 motor vehicles to 1 or more consumers during the most recent 12-month period; and

''(B) the term 'used passenger motor vehicle' means a motor vehicle that has previously been purchased other than for resale.

''(4) By rule, the Secretary may exempt the auctioning of a used passenger motor vehicle from the requirements under paragraph (1) to the extent that the exemption does not harm public safety.''.

(b) This section shall take effect on that date that is 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 4035. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

EXTENSION OF VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

SEC. 251. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in section 101(p)(2), by striking ''3 years'' and inserting ''6 years''; and

(2) in section 802(d)(1), by striking ''$10,000,000,000'' and inserting ''$17,500,000,000''.

(b) RESCISSION OF CERTAIN UNOBLIGATED BALANCES.—All of the unobligated balances of the amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2016 under the headings ''OPERATING EXPENSES'' and ''MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE'' in titles II and V of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2016 (division K of Public Law 114–113), including funds designated by Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(ii)) are rescinded.

SA 4036. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. The Federal Communications Commission shall extend the comment period for the proposed rule entitled ''Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services'' (81 Fed. Reg. 23359 (April 20, 2016)) by 60 days.

SA 4037. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''HOMELESS ASSISTANCE GRANTS'' under the heading ''COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT'' in title II of division A, insert before the period at the end the following: ''*Provided further*, That for purposes of this heading, the term 'recovery housing' means housing where the use of alcohol and the unlawful use of drugs by residents is prohibited, and where residents participate in programming that uses peer support to promote sobriety, health, and positive community involvement''.

SA 4038. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. Not later than September 30, 2017, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) provide for the conduct by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs of an inspection or audit of the use of Federal award GU1103 in the amount of $3,265,487 that was awarded in 2013 to renovate a veteran's cemetery in Guam under the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including—

(A) an itemized accounting of the use of such award; or

(B) if no such itemized accounting is possible, an explanation of why any amounts in connection with such award are unaccounted for;

(2) submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the results on the inspection or audit conducted under paragraph (1); and

(3) publish the results on the inspection or audit conducted under paragraph (1) on a publicly available Internet website of the Department.

SA 4039. Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

EXTENSION AND EXPANSION OF VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

SEC. 251. (a) EXTENSION.—The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in section 101(p)(2), by striking ''3 years'' and inserting ''6 years''; and

(2) in section 802(d)(1), by striking ''$10,000,000,000'' and inserting ''$17,500,000,000''.

(b) EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Subsection (b)(2) of section 101 of such Act is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C)(ii), by striking ''; or'' and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (D)(ii)(II)(dd), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) has received health services under the pilot program under section 403 of the Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–387; 38 U.S.C. 1703 note) and resides in a location described in section (b)(2) of such section.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—(1) Subsection (g)(3) of such section is amended by striking ''or (D)'' and inserting ''(D), or (E)''.

(2) Subsection (q)(2)(A) of such section is amended—

(A) in clause (iii), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(v) eligible veterans described in subsection (b)(2)(E).''.

(d) EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.—The amounts made available under the amendments made by subsection (a) are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(i)).

(e) QUARTERLY REPORT.—Not less frequently than quarterly until all amounts deposited in the Veterans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) are exhausted, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives an update on the expenditures made from such Fund to carry out section 101 of such Act during the quarter covered by the report.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES UNDER MEDICAL COMMUNITY CARE ACCOUNT

SEC. 252. In using amounts made available in this title for the Medical Community Care account of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish consistent criteria and standards—

(1) for purposes of determining eligibility of non-Department health care providers to provide health care under the laws administered by the Secretary, including standards relating to education, certification, licensure, training, and employment history; and

(2) for the reimbursement of such health care providers for care or services provided under the laws administered by the Secretary, which to the extent practicable shall—

(A) use rates for reimbursement that are not more than the rates paid by the United States to a provider of services (as defined in section 1861(u) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(u))) under the Medicare program

under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) for the same care or services;

(B) incorporate the use of value-based reimbursement models to promote the provision of high-quality care to improve health outcomes and the experience of care for veterans; and

(C) be consistent with prompt payment standards required of Federal agencies under chapter 39 of title 31, United States Code.

SA 4040. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 90 days thereafter, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the policies contained in the update to the Community Involvement Manual of the Federal Aviation Administration required under the heading ''OPERATIONS'' under the heading ''FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'' in title I of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016 (division L of Public Law 114–113; 129 Stat. 2840).

SA 4041. Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

CERTAIN SERVICE DEEMED TO BE ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE

SEC. 251. (a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of section 401(a)(1)(A) of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (38 U.S.C. 106 note), the Secretary of Defense is deemed to have determined that qualified service of an individual constituted active military service.

(b) DETERMINATION OF DISCHARGE STATUS.—The Secretary of Defense shall issue an honorable discharge under section 401(a)(1)(B) of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 to each person whose qualified service warrants an honorable discharge. Such discharge shall be issued before the end of the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) PROHIBITION OF RETROACTIVE BENEFITS.—No benefits may be paid to any individual as a result of the enactment of this section for any period before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) QUALIFIED SERVICE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''qualified service'' means service of an individual as a member of the organization known as the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during the period beginning on July 1, 1943, and ending on December 15, 1945.

SA 4042. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. KAINE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 37, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

SEC. 122. (a) TRANSFER OF AMOUNTS.—

(1) STATE OF VIRGINIA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the total amount apportioned to the State of Virginia under section 104 of title 23, United States Code, for fiscal year 2017, the Secretary of Transportation shall, by the later of November 30, 2016, or 30 days after the enactment of this Act, transfer to the National Park Service—

(i) an amount equal to—

(I) $30,000,000; multiplied by

(II) the ratio that—

(aa) the amount apportioned to the State of Virginia under such section 104; bears to

(bb) the combined amount apportioned to the State of Virginia and the District of Columbia under such section 104; and

(ii) an amount of obligation limitation equal to the amount calculated under clause (i).

(B) SOURCE AND AMOUNT.—For purpose of the transfer under subparagraph (A), the State of Virginia shall select at the discretion of the State—

(i) the programs (among those for which funding is apportioned as described in that subparagraph) from which to transfer the amount specified in that subparagraph; and

(ii) the amount to transfer from each of those programs (equal in aggregate to the amount calculated under subparagraph (A)(i)).

(2) DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the total amount apportioned to the District of Columbia under section 104 of title 23, United States Code, for fiscal year 2017, the Secretary of Transportation shall, by the later of November 30, 2016, or 30 days after the enactment of this Act, transfer to the National Park Service—

(i) an amount equal to—

(I) $30,000,000; multiplied by

(II) the ratio that—

(aa) the amount apportioned to the District of Columbia under such section 104; bears to

(bb) the combined amount apportioned to the State of Virginia and the District of Columbia under such section 104; and

(ii) an amount of obligation limitation equal to the amount calculated under clause (i).

(B) SOURCE AND AMOUNT.—For purpose of the transfer under subparagraph (A), the District of Columbia shall select at the discretion of the District—

(i) the programs (among those for which funding is apportioned as described in that subparagraph) from which to transfer the amount specified in that subparagraph; and

(ii) the amount to transfer from each of those programs (equal in aggregate to the amount calculated under subparagraph (A)(i)).

(3) FEDERAL LANDS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM.—Of the amounts otherwise made available to the National Park Service under section 203 of title 23, United States Code, not less than 10 percent shall be set aside for purposes of this section.

(b) ELIGIBILITY AND FEDERAL SHARE.—The amounts under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) available to the National Park Service only for projects that—

(A) are eligible under section 203 of title 23, United States Code;

(B) are located on bridges on the National Highway System that were originally constructed before 1945 and are in poor condition; and

(C) each have an estimated total project cost of not less than $150,000,000; and

(2) subject to the Federal share described in section 201(b)(7)(A) of title 23, United States Code.

(c) OTHER FUNDS AND OBLIGATION LIMITATION.—Any funds and obligation limitation transferred under subsection (a) shall be in addition to funds or obligation limitation otherwise made available to the National Park Service under sections 203 and 204 of title 23, United States Code.

SA 4043. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in this title to ensure that the ratio of veterans to full-time employment equivalents within any program of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, does not exceed 125 veterans to one full-time employment equivalent.

(b) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the programs of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, including—

(1) an assessment of the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program; and

(2) recommendations for such action as the Secretary considers necessary to reduce the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program.

SA 4044. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 215, line 5, strike ''2018.'' and insert ''2018: *Provided further*, That, of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $100,000, shall be used to expand procedures related to any online consumer tool offered or supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides information to veterans regarding specific postsecondary educational institutions, such as the GI Bill Comparison Tool or any successor or similar program, to ensure for each such institution an accounting of pending investigations and civil or criminal actions against the institution by Federal agencies and State attorneys general, to the extent such information is publicly available.''.

SA 4045. Mr. ROUNDS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II of division B, add the following:

SEC. 251. ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE MONITORING OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Commencing not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a grant program to improve the monitoring of mental health and substance abuse treatment programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) GRANTS.—

(1) MAIN GRANT.—

(A) AWARD.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall award grants to four protection and advocacy systems under which each protection and advocacy system shall carry out a demonstration project to investigate and monitor the care and treatment of veterans provided under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for mental illness or substance abuse issues at medical facilities of the Department.

(B) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant awarded under subparagraph (A) to a protection and advocacy system shall be in an amount that is not less than $105,000 for each year that the protection and advocacy system carries out a demonstration project described in such subparagraph under the grant program.

(2) COLLABORATION GRANT.—

(A) AWARD.—During each year in which a protection and advocacy system carries out a demonstration project under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall award a joint grant to a national organization with extensive knowledge of the protection and advocacy system and a veterans service organization in the amount of $80,000.

(B) COLLABORATION.—Each national organization and veterans service organization that is awarded a joint grant under subparagraph (A) shall use the amount of the grant to facilitate the collaboration between the national organization and the veterans service organization to—

(i) coordinate training and technical assistance for the protection and advocacy systems awarded grants under paragraph (1)(A); and

(ii) provide for data collection, reporting, and analysis in carrying out such paragraph.

(3) AUTHORITY.—In carrying out a demonstration project under paragraph (1)(A), a protection and advocacy system shall have the authorities specified in section 105(a) of the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act (42 U.S.C. 10805(a)) with respect to medical facilities of the Department.

(c) SELECTION.—In selecting the four protection and advocacy systems to receive grants under subsection (b)(1)(A), the Secretary shall consider the following criteria:

(1) Whether the protection and advocacy system has demonstrated monitoring and investigation experience, along with knowledge of the issues facing veterans with disabilities.

(2) Whether the State in which the protection and advocacy system operates—

(A) has low aggregated scores in the domains of mental health, performance, and access as rated by the Strategic Analytics Improvement and Learning database system (commonly referred to as ''SAIL''); and

(B) to the extent practicable, is representative of both urban and rural States.

(d) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that each protection and advocacy system participating in the grant program submits to the Secretary reports developed by the protection and advocacy system relating to investigations or monitoring conducted pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(A). The Secretary shall designate an office of the Department of Veterans Affairs to receive each such report.

(e) DURATION; TERMINATION.—

(1) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the grant program established under subsection (a) for a period of five years beginning on the date of commencement of the grant program.

(2) TERMINATION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—The Secretary may terminate a demonstration project under subsection (b)(1)(A) before the end of the five-year period described in paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines there is good cause for such termination. If the Secretary carries out such a termination, the Secretary shall award grants under such subsection to a new protection and advocacy system for the remaining duration of the grant program.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out the grant program under subsection (a) $500,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.

(g) TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—Of the funds made available to the Department of Defense in title I of division B of this Act for the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, $500,000 shall be transferred to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out this section in fiscal year 2017.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''protection and advocacy system'' has the meaning given the term ''eligible system'' in section 102(2) of the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act (42 U.S.C. 10802(2)).

(2) The term ''State'' means each of the several States, territories, and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(3) The term ''veterans service organization'' means any organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

SA 4046. Mr. PETERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, on page 46, beginning on line 2, strike ''$160,075,000'' and all that follows through line 4, and insert the following: ''$163,075,000, of which $20,000,000 shall remain available through September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That not less than $9,600,000 of the amount provided under this heading shall be expended on vehicle electronics and emerging technology research for autonomous vehicles: *Provided further*, That the amount appropriated under this title for necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary shall be reduced by $3,000,000.''.

SA 4047. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 15, line 25, strike ''airport'' and insert the following: ''airport: *Provided further*, That an amount not to exceed $2,000,000 shall be available for use to revise existing third class medical certification regulations such that a general aviation pilot is authorized to operate an aircraft authorized under Federal law to carry not more than 6 occupants and with a maximum certificated takeoff weight of not more than 6,000 pounds if the pilot has held a third class medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration in the preceding 10 years, has completed an online medical education course in the preceding 2 years, has received a medical examination by a State-licensed physician in the preceding 4 years, and is under the care and treatment of a physician as directed, as provided for in the report of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate accompanying S. 571, 114th Congress (Senate Report 114–198)''.

SA 4048. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) The Secretary of Transportation shall establish a program to evaluate unmanned aircraft system detection and mitigation technologies that—

(1) may be used by airports to locate and track unmanned aircraft systems and the operators of such systems;

(2) do not interfere with existing airport operations, navigation, or communications systems;

(3) cannot be disabled or overridden by the owner or operator of an unmanned aircraft system;

(4) do not rely on the compliance of the manufacturer, owner, or operator of an unmanned aircraft system.

(b) The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall—

(1) not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, submit to Congress a report on the program required by subsection (a);

(2) establish pilot programs at not more than 3 airports to deploy and test the most promising technology identified in the report required by paragraph (1); and

(3) not later than 90 days after such date of enactment, submit to Congress a report that includes—

(A) the results of the pilot programs established under paragraph (2); and

(B) recommendations for national unmanned aircraft system detection and mitigation protocols at airports in the United States.

(c) Of amounts in the Airport and Airway Trust Fund established under section 9502 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, not more than $5,000,000 shall be available to carry out the pilot programs required by subsection (b)(2).

SA 4049. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. It is the sense of Congress that, during the pending summer travel season, the Transportation Security Administration should use all existing resources and technology to increase the efficiency of security screening at airports while preserving a high level of security, including by—

(1) redeploying behavior detection officers to staff the travel document checker position and putting the travel document checkers at screening checkpoints to perform screening functions;

(2) redeploying divest officers to screening checkpoints to perform screening functions and accepting the voluntary assistance of airports or air carriers with queuing and encouraging passengers to properly divest;

(3) providing Federal security directors the ability to make local decisions about manpower resource allocation without having to consult with Transportation Security Administration headquarters;

(4) immediately disseminating to airports and Federal security directors the best practices developed during the optimization team visits;

(5) using passenger screening canines to their greatest benefit in terms of both volume and mitigating excessive screening checkpoint wait times;

(6) conducting local training of transportation security officers until after the busy summer travel season;

(7) ensuring predictable and consistent operating hours for the PreCheck program and immediately initiating a marketing blitz highlighting the program and its benefits in coordination with airports;

(8) reassigning all available administrative and regulatory personnel to support passenger and baggage screening operations;

(9) moving available part-time screeners to full-time for the summer; and

(10) adopting an online enrollment process for the PreCheck program.

SA 4050. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 85, line 6, insert ''*Provided further*, That the Secretary may provide section 8 rental assistance from amounts made available under this paragraph for units assisted under a project-based subsidy contract funded under the 'Project-Based Rental Assistance' heading under this title where the owner has received a Notice of Default and the units pose an imminent health and safety risk to residents: *Provided further*, That to the extent that the Secretary determines that such units are not feasible for continued rental assistance payments or transfer of the subsidy contract associated with such units to another project or projects and owner or owners, any remaining amounts associated with such units under such contract shall be recaptured and used to reimburse amounts used under this paragraph for rental assistance under the preceding proviso:'' before ''*Provided further*,''.

SA 4051. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4039 submitted by Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. BURR) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

AUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SEC. 253. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility leases at the locations specified and in an amount for each lease not to exceed the amount specified for such location (not including any estimated cancellation costs):

(1) For an outpatient clinic, Ann Arbor, Michigan, an amount not to exceed $17,093,000.

(2) For an outpatient mental health clinic, Birmingham, Alabama, an amount not to exceed $6,971,000.

(3) For an outpatient specialty clinic, Birmingham, Alabama, an amount not to exceed $10,479,000.

(4) For research space, Boston, Massachusetts, an amount not to exceed $5,497,000.

(5) For research space, Charleston, South Carolina, an amount not to exceed $6,581,000.

(6) For an outpatient clinic, Daytona Beach, Florida, an amount not to exceed $12,664,000.

(7) For Chief Business Office Purchased Care office space, Denver, Colorado, an amount not to exceed $17,215,000.

(8) For an outpatient clinic, Gainesville, Florida, an amount not to exceed $4,686,000.

(9) For an outpatient clinic, Hampton Roads, Virginia, an amount not to exceed $18,124,000.

(10) For research space, Mission Bay, California, an amount not to exceed $23,454,000.

(11) For an outpatient clinic, Missoula, Montana, an amount not to exceed $7,130,000.

(12) For an outpatient clinic, Northern Colorado, Colorado, an amount not to exceed $8,776,000.

(13) For an outpatient clinic, Ocala, Florida, an amount not to exceed $5,279,000.

(14) For an outpatient clinic, Oxnard, California, an amount not to exceed $6,297,000.

(15) For an outpatient clinic, Pike County, Georgia, an amount not to exceed $5,757,000.

(16) For an outpatient clinic, Portland, Maine, an amount not to exceed $6,846,000.

(17) For an outpatient clinic, Raleigh, North Carolina, an amount not to exceed $21,607,000.

(18) For an outpatient clinic, Santa Rosa, California, an amount not to exceed $6,498,000.

(19) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Corpus Christi, Texas, an amount not to exceed $7,452,000.

(20) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Jacksonville, Florida, an amount not to exceed $18,136,000.

(21) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Pontiac, Michigan, an amount not to exceed $4,532,000.

(22) For a replacement outpatient clinic, phase II, Rochester, New York, an amount not to exceed $6,901,000.

(23) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Tampa, Florida, an amount not to exceed $10,568,000.

(24) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Terre Haute, Indiana, an amount not to exceed $4,475,000.

(b) EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.—The amounts made available under subsection (a) are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(i)).

SA 4052. Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4039 submitted by Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. BURR) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

AUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SEC. 253. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility leases at the locations specified and in an amount for each lease not to exceed the amount specified for such location (not including any estimated cancellation costs):

(1) For an outpatient clinic, Ann Arbor, Michigan, an amount not to exceed $17,093,000.

(2) For an outpatient mental health clinic, Birmingham, Alabama, an amount not to exceed $6,971,000.

(3) For an outpatient specialty clinic, Birmingham, Alabama, an amount not to exceed $10,479,000.

(4) For research space, Boston, Massachusetts, an amount not to exceed $5,497,000.

(5) For research space, Charleston, South Carolina, an amount not to exceed $6,581,000.

(6) For an outpatient clinic, Daytona Beach, Florida, an amount not to exceed $12,664,000.

(7) For Chief Business Office Purchased Care office space, Denver, Colorado, an amount not to exceed $17,215,000.

(8) For an outpatient clinic, Gainesville, Florida, an amount not to exceed $4,686,000.

(9) For an outpatient clinic, Hampton Roads, Virginia, an amount not to exceed $18,124,000.

(10) For research space, Mission Bay, California, an amount not to exceed $23,454,000.

(11) For an outpatient clinic, Missoula, Montana, an amount not to exceed $7,130,000.

(12) For an outpatient clinic, Northern Colorado, Colorado, an amount not to exceed $8,776,000.

(13) For an outpatient clinic, Ocala, Florida, an amount not to exceed $5,279,000.

(14) For an outpatient clinic, Oxnard, California, an amount not to exceed $6,297,000.

(15) For an outpatient clinic, Pike County, Georgia, an amount not to exceed $5,757,000.

(16) For an outpatient clinic, Portland, Maine, an amount not to exceed $6,846,000.

(17) For an outpatient clinic, Raleigh, North Carolina, an amount not to exceed $21,607,000.

(18) For an outpatient clinic, Santa Rosa, California, an amount not to exceed $6,498,000.

(b) EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.—The amounts made available under subsection (a) are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(i)).

SA 4053. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, beginning on page 61, strike line 10 and all that follows through page 62, line 4.

SA 4054. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, beginning on page 56, strike line 10 and all that follows through page 57, line 12.

SA 4055. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, on page 56, strike lines 6 through 9.

SA 4056. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, beginning on page 51, strike line 14 and all that follows through page 53, line 3.

SA 4057. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, on page 27, strike lines 5 through 12 and insert the following:

Not to exceed $430,795,000, together with advances and reimbursements received by the Federal Highway Administration, shall be obligated for necessary expenses for administration and operation of the Federal Highway Administration.

SA 4058. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, beginning on page 10, strike line 16 and all that follows through page 11, line 16.

SA 4059. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, on page 28, line 9, strike the period at the end and insert the following: ''*Provided further*, That none of the funds made available under this heading may be used to carry out a project under section 133(h) of title 23, United States Code.''

SA 4060. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED, and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division A, beginning on page 4, strike line 10 and all that follows through page 6, line 18.

SA 4061. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3897 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. SHELBY)) to the amendment SA 3896 proposed by Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REED and Mr. TESTER) to the bill H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SEC.____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to direct a grantee to undertake specific changes to existing zoning laws as part of carrying out the final rule entitled ''Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing'' (80 Fed. Reg. 42272 (July 16, 2015)) or the notice entitled ''Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Assessment Tool'' (79 Fed. Reg. 57949 (September 26, 2014)).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 18, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Telephone Consumer Protection Act at 25: Effects on Consumers and Business.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 18, 2016, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 18, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''ESSA Implementation: Perspectives from Education Stakeholders.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 18, 2016, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Assessing the Security of Critical Infrastructure: Threats, Vulnerabilities, and Solutions.''

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 18, 2016, at 2:15 p.m., in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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 May 18, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 18, 2016, at 2 p.m., in room SR–428A of the Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Small Business Struggle Under Obamacare.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND TERRORISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 18, 2016, at 3 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Ransomware: Understanding the Threat and Exploring Solutions.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Julia Tierney and Jane Bigham, two detailees with the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, and Charcillea Schaefer, a military fellow in Senator MURRAY's personal office, be granted privileges of the floor for the duration of the 114th Congress.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar Nos. 547 through 551 and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Foreign Service; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, 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. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE COAST GUARD

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Coast Guard Reserve to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203(a):

To be captain

Jennifer K. Grzelak
Andrew R. Sheffield

The following named officers for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Coast Guard under title 14, U.S.C., section 271(d):

To be rear admiral

Rear Adm. (1h) Meredith L. Austin
Rear Adm. (1h) Peter W. Gautier
Rear Adm. (1h) Michael J. Haycock
Rear Adm. (1h) James M. Heinz
Rear Adm. (1h) Kevin E. Lunday
Rear Adm. (1h) Todd A Sokalzuk
Rear Adm. (1h) Paul F. Thomas

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

The following named officer for appointment as Vice Commandant in the United States Coast Guard and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 47:

To be admiral

Vice Adm. Charles D. Michel

The following named officer for appointment as Deputy Commandant for Operations, 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

Vice Adm. Charles W. Ray

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE

PN230—4 FOREIGN SERVICE nomination of Victoria L Mitchell, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 26, 2015.

PN1088 FOREIGN SERVICE nomination of Antonio J. Arroyave, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 19, 2016.

PN1256 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (146) beginning Rian Harker Harris, and ending Jennifer Marie Schuett, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 15, 2016.

PN1257 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (173) beginning Melinda L. Crowley, and ending Julie Elizabeth Zinamon, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 15, 2016.

PN1371 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (8) beginning Nathan Seifert, and ending Joshua Burke, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 14, 2016.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 471, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 471) designating the week of May 15 through May 21, 2016, as ''National Public Works Week.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. COLLINS. 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. 471) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

DANNIE A. CARR VETERANS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2814 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2814) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Sevierville, Tennessee, the Dannie A. Carr Veterans Outpatient Clinic.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, 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 (H.R. 2814) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2016

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 19;

that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 2577, with the time until 11:15 a.m. equally divided between the managers or their designees.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Ms. COLLINS. 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 8:14 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 19, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

FRANCES MARIE TYDINGCO–GATEWOOD, OF GUAM, TO BE JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT COURT OF GUAM FOR THE TERM OF TEN YEARS. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

CAROLE SCHWARTZ RENDON, OF OHIO, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE STEVEN M . DETTELBACH, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. DAVID G. BASSETT
BRIG. GEN. WILLARD M. BURLESON III
BRIG. GEN. CHRISTOPHER G. CAVOLI
BRIG. GEN. DAVID C. COBURN
BRIG. GEN. STEPHEN E. FARMEN
BRIG. GEN. BRYAN P. FENTON
BRIG. GEN. MALCOLM B. FROST
BRIG. GEN. PATRICIA A. FROST
BRIG. GEN. DOUGLAS M. GABRAM
BRIG. GEN. PETER A. GALLAGHER
BRIG. GEN. JOHN A. GEORGE
BRIG. GEN. RANDY A. GEORGE
BRIG. GEN. MICHAEL L. HOWARD
BRIG. GEN. SEAN M. JENKINS
BRIG. GEN. JOHN P. JOHNSON
BRIG. GEN. RICHARD G. KAISER
BRIG. GEN. JOHN S. KEM
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT L. MARION
BRIG. GEN. TIMOTHY P. MCGUIRE
BRIG. GEN. DENNIS S. MCKEAN
BRIG. GEN. TERRENCE J. MCKENRICK
BRIG. GEN. CHRISTOPHER P. MCPADDEN
BRIG. GEN. DANIEL G. MITCHELL
BRIG. GEN. FRANK M. MUTH
BRIG. GEN. ERIK C. PETERSON
BRIG. GEN. LEOPOLDO A. QUINTAS, JR.
BRIG. GEN. KURT J. RYAN
BRIG. GEN. MARK C. SCHWARTZ
BRIG. GEN. WILSON A. SHOFFNER, JR.
BRIG. GEN. KURT L. SONNTAG
BRIG. GEN. SCOTT A. SPELLMON
BRIG. GEN. RANDY S. TAYLOR
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT P. WALTERS, JR.
BRIG. GEN. ERIC J. WESLEY

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER ARTICLE II, SECTION 2, CLAUSE 2, OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. RONNY L. JACKSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be admiral

ADM. MICHELLE J. HOWARD

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 lieutenant colonel

ZACHARY P. AUGUSTINE
CHRISTOPHER JAMES BAKER
BRIAN V. BANAS
JEFFREY T. BILLER
OWEN B. BISHOP
MICHAEL P. CARRUTHERS
DAVID ANTHONY COGGIN, JR.
ANTHONY M. DAMIANI
ALLISON CHISOLM DANELS
MATTHEW E. DUNHAM
DARIN C. FAWCETT
CODY P. FOWLER
JOSHUA A. GOINS
ERICA L. HARRIS
ELIZABETH MARIE HERNANDEZ
RYAN D. HILTON
SHAROIHA P. K. JAMESON
RHEA ANN LAGANO
ERIN T. X. LAI
BRETT A. LANDRY
DUSTIN C. LANE
LARISSA N. LANIGAR
JAMES R. LISHER II
DANIEL C. MAMBER
SHELLY STOKES MCNULTY
BRADLEY A. MORRIS
NICOLE M. NAVIN
NINA R. PADALINO
KYLE A. PAYNE
GABRIEL DAVIS PEDRICK
JENNIFER E. POWELL
MICHAEL T. RAKOWSKI
DEREK A. ROWE
RENEE DIANE SALZMANN
DANIEL E. SCHOENI
NATHANIEL H. SEARS
LANCE R. SMITH
LEAH M. SPRECHER
MICHELLE MARIE SUBERLY
MATTHEW D. TALCOTT
MICHAEL L. TOOMER
DANIEL P. TULL
JOHN B. WARNOCK
PILAR G. WENNRICH
BRIAN A. YOUNG

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

WILLIAM J. FECKE
FREDDIE E. JENKINS
CRAIG A. KEYES
MARK R. LAMEY
ZOYA L. LEE ZERKEL
WILLIAM P. MALLOY
ANN M. MCCAIN
DERRICK J. MCKERCHER
DAVID A. SCHLEVENSKY
GIGI A. SIMKO
JAMES S. SMITH
MARY E. STEWART
PAUL J. TOTH, JR.
JANET K. URBANSKI

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

WALTER W. BEAN
DAVID LEWIS BUTTRICK
ALAN CHOUEST
RANDALL W. ERWIN
MICHAEL W. HUSFELT
SCOTT L. RUMMAGE

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 lieutenant colonel

JENNIFER D. BANKSTON
BENJAMIN BERZINIS
JANET L. BLANCHARD
DENISE D. CARCAMO
ROBERT L. CHAPLIN, JR.
STEPHANIE CHIRICO
KRISTA L. CHRISTIANSON
JUVELYN T. CHUA
PENNY H. CUNNINGHAM
PATRICIA J. DALTON
RENAE R. DENELSBECK
MICHELLE D. DIMOFF
JON D. EARLES
MARION L. FOREMAN, JR.
SUZANNE M. GREEN
KRISTA D. GREY
JULIE L. HANSON
DALE E. HARRELL
JAMALE R. HART
LYNN M. HAY
JO ANN M. HENDERSON
DAVID P. HERNANDEZ
RONALD K. HODGEN
LONNIE W. HODGES
DAWNKIMBERLY Y. HOPKINS
STEPHANIE ISAACFRANCIS
JENNIFER LEA JAMISON GINES
AMANDA C. KRBEC
ANGELA M. LACEK
SCOTT A. LEBLANC
TAMARA A. LEITAKERMYERS
ROY L. LOUQUE
AMY F. MACIAS
LAURIE A. MIGLIORE
SANDRA R. NESTOR
SINA M. NICHOLS
DAVID S. NORWOOD
ADELEKE A. OYEMADE
MATTHEW L. PFEIFFER
NISA T. PISTONE
SUSAN P. RHEA
DWAYNE ROLNIAK
HEATHER N. ROSCISZEWSKI
SCOTT F. SANDERS
AMANDA L. SIANGCO
ERIKA T. SMITH
JAMES A. SMITH II
WANDA K. STAUFFER
SARAH E. STRANSKE
KIMBERLY NOVACK TRNKA
CLINTON K. WAHL
JAMES K. WEBB
WILLIAM F. WOLFE

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 major

MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER AHL
JOEL RYAN ANDREASON
JOHANNA K. BERNSTEIN
KEVIN MICHAEL BODEN
ROSS ANDREW BROWN
JASMINE NATASHA CANDELARIO
CAROLYN G. CARMODY
LINDSAY ANN COLLINS
ADAM JONES CUMBERWORTH
BENJAMIN HARRIS DEYOUNG
SETH WOODRUFF DILWORTH
SARAH MARTINO DINGIVAN
MICAH WAYNE ELGGREN
JANE A. ELZEFTAWY
JAMES PETER FERRELL
ANTONIO FORNASIER
DAVID LINDSTROM FOX
CASEY JOHN GROHER
KEVIN CHARLES HAKALA
PETER FITZGERALD HAVERN
VALYNCIA S. HILL
ANDREA MARIE HUNWICK
KENNETH JAMES HYLE III
BRETT AUSTIN JOHNSON
TIFFANY A. JOHNSON
ANDREW JOHN KASMAN
JOHN F. KNOX
DUSTIN B. KOUBA
CHRISTOPHER R. LANKS
DANIEL SOONGHYUN LEE
JOHNATHAN DAVID LEGG
MATTHEW PATRICK LYNCH
RACHEL SARA LYONS
CHRISTOPHER KIRK MANGELS
SEAN C. MCGARVEY
JARETT FREDRIC MERK
CHRISTINE L. MEYLING
JEREMY LEE MOONEY
ADAM GREGORY MUDGE
RYAN ADAM MUELLER
VY S. NGUYEN
TRENTON ALLEN NORMAN
PHILLIP NORMAN PADDEN
KYRA LINDSAY PALMER
DAYLE PAMELA PERCLE
NICHOLAS DAVID PETERSON
MICHAEL ADAM PIERSON
BRADLEY L. PORONSKY
DANKO PRINCIP
MICHAEL JOSEPH RAMING
SARA MARIE RATHGEBER
RYAN MARCUS REED
JOHN STEWART REID
LAUREN E. ROSENBLATT
JAZMINE ABADIA RUSSELL
AMANDA KAY SNIPES
STEVEN LUTHER SPENCER II
TAREN E. WELLMAN
EMILY MARIE WILSON
CRYSTAL LOUISE WONG
LISA MARIE WOTKOWICZ

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 major

TIMOTHY JAMES ANDERSON
JESSICA L. ANGELES
CHEICK A. BAH
NEIL ADAM BOOTS
RODNEY PAUL BOTTOMS
MICHAEL A. BOWER
LIZETH CAMERON
JAMIE TERRELL CLARK
MELODIE M. CROSS
PATRICK JAMES DAUGHERTY, JR.
AMANDA M. DAVIS
WENDY M. DUNLAP
BOYD H. FRITZSCHE
DANIEL J. GILARDI
NATHAN TRAVIS GREEN
TYLER A. GRUNEWALD
KATHERINE S. HASS
MARIE F. JOHN
MATTHEW B. KESTI
CANDACE F. LUCAS
MOLLY A. MATTHEWS NEU
RYAN C. MCCRAE
BENJAMIN E. MEIGHAN
MISTI NICHOLE NEILL

BRYANT C. NELSON
TAMARA A. OPALINSKI
JONATHAN D. PENTEL
JAMES N. PFOTENHAUER
JOHN MORRISON RABOLD
XIAO CHEN REN
NATHAN REYNOLDS
THOMAS S. SHADD
SHANE EUGENE SLADE
CHRISTOPHER E. STEWART
CORINNE M. STEWART
AMANDA T. TERRY
MARIO E. TORRES
CHRISTOPHER KENNETH WEBER
CHAD M. WHITSON
BENJAMIN J. WILSON
JUSTIN L. WOLTHUIZEN

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 major

VICTORIA D. ABLES
KRISTEN A. ALBERT
LAWANDA M. AMATO
JORGE A. ARIZPE
LESLIE L. BALCAZAR
MONIQUE NATASHA BATTLE
SARA R. BITTIKER
RHETT A. BLUE
JAMES F. BOCCHICCHIO
BRENT HARRIS BURHITE
LYN L. CABIGAS
SAMANTHA K. CAMPBELL
STEPHANIE J. CAMPOS
REBEKAH J. CARLISLE
LEWIS J. CARVER, JR.
MIN CHOI
NELANETTE V. CLEMMONS
JASMINE D. COOK
DENISE R. COVERT
CARLA S. COX
ANNA M. DANZ
LISA M. DEEP
JILL A. DIXON
EDWARD S. EAST
JESSICA F. ELLIS
MICAH T. EMERSON
ADAM C. FALTERSACK
REBECCA A. FARMER
AMANDA M. FULMER
FALANA C. GIDEON
KELLEY E. GIVENS
JENNIFER L. GREEN
SHELLY S. HANSON
DION J. HATTRUP
MELISSA HENDRICKS
RANDALL S. HICKS
MATHEW B. HILL
RACHEL E. HODGE
CANDICE R. HOLBROOK
DIANA HORTON
LISA S. HOWARD
ANTHONY INTERRANTE III
SARA A. JANSCH
CAROL A. KELLY
BRIAN R. KENNEDY
BROOKE N. KIEFFER
LEIGH E. KIMMELL
EDWARD R. KISSAM
LEAH M. LIN
NINA M. LINNEHAN
JESSICA LINTON
SHEILA L. LLANDERAL
CHRISTINA FAYE LOVE
ROMMEL B. LUBANG
MATTHEW S. LUNDH
MICHELLE L. LUTTRELL
ANGELA D. MAASS
MARTI T. MACTAGGART
RAY P. MAMUAD
LEON MAPP, JR.
LINDSEY N. MARQUEZ
THERESA A. MAVITY
BRENDAN E. MCQUOWN
DANIELLE N. MERRITT
SHANA R. MILLER
CHANEL N. MITCHELL
JENNIFER LEIGH MITCHUM
PATRICK J. MOSER
PAUL R. PADILLA
ALEXANDRA D. PARKER
JASON W. PARKINSON
ANDREW J. PHILLIPS
JAMES B. PUTNAM
KIRSTAN J. PYLE
STEPHANIE J. RAPS
NICHOLAS PATRICK REEDER
CECILIA Y. RIOS
JAMILIA D. ROBINSON
ADRIAN C. RODRIGUEZ
CHAD T. SANDMANN
CHRISTINE C. SARGENT TROJAN
DOUGLAS J. SAVEY
DEBRA M. SIZEMORE
JACQUELYN P. SMITH
JENNIFER D. SMITH
KENNETH D. SMITH
DAWN M. SOUZA
FAIZ M. TAQI
SYDNE M. B. TOBIAS
PAIGE A. WARREN
DEBRA L. WHITT
LENA MARIE WILLIAMS COX
ALEXANDER C. WILSON
HEATH WILSON
DAWN M. WINTER
JESSICA L. WYCHE
NICHOLE M. YOUNG
ANN M. ZENOBIA
MATTHEW G. ZINN

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SPECIALIST CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be lieutenant colonel

DANIEL P. FISHER

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

DARIN J. BLATT

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

ZOLTAN L. KROMPECHER

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 lieutenant colonel

JOHN D. WINGEART

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 lieutenant colonel

JANELLE V. KUTTER

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 lieutenant colonel

KEVIN T. REEVES

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

SHAWN R. LYNCH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C. SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major

ANKITA B. PATEL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be major

RITA A. KOSTECKE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be major

HELEN H. BRANDABUR

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

BARRY K. WILLIAMS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be colonel

MARSHALL H. SMITH

FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR APPOINTMENT AS A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER, A CONSULAR OFFICER, AND A SECRETARY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

AMANDA R. AHLERS, OF CALIFORNIA
ALEXIS J. ALEXANDER, OF TEXAS
MOSES AN, OF CALIFORNIA
ANDREW J. AYLWARD, OF CALIFORNIA
JAMES C. BENNETT, OF WISCONSIN
LITTANE D. BIEN-AIME, OF MASSACHUSETTS
KEONDRA S. BILLS, OF NEW YORK
RYAN P. BLANTON, OF TEXAS
JACKSON N. BLOOM, OF CALIFORNIA
PREN-TSILYA BOA-GUEHE, OF MARYLAND
PATRICK T. BRANCO, OF HAWAII
PAUL R. BULLARD, OF NEW YORK
AARON P. BURGE, OF FLORIDA
ALLISON S. BYBEE, OF ALASKA
VIRGIL W. CARSTENS, OF TEXAS
MARK R. CARTER, OF WASHINGTON
RYAN W. CASSELBERRY, OF FLORIDA
MARIYAM A. CEMENTWALA, OF CALIFORNIA
SHILIANG THOMAS CHEN, OF NEW YORK
KRISTOFER L. CLARK, OF FLORIDA
PAM S. COBB, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PATRICK F. COLLINS, OF ILLINOIS
MARLO S. CROSS-DURRANT, OF MICHIGAN
DANIEL R. DEMING, OF TENNESSEE
KRISTIE J. DI LASCIO, OF FLORIDA
ANDREW J. DILBERT, OF FLORIDA
REBECCA A. DOFFING, OF MINNESOTA
ELISABETH F. EL-KHODARY, OF MARYLAND
JOHN V. FAZIO, OF ILLINOIS
NICOLE M. FINNEMANN, OF MICHIGAN
PAUL I. FISHBEIN, OF CALIFORNIA
KARINA G. GARCIA, OF CALIFORNIA
COURTNEY L. GATES, OF CALIFORNIA
JENNIFER L. GOLDSTEIN, OF CALIFORNIA
JOHN H. GRAY, OF CALIFORNIA
MARIANNA GRAYSON, OF TEXAS
NATHANIEL S.D. HAFT, OF MARYLAND
ALLYSON R. HAMILTON–MCINTIRE, OF KENTUCKY
MILES C. HANSEN, OF TEXAS
KAYLEA J. HAPPELL, OF NEW YORK
KIMBERLY R. HARMON, OF SOUTH CAROLINA
BYRON C. HARTMAN, OF VIRGINIA
COURTNEY W. HO, OF NEW JERSEY
NOAH B. HOGAN, OF INDIANA
DANIELA S. IONOVA–SWIDER, OF VIRGINIA
JOHN P. JENKS, OF VIRGINIA
LISA S. JEWELL, OF ILLINOIS
NILE J. JOHNSON, OF GEORGIA
DEREK R. KELLY, OF NEW YORK
YUKI KONDO–SHAH, OF ARIZONA
LAURIE A. KURIAKOSE, OF WISCONSIN
JESSIE M. KUYKENDALL, OF OKLAHOMA
FRANK A. LAVOIE, OF NEVADA
JAIME F. LEBLANC–HADLEY, OF TEXAS
ALEX V. LITICHEVSKY, OF NEW JERSEY
SUTTON A. MEAGHER, OF MISSOURI
CAMERON S. MILLARD, OF WASHINGTON
JARED R. MILTON, OF VIRGINIA
WILLIAM J. MISKELLY, OF INDIANA
EMMA M. NAGY, OF CALIFORNIA
CARLY S. NASEHI, OF FLORIDA
TOBIN H. NELSON, OF CALIFORNIA
KATHERINE A. NTIAMOAH, OF INDIANA
BENJAMIN J. OVERBY, OF TEXAS
RYAN L. PALSROK, OF NEW YORK
JANE JIHYE PARK, OF VIRGINIA
JULIANNE N. PARKER, OF FLORIDA
GREGORY M. PEARMAN, OF CALIFORNIA
RYAN E. PETERSON, OF VIRGINIA
KAKOLI RAY, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL C. RILEY, OF NORTH CAROLINA
VANESSA N. ROZIER, OF CONNECTICUT
AHMED A. SHAMA, OF NEW YORK
ANDREW T. SHEPARD, OF FLORIDA
NOOSHIN SOLTANI, OF TEXAS
ALESIA L. SOURINE, OF MICHIGAN
MAX J. STEINER, OF CALIFORNIA
REBECCA J. STEWART, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ALEXANDRA J. TAYLOR, OF PENNSYLVANIA
MARKUS A. THOMI, OF NEW YORK
MATTHEW A. THOMPSON, OF WASHINGTON
LEAH M. THORSTENSON, OF TEXAS
ELIZABETH B. THRELKELD, OF OKLAHOMA
NICHOLAS JACKSON UNGER, OF CALIFORNIA
TODD W. UNTERSEHER, OF LOUISIANA
JENNIFER L. VAN WINKLE, OF IOWA
VANESSA L. VIDAL–SAMMOUD, OF CALIFORNIA
GEORGE B. WARD, OF MARYLAND
ANN MARIE WARMENHOVEN, OF FLORIDA
LEE V. WILBUR, OF SOUTH DAKOTA

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 18, 2016:

IN THE COAST GUARD

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JENNIFER K. GRZELAK AND ENDING WITH ANDREW R. SHEFFIELD, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON DECEMBER 14, 2015.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 271(D):

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) MEREDITH L. AUSTIN
REAR ADM. (LH) PETER W. GAUTIER
REAR ADM. (LH) MICHAEL J. HAYCOCK
REAR ADM. (LH) JAMES M. HEINZ
REAR ADM. (LH) KEVIN E. LUNDAY
REAR ADM. (LH) TODD A. SOKALZUK
REAR ADM. (LH) PAUL F. THOMAS

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JONATHAN P. TSCHUDY AND ENDING WITH MATTHEW B. WILLIAMS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MARCH 17, 2016.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS VICE COMMANDANT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 47:

To be admiral

VICE ADM. CHARLES D. MICHEL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, 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

VICE ADM. CHARLES W. RAY

FOREIGN SERVICE

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATION OF VICTORIA L. MITCHELL.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATION OF ANTONIO J. ARROYAVE.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH RIAN HARKER HARRIS AND ENDING WITH JENNIFER MARIE SCHUETT, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MARCH 15, 2016.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MELINDA L. CROWLEY AND ENDING WITH JULIE ELIZABETH ZINAMON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MARCH 15, 2016.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH NATHAN SEIFERT AND ENDING WITH JOSHUA BURKE, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON APRIL 14, 2016.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

COMMENDING KERRY W. KIRCHER

HON. PAUL D. RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI and I rise today to commend Kerry W. Kircher for his service and dedication to the House of Representatives.

Mr. Kircher is retiring as House Counsel, after serving more than two decades in the Office of General Counsel. Mr. Kircher first served as an Assistant General Counsel, then as Deputy General Counsel, and finally—over the last five years—as the General Counsel. Throughout his time, Kerry served five Speakers of the House, including each of us. During his service, Kerry zealously defended the rights and prerogatives of this institution and for this we are grateful.

We wish Kerry well in his future endeavors and thank him for his service to the U.S. House of Representatives.

COMPREHENSIVE OPIOID ABUSE REDUCTION ACT OF 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 12, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5046) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize the Attorney General to make grants to assist State and local governments in addressing the national epidemic of opioid abuse, and for other purposes:

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 5046, the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Reduction Act.

Addiction affects people from all walks of life. It is not confined to people of certain races, classes, and ages. Its broad reach is perhaps what makes it so terrifying.

Prescription drug abuse and alarming increases in heroin abuse have gripped our country and it is past time for it to grip the attention of the Congress.

I was proud to vote for many great bills this week to improve the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, particularly opioid abuse.

While all of these bills, including the one before us today, address many aspects of this complex issue, we need to be honest and admit that in order to truly address this problem, we have to invest funding in it.

There are already many programs in place that are successful in preventing and treating substance abuse, but they are underfunded. We need to change that.

As we embark on the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations process, I urge my colleagues to keep this mind.

Substance abuse destroys families, friendships, our communities, and virtually everything else in its path. The time to act is now.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. C. A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the provision contained in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 to upgrade the U.S. Cyber Command to a unified combatant command.

The United States Cyber Command, which is located in my district at Fort Meade, Maryland, has been tasked with one of the greatest challenges of our times. Every day, its cyber warriors are protecting us from our enemies plotting to compromise our military networks and critical infrastructure. Recently, they were given their first wartime assignment in the fight against ISIS.

The demand for cyber warfare capabilities has been so high that CYBERCOM teams that are not even officially operational yet are contributing to the mission, according to its chief, Admiral Mike Rogers. That need is only going to increase and we must give it the power and resources it needs to better protect our country.

Elevating CYBERCOM as a Unified Combatant Command recognizes the fact that cyberspace is the battlefield of the 21st Century. Warfare is not just on land, at sea, or in the skies and space—but in cyberspace. Just as our special operations command is able to quickly and deftly perform some of our toughest covert missions, it only makes sense to have a command that can respond nimbly to cyber threats and organize our offensive and defensive efforts.

I agree wholeheartedly with Admiral Rogers, who has said this designation would allow his Command to be faster with better mission outcomes. We must not forget that the other half of his responsibility, the National Security Agency, already enjoys an excellent and essential working relationship with CYBERCOM. We must ensure that any reorganization strengthens this relationship.

I am proud to represent both agencies in Congress and am confident Maryland and the Second District is amply prepared to assist with the infrastructure needs that accompany any growth.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. MAC THORNBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chair, I ask that the following exchange of letters be submitted on H.R. 4909:

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, 29 April 2016.

Hon. WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write concerning H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. That bill, as ordered reported, contains provisions within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Committee, including those affecting public lands, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Corps, the Endangered Species Act, and historic preservation.

In the interest of permitting you to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this very important bill, I waive this committee's right to a sequential referral. I do so with the understanding that the Natural Resources Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. I also request that you urge the Speaker to name members of the Natural Resources committee to any conference committee to consider such provisions.

Please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 4909 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you and your staff have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees, and congratulations on this significant achievement.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2016.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. I agree that the Committee on Natural Resources has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral,

the Committee on Natural Resources is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 29, 2016.

Hon. WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. THORNBERRY: I am writing concerning H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

This legislation contains provisions within the Committee on Agriculture's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Agriculture will forego action on the bill. This is being done on the basis of our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

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

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2016.

Hon. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. I agree that the Committee on Agriculture has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Agriculture is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 29, 2016.

Hon. WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THORNBERRY: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 4909, the ''National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.'' This legislation contains provisions that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important bill, I am willing to waive my committee's right to sequential referral. I do so with the understanding that by waiving formal consideration of the bill, the Committee on Ways and Means does not waive any fiiture jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. I request that you urge the Speaker to name members of my committee to any conference committee that is convened to consider such provisions.

Please include this letter and your response confirming our understanding in the committee report on H.R. 4909, and in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2016.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. I agree that the Committee on Ways and Means has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Ways and Means is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2016.

Hon. WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THORNBERRY: I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 4909, the ''National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.'' While the legislation does contain provisions within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee will not request a sequential referral so that it can proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Committee takes this action with the understanding that its jurisdictional interests over this and similar legislation are in no way diminished or altered, and that the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as such legislation moves forward. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment to any House-Senate conference on such legislation and requests your support when such a request is made.

Finally, I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding and ask that a copy of our exchange of letters be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 4909 on the House floor.

Sincerely,

FRED UPTON,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2016.

Hon. FRED UPTON,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4909, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. I agree that the Committee on Energy and Commerce has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Chair, I join my colleagues in opposition to this amendment.

Like members on both sides of this debate, I strongly support strengthening our domestic industrial base. I also support efficiently using taxpayer dollars to ensure our military has the best systems and equipment.

While well intentioned, this amendment is overly broad and could have serious unintended consequences for taxpayers, for our military, and for our foreign policy.

My colleagues have discussed the cost and technical issues. I share these concerns about negatively disrupting the AMRAAM and potentially other tactical missile programs.

We should also consider the consequences this amendment may have for our ability to engage in cost sharing with our international allies and partners.

Cost sharing on a variety of platforms can drive competition, improve technologies available to our military, and lower costs for taxpayers. It also strengthens the partnerships we leverage to provide stability and security for the United States.

It is my understanding that a reasonable path forward exists to ensure we can build our domestic manufacturing base for solid rocket motors.

I encourage my colleagues to oppose this amendment so that we can advance a targeted solution to address the specific programmatic concerns of the sponsor, without imposing an overbroad mandate that disrupts all tactical missile programs.

Again, thank you Congresswoman MCSALLY and Ranking Member SMITH.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense

and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Chair, I rise today to highlight the importance of my amendment to extend the authorization of a Naval construction project located at Great Lakes Naval Station in Illinois for one year.

In 2013 the installation at Great Lakes reached out to request funds for the construction of a new unaccompanied housing building on the base for recently enlisted individuals. The current housing building is suffering from ongoing maintenance issues making the building unsuitable and inadequate.

Mr. Chair, this year's NDAA represents a renewed investment in our soldiers with a pay raise, increased access to health care, and a number of other positive steps to support our fighting men and women. My amendment represents another positive investment in our troops. These men and women deserve to be housed in good conditions. This amendment does not add any cost to the legislation, and simply extends the authorization of this already appropriated for construction project for Fiscal Year 2017.

CONGRATULATING KIM BARKS OF COMPLETE TRUCK & RV REPAIR FOR RECEIVING THE CITY OF ST. CHARLES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT 2016 EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD—JACK HECK AWARD

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a constituent of mine, Kim Barks. She is the owner of Complete Truck & RV Repair and is receiving the 2016 Employer of the Year Award—Jack Heck Award from the City of St. Charles Economic Development Department.

When Complete Truck & RV Repair opened as a family-run business in 2013, it had ten employees. Now, the shop is staffed by 22 employees and has been able to add Restoration, Fabrication, Auto & RV Detailing, and Towing Services. The Barks family also added another location for RV storage to continue serving their customers.

To say that Complete Truck & RV Repair contributes to the St. Charles community would almost be an understatement. Kim and her father are passionate about animals and built a dog park for guests who come to service their vehicles. Kim is also a supporter of the organization Dogs on Duty, Five Acres Animal Shelter, and the Humane Society.

Another part of Complete Truck & RV Repair's community outreach is its contribution to the St. Charles' Backstoppers. Kim's father has helped the Backstoppers raise money for over 15 years. Complete Truck & RV Repair is hosting the 1st Annual Backstoppers Summer Dance June 24th at the Machinists' Hall to continue this fundraising effort. The Barks and their repair business work year round to raise awareness for the Backstoppers. The business owns a fire truck, named Red. Red travels around town to various fire houses to promote awareness of the Backstoppers fund. Red also can be seen in various city parades.

Complete Truck & RV Repair hires veterans and is part of the Hire Heroes Program. The business honors veterans by giving them a discount. It currently has five veterans employed on the Complete Truck & RV Repair staff. Complete Truck & RV Repair also gives Police Officers, EMS, and Firefighters a discount on services.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Complete Truck & RV Repair for its accomplishment as the 2016 Employer of the Year Award—Jack Heck Award.

RECOGNIZING MARINE CORPS MASTER SERGEANT FRANK MASON

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, five years ago, I had the honor of bringing to the attention of this House a tribute for a great Devil Dog celebrating his 90th birthday. Once again, I have been given this honor and rise to recognize Marine Corps Master Sergeant Frank Mason who will be turning 95 this month.

As I said at that time, Frank is part of America's greatest generation who led our nation to victory in World War II and came home to live a life every one of us should be blessed to have. On May 3, 2011, I outlined Frank's life story of service and sacrifice in great detail, so here I will just remind everyone briefly that he enlisted in the Marine Corps at 17, proudly serving in World War II in China and the Philippines, held as a prisoner of war for over three years, and once again served during the Korean War, including the critical and historic Battle of the Chosin Reservoir.

While I initially searched for new words to describe Frank and his service, I have come to the realization that what was stated five years ago remains the best description and rings just as true today. So, with no apology for repeating my previous remarks, I believe Frank's account of these events aptly reflects the attitude of a Marine rifleman and the proud tradition and honor of the Marine Corps to this very day. Frank asserted, "We never surrendered. We were ordered to stop fighting."

I will also repeat the quote I used at the time from Ronald Reagan, "Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have made a difference in the world. Marines don't have that problem." Mr. Speaker, as a fellow Marine and a Member of Congress that represents Frank in this body, I am proud to once again thank him for his service and wish him all the best as he celebrates his 95th birthday. Frank, we are honored by the example you provide. Semper Fidelis.

HONORING THE CAREER OF HON. JOHN T. CURTIN

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and legacy of service of the Honorable John T. Curtin who is celebrating his retirement from the post as a United States District Judge for the Western District of New York. After 48 years on the bench, no other local judge has served longer or, many would argue, with greater distinction than Judge Curtin.

Nominated by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1967 at the urging of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Curtin was a U.S. District Attorney with a reputation for organized crime investigations. As a federal judge, it was the 1972 Buffalo Public Schools desegregation suit that made Curtin a household name. His ruling led to a plan that included the forced busing of black and white students and the creation of specialized magnet schools designed to encourage the voluntary transfer of children. The order he signed would be hailed as a national model for how to integrate a diverse school district. Curtin also issued orders to desegregate Buffalo's police and fire departments, a move that ushered in a new generation of women and minority officers and firefighters which remains in effect to this day.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Curtin oversaw a huge lawsuit about toxic waste dumped in the Love Canal neighborhood of Niagara Falls. The case led to the relocation of hundreds of residents and became a national rallying cry for environmentalists. He would then later oversee the L.A. Boys gang case, in which he gave two of the longest prison terms in local history. Also, before most other Americans, he recognized the futility of the war on drugs and the damage it caused, when he stopped hearing drug cases more than 20 years ago.

Inside and outside the courtroom, Curtin was known for his soft-spoken demeanor and even-handed temperament. Curtin was well known for his courage and independence and his retirement marks the end of an era in Buffalo federal court, an era marked by landmark rulings and historic court cases.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to honor the career of the Honorable John T. Curtin. I ask that my colleagues join me in expressing our congratulations on an accomplished career and to commend his dedication to his profession and the Western New York community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN D. WAGNER

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of John D. Wagner, an outstanding member of the Northeast Ohio community who passed away on April 28th at the age of 69.

A lifelong resident of Barberton, Ohio, Mr. Wagner spent his life dedicated to service. One who not only provided for his family as a business manager of the local Number 219 Plumbers and Pipefitters Union, but also as one who provided for the members of his community. He served on multiple boards and councils, such as the Barberton City Council and the executive board of the Ohio AFL–CIO, just to name a few. John was also known for coaching the Barberton American Little League for many years.

He will be deeply missed by his friends, family, and the hard-working folks he helped to represent. Mr. Wagner's passion and leadership for his community serves as a hallmark not only for the city of Barberton, but for all of us who are making differences for the people we represent.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

HON. ROD BLUM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Police Week to honor the brave men and women in uniform who serve the First District of Iowa.

Every day, our Nation's law enforcement officers selflessly put their lives in danger to protect our communities. Having recently participated in a police ride along in Dubuque and Waterloo, I had the chance to experience their duties first hand—and my respect for these individuals only increased after seeing their dedication.

Today, the Cedar Falls Police Department hosts a memorial event for the Black Hawk County Peace Officers fallen in the line of duty. I am proud of my district for honoring these brave men and women. On behalf of the 194 law enforcement officers in Iowa who gave their lives last year, I offer my gratitude for their service and my prayers for their families, friends, and colleagues.

I respectfully urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to continue to support the officers who lay their lives on the line for our safety. I am proud to stand before you today to personally thank every law enforcement officer in the First District of Iowa—and around the country—who put themselves in harm's way in order to keep us safe.

HONORING BENJAMIN COHEN

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Benjamin Cohen, son of Nicole and Adam Cohen, on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah. Benjamin, a political enthusiast and true active citizen, will be called to the Torah on May 29, 2016. I offer my heartfelt wishes as he begins this next stage in his Jewish life, passing on our Jewish traditions from generation to generation (l'dor v'dor).

It is with great pleasure that I honor Benjamin and his family in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

HONORING THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Philadelphia District, which this year is marking its 150th anniversary.

Since Lieutenant Colonel C. S. Stewart was assigned as Superintending Engineer of the Harbor Improvements of the Delaware in July 1866, the men and women of the District have been meeting the Nation's challenges with engineering solutions both in war and in peace, to include building up Frankford Arsenal, the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot, Fort Monmouth, Fort Dix, McGuire Air Force Base, and Dover Air Force Base; designing and constructing the Army's dredges, survey boats, work boats and barges, and other vessels; keeping the Delaware River, Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, and other waterways open and vital to maritime commerce; completing the Nation's first comprehensive basin-wide study, leading to a system of dams and levees that reduced flood damages within the Delaware River Basin; cleaning up contaminants from around and under abandoned industrial sites; and using dunes and beach nourishment to reduce storm damages along the New Jersey and Delaware coasts.

Through it all, this organization has developed a solid and well-earned reputation for integrity, innovation, responsiveness, customer service, and quality excellence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in celebrating the Philadelphia District's century and a half of outstanding service to the Nation.

TRIBUTE TO DORIS GIBSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Doris Gibson, of Kellerton, Iowa, on the celebration of her 101st birthday.

Our world has changed a great deal during the course of Doris's life. Since her birth, we have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television, cellular phones, and the internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism, and witnessed the birth of new democracies. Doris has lived through seventeen United States Presidents and twenty-one Governors of Iowa. In her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent Ms. Gibson in the United States Congress and it is my pleasure to wish her a very happy 101st birthday. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Doris for reaching this incredible milestone and in wishing her nothing but the best.

HONORING KELSIE ELLINGSWORTH ON BEING ACCEPTED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF FUTURE PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL SCIENTISTS AS A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS OF FUTURE MEDICAL LEADERS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Clever High School student Kelsie Ellingsworth, of Clever, Missouri, on her being accepted as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors-only program that is designed to motivate and direct the top students in the United States. Specifically, it's designed for students aspiring to become physicians or medical researchers, and provides a path and mentorship for students to accomplish their goals.

To be considered for acceptance as a delegate, applicants are either recommended by a teacher or member of the Academy based on a proven track record of academic excellence. Delegates represent all 50 states plus Puerto Rico, and must have a minimum 3.5 GPA. Students like Ellingsworth who qualify for this incredibly selective honor exemplify top-tier diligence and academic talent.

Mr. Speaker, Kelsie Ellingsworth has not only excelled in her academics, but has shown a passion for science and medicine that will serve her future aspirations well. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating her for this achievement. On behalf of Missouri's Seventh Congressional District, I wish Kelsie the best of luck in all her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE CITY OF HAYWARD'S WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITY ON ITS RECENT AWARDS

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the City of Hayward's Water Pollution Control Facility ("Facility") on its pioneering accomplishments in green energy and waste management.

In 2010, the Facility was costing Hayward approximately $578,000, which was about 20 percent of its total energy cost and 10 percent of the Facility's budget. It also produced approximately 20 percent of Hayward's greenhouse gas emissions.

The year before, the City had adopted its Climate Action Plan with a goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020. Part of this effort was to improve the Facility, allowing it to generate all of its own power with clean or renewable energy sources, but without tapping into Hayward's general fund.

Using outside funding, including multiple incentive programs from the California Public

Utilities Commission, the Facility was able to utilize four new technologies to move from energy consumption to production. The Facility is now able to export the excess energy it creates and saves Hayward an estimated $400,000 each year.

Some of these technologies also help reduce the environmental impact to the community. The Facility's new digesters, which convert bio-waste to energy, accept waste fats, oils, and greases from the area to help fuel them, keeping those wastes out of landfills. The Facility also sends treated, non-potable water to a nearby power plant, reducing the cost of pumping the water into the San Francisco Bay, and better harnessing water resources in this time of severe drought.

The Facility's revolutionary measures have recently been recognized by organizations across the country. In October 2015, the EPA selected it for the Green Power Leadership Award. On May 26, the Facility will receive the Bay Area's oldest environmental award, the Acterra Business Environmental Award.

The Facility's commitment to the Hayward community and environment is truly extraordinary. I want to acknowledge it and the City of Hayward for their dedication to a sustainable future.

IN RECOGNITION OF MONSIGNOR JOSEPH P. KELLY FOR SERVING THE DIOCESE OF SCRANTON FOR 50 YEARS

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Monsignor Joseph P. Kelly, who will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood on May 28, 2016. Monsignor Kelly will be honored for his devoted service to those in need in our community at the Catholic Social Services Gala on May 22 at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Throughout his career, Monsignor Kelly has tended to the needs of many throughout the 11 counties within the Diocese of Scranton. He has been Pastor to several parishes in northeastern Pennsylvania, including St. Catherine's in Moscow, St. Ann's in Tobyhanna, and Nativity of Our Lord and Holy Rosary of Scranton. In addition to leading local faith communities, Monsignor Kelly has served as Diocesan Director of Catholic Men, Women and Youth as well as the Episcopal Vicar of Hispanic Ministry.

Monsignor Kelly has played an important role as an educator and mentor to young people during his ministry. He taught 8th grade religion for 25 years and taught religion to seniors at Scranton Prep for 13 years. He was the Executive Director of Camp St. Andrew and Co-Founder of Project Hope at Camp St. Andrew.

Monsignor Kelly has been an advocate for Catholic charities and human services throughout Pennsylvania and the United States. He has worked tirelessly to provide services to children and families who are struggling to make ends meet, shelters for the homeless, food for the hungry, adoption and foster care, affordable housing, help for homeless veterans, resettlement services for refugees, and treatment for drug addiction. Today, Monsignor Kelly continues to devote himself to northeastern Pennsylvanians as the Executive Director of St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen in Scranton.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 16th, 2016 I was inadvertently detained on Roll Call Votes 194 and 195. Had I been present to vote I would have voted YES on each.

On Tuesday, May 17th, 2016 I was inadvertently detained on Roll Call Votes 196, 197, 198, and 199. Had I been present to vote I would have voted YES on Roll Call Votes 196, 197, and 199. I would have voted NO on Roll Call Vote 198.

TRIBUTE TO JANE AND HARTFORD COOPER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Jane and Hartford Cooper of Nodaway, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 55th anniversary. They celebrated their special day earlier this year on February 19, 2016.

Jane and Hartford's lifelong commitment to each other truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 55th anniversary may their commitment grow even stronger, and continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

I salute this great couple on their 55th year together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Jane and Hartford on this momentous occasion.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PAT FOX FOR HER 11 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF RIVERVIEW HEALTH

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Pat Fox on the occasion of her retirement. For over a decade, Pat has served as President and CEO of Riverview Health in Noblesville, Indiana. Pat has an impressive 45 years in the healthcare industry and her passion for patient care and dedication to making Riverview a first-rate hospital has left an enduring impact on the Riverview Health system. The people of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District are forever grateful for Pat Fox's commitment to making Riverview Health a great place to work, practice medicine, and receive excellent patient care.

Pat began her career in the health industry as a nurse aid in a small county hospital and decided she wanted to pursue a nursing degree. After completing her degree to become an R.N. at St. Mary's in Chicago, she went on to receive a bachelor's degree in Public Health Administration from Indiana University and a master's degree from St. Francis in Illinois. Pat remains a licensed R.N. today, however for the past 30 years she has served in leadership roles in hospitals throughout Indiana.

She began her career in hospital administration as a manager at Wishard Hospital in Indianapolis, which is now known as Eskenazi, and worked her way up to Vice President of Patient Care Services. In 2000, Pat was recruited by Riverview Health for her strong leadership skills to fill the position of Chief Operating Officer. Four years later, when the CEO retired, Pat was promoted. Throughout her 11 year tenure as CEO of Riverview Health, she has been instrumental in helping the Riverview Health system grow into an exceptional and widely-respected health system.

Riverview Health opened its first hospital in May of 1951. At the time, it was just one hospital, but over the past 55 years, Riverview has committed itself to adapting and expanding its facilities to meet the healthcare needs of its community. When Pat started in 2000, Riverview Health was considered a small county hospital with six physicians working outside the hospital in offices around Hamilton County. Under her administration, the health system has grown into a first-class network of 55 facilities, including the large hospital, offices, nursing homes and numerous other facilities focused on outpatient care. Most notably, Pat is responsible for leading the efforts in opening the Women's and Children's units, a new Emergency Center, and facilitation of a physician-led multi-disciplinary breast cancer team. Riverview Health has also been selected to receive a number of prestigious awards under Pat's leadership. Riverview Health was honored with an AchieveWELL certification from The Wellness Council of Indiana (2011), the Patient Safety Excellence Award from HealthGrades (2012), Five-Star Excellence Award from the Professional Research Consultants Inc. (2014), and has consistently ranked in the top 5 percent of U.S. hospitals.

Beyond her work with Riverview, she is an active member of the community. She serves on a number of non-profit boards, including the Cherish Center, Noblesville Youth Assistance Program, Prevail, Inc., and the Westfield Chamber of Commerce. Her commitment to the Hoosier community and success as a leader has not gone unnoticed. She has received a number of awards, including Aspire Indiana's 2013 Aspiring Person Award for her diverse and meaningful involvement throughout the community.

Pat has devoted herself to attaining the vision she set out for the hospital when she began her career with Riverview, and over the last decade she has achieved that vision above and beyond. She transformed healthcare, particularly in Noblesville, but also throughout central Indiana and the Hoosier community is eternally grateful for her dedication to providing the highest standard of healthcare to Hoosiers. I am thrilled to hear

she plans to remain active in the community and will have more time to partake in some of her favorite hobbies, running marathons and traveling with her husband. On behalf of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District, I'd like to congratulate Pat on her remarkable career and extend a huge thank you for all of the wonderful contributions she has made to Riverview Health and the Hoosier community. I wish the very best to Pat, her husband, Steve, her two children, and two grandchildren as she enjoys a well-deserved retirement.

HONORING WYATT BOWEN ON BEING ACCEPTED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF FUTURE PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL SCIENTISTS AS A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS OF FUTURE MEDICAL LEADERS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Wyatt Bowen, of Pierce City, Missouri, who has been accepted by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors-only program that is designed to motivate and direct the top students in the United States. It is specifically for students who aspire to be physicians or enter into the field of medical research, and helps to provide a path and mentorship for students to accomplish those dreams. It takes place at the University of Massachusetts over 3 days, and helps to spark meaningful dialogues and exchanges of ideas between future leaders in the medical field.

To be considered for acceptance as a delegate, applicants must be recommended by either a teacher or member of the Academy based on a proven track record of academic excellence. Students must have a minimum of a 3.5 GPA and represent all 50 states and Puerto Rico. It is an incredibly selective opportunity, and those students who qualify for selection have done so because of their hard work and diligence to their studies, not to mention their impressive intellect.

Mr. Speaker, Wyatt Bowen, who attends Pierce City High School, has dedicated himself to his studies and exhibited a passion for health and medical studies, and will soon be representing the future of the state of Missouri at this conference. I would like to extend my personal congratulations for his achievement, and on behalf of the 7th District of Missouri, I would like to thank him for his representation of our district.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF RUTGERS GARDENS

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rutgers Gardens as it celebrates its centennial this year. Since its development, Rutgers Gardens have contributed to the agricultural studies, as well as the beauty, of Rutgers University.

Over the years, Rutgers Gardens has expanded and evolved. Today it encompasses nearly 180 acres comprising the former land of Wolpert Farm, Welshman Farm and Helyar Woods. It is located on Rutgers University's Cook Campus, a stark contrast to the rest of the university's urban setting.

While beautiful, Rutgers Gardens provides much more than simply a botanical display for the community to enjoy. From the onset, the purpose of the gardens was agricultural research, which still continues today. Additionally, students and visitors can receive valuable horticultural education through various programs and materials offered by the gardens.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in marking the 100th Anniversary of Rutgers Gardens. This milestone is truly deserving of this body's recognition.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CORPORAL WILLIAM STEELE WINESETT

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Corporal William Steele Winesett, who passed away peacefully on May 4, 2016 in Lumberton, NC. We send our prayers and sincerest condolences to his entire family as they celebrate the life of this extraordinary man.

After graduating from Plymouth High School in Plymouth, NC, Corporal Winesett joined the United States Marine Corps to serve his country during World War II. As a machine gunner in the Pacific theater, he took part in Operation Detachment as U.S. Marines landed on and captured the island of Iwo Jima. The lessons and experience brought to him through his military service stayed with Corporal Winesett and he remained fiercely proud of his service throughout his life.

Following the conclusion of the war, Corporal Winesett returned to North Carolina and attended East Carolina University. Afterwards he joined General Motors Insurance, and after 33 years he retired to spend more time with his beloved wife, Lola. A true pillar of the community, Corporal Winesett was a leader in the Boy Scouts of America, volunteering with the same troop for 50 years. He also remained an active member and devoted parishioner of the Rowland United Methodist Church where he took great pride in maintaining the lawn for all to enjoy. Corporal Winesett was a man founded in principle and faith in God and will be truly missed.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commemorating the life of Corporal William Steele Winesett for his service to God, country, and his community.

TRIBUTE TO KATHIE AND JERRY SEALOCK

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Kathie and Jerry Sealock of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary. They were married on May 5, 1966, at Epworth United Methodist Church in Council Bluffs by Rev. Gerald LaMotte. Jerry retired in 1987 from the U.S. Postal Service and Kathie retired in 1991 as a bookkeeper for Hy-Vee Drug Store.

Kathie and Jerry's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, the late Jeffrey, Karen, and Karilyn, and their grandchildren, truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 60th anniversary may their commitment grow even stronger, and continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

I salute this great couple on their 60th year together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Kathie and Jerry on this momentous occasion.

HONORING DR. TSAI ING-WEN

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the newly elected president of Taiwan, Dr. Tsai Ing-wen, who will be inaugurated on May 20, 2016. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Tsai and in applauding Taiwan for completing another presidential election.

Dr. Tsai Ing-wen, the leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), will be Taiwan's first female president, leading the country to a new chapter of transformation. Taiwan provides an example to be followed in gender equality and women in leadership at its highest level of government. Taiwan has made more progress with gender equality issues than many of its Pacific neighbors, having adopted a law to implement the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2011.

Taiwan is also an important partner to the United States, serving as a democratic beacon of freedom in the Pacific. Democracy is strong and vibrant in Taiwan and we must continue to support these ideals that are so similar to our own. We must remain steadfast in our support of Taiwan even though its future may hold challenges dealing with their neighbors.

Our shared goal is to provide the basis for long-term peace and prosperity for both of our nations and worldwide. Taiwan, like the U.S., is also a responsible member of the international community and constantly works for the peaceful resolution of disputes. Taiwan has achieved a remarkable reduction of cross-strait tensions, and effectively works for peace, harmony, and civilized conduct by all nations throughout the world.

It is my privilege to travel to Taiwan for Dr. Tsai Ing-wen's Inauguration in May, 2016. I look forward to supporting our friends there and personally congratulating Dr. Tsai.

HONORING SCOTT CETOUTE FOR ACHIEVING PERFECT ATTENDANCE WHILE ENROLLED IN THE BROWARD COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM FROM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH HIS SENIOR YEAR

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to recognize Mr. Scott Cetoute, a student-athlete and soon to be graduate of Coral Springs High School. Scott was recently honored at the Broward County Public Schools fifth annual Best-in-Class and Perfect Attendance Awards ceremony on Thursday, May 12, 2016, and will be honored again on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at the Broward County School Board Meeting.

The Best-in-Class Award is an accolade presented to students who have been continuously enrolled in Broward County Public Schools from kindergarten through 12th grade, and have perfect attendance. This is a remarkable achievement and it is an immense honor of mine to recognize Scott for his unwavering devotion to education.

Having never missed a single day of school for a total of 2,340 days is no small feat. Furthermore, in a show of appreciation, various community and business partners have joined together to provide Scott and fellow honorees with an assortment of gifts and supplies that will assist them as they continue their journey towards higher education.

Mr. Speaker, I once again want to commend Mr. Scott Cetoute for his dedication and commitment to education. He is a shining example of student success. I wish him all the very best as he begins studying at Broward Community College this summer to earn his Associate Degree, upon completion of which he plans to continue his education at Florida International University (FIU). Scott has strong aspirations to become a pharmacist once he completes his education. I know that he will make his community and the state of Florida proud.

PERSONAL EXPLANANTION

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, due to the illness and passing of my father, former Congressman Delbert L. Latta, I was unable to be present for votes on Tuesday, May 10, 2016; Wednesday, May 11, 2016; Thursday, May 12, 2016; Friday, May 13, 2016; and Monday, May 16, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Roll Call Number 180: YEA; Roll Call Number 181: YEA; Roll Call Number 182: YEA; Roll Call Number 183: YEA; Roll Call Number 184: YEA; Roll Call Number 185: YEA; Roll Call Number 186: NAY; Roll Call Number 187: YEA; Roll Call Number 188: YEA; Roll Call Number 189: YEA; Roll Call Number 190: YEA; Roll Call Number 191: YEA; Roll Call Number 192: YEA; Roll Call Number 193: YEA; Roll Call Number 194: YEA; Roll Call Number 195: YEA.

TRIBUTE TO GERRY AND RANDALL HOUGH

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Gerry and Randall Hough of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary. They were married on April 27, 1946.

Gerry and Randall's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Jodie and Debbie, and their five grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 70th anniversary may their commitment grow even stronger, and continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

I salute this great couple on their 70th year together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representative join me in congratulating Gerry and Randall on this momentous occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CARLOS CURBELO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on May 17, I missed votes on account of attending a family event in the district. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Roll Call 196: I would have voted YEA: Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 732—the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4909—National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017

Roll Call 197: I would have voted YEA: Adoption of H. Res. 732—the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4909—National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017

Roll Call 198: I would have voted NAY: Esty (D–CT) Motion to Instruct Conferees on S. 524—Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016

Roll Call 199: I would have voted YEA: H.R. 897—Zika Vector Control Act

HONORING JOHN CRUMPTON ON BEING ACCEPTED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF FUTURE PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL SCIENTISTS AS A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS OF FUTURE MEDICAL LEADERS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Crumpton, of Branson, Missouri, who has been accepted by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors-only program that is designed to motivate and direct the top students in the United States. It is specifically for students who aspire to be physicians or enter into the field of medical research, and helps to provide a path and mentorship for students to accomplish those dreams. It takes place at the University of Massachusetts over 3 days, and helps to spark meaningful dialogues an exchanges of ideas between future leaders in the medical field.

To be considered for acceptance as a delegate, applicants must be recommended by either a teacher or member of the Academy based on a proven track record of academic excellence. Students must have a minimum of a 3.5 GPA and represent all 50 states and Puerto Rico. It is an incredibly selective opportunity, and those students who qualify for selection have done so because of their hard work and diligence to their studies, not to mention their impressive intellect.

Mr. Speaker, John Crumpton; who attends Branson High School, has shown a level of excellence in academics and passion for science that leaves me fully confident that he will represent Missouri well at this Congress. I would like to extend my personal congratulations for his achievement, and on behalf of the 7th District of Missouri, I would like to thank him for representing our district.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE OF VIRGINIA, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS, INC. AND ITS SUBORDINATE LODGES

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Virginia, Free and Accepted Masons, Incorporated and its subordinate lodges, who will be celebrating Founder's Day on Sunday, May 22nd in Petersburg, Virginia. This organization has worked in continuous and faithful service for 140 years within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Prince Hall lodge has a long history in the Commonwealth, tracing its own history to 1775, when Prince Hall and fourteen other free blacks joined a British army lodge of Masons stationed in Boston, Massachusetts and, following their departure, formed their own lodge: African American Lodge Number 1. Prince Hall became the lodge's first Grand Master.

By establishing this organization, Prince Hall and his compatriots were, in 1775, taking some of the first steps to form one of American's first formal African-American institutions.

Established in Virginia in 1875 as Universal Lodge Number 1 in Alexandria, countless members of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Virginia, Free & Accepted Masons have served in community and elected leadership positions.

Through their service to the Commonwealth of Virginia and our nation, members of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Virginia, Free & Accepted Masons and its subordinate lodges have sought to ''inspire noble principles, moral values, and profound convictions in the lives of each individual'' their work touches. They have sought to teach the principles of family, the values of philanthrophy through charity and volunteer work, and the convictions of acceptance and compassion through honor, integrity, and respect.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my enthusiastic congratulations to Roger C. Brown of Richmond, Virginia, who currently serves as the 78th leader of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Virginia and to all its Grand Lodge Officers, Worshipful Masters, Worshipful Past Masters and members on their celebration, on December 16th, 2015, of 140 years of continuous service in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and on the celebration of Founder's Day on May 22, 2016 in Petersburg, Virginia. It is my profound hope that through their work, members of the Grand Lodge will continue to inspire and provide support and service to communities in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

MR, BILL CARNEY

HON. LEE M. ZELDIN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible fifty years of marriage between Barbara and Bill Carney.

On May 14, 2016, Barbara and Bill Carney celebrated fifty years of marriage, friendship, fun and family. Those 50 years have taken them on a winding and unpredicted journey—from the Irish Catholic neighborhood of Flatbush, Brooklyn, to the suburbs of Long Island, to the halls of the United States Congress—with unforeseen stops and innumerable joys along the way. With love, respect and patience, they made it look easy. Their lives together, love for each other, generosity of spirit, faith and humor have impacted so many people through the years.

Barbara Haverlin and Bill Carney grew up blocks from one another in Brooklyn. They attended the same parish, St. Catherine of Genoa, frequented the same places, and enjoyed overlapping groups of friends. They did not meet, however, until their early twenties at O'Reilly's Pub, where Bill was tending bar and Barbara was dating one of the O'Reilly brothers. On a dare from co-workers, Bill asked out the boss' girlfriend. Within two weeks of the first date, they decided to marry and were wed twelve months later. Both having lost their parents in their teens; Barbara and Bill deeply appreciated the importance and value of family. They have been blessed with extraordinary closeness with community and family, which is the same value and spirit that Barbara and Bill maintained in raising their two daughters, Julie Baker and Jackie Carney D'Aquila.

After marriage, Bill held multiple jobs to support his family—always willing to try or learn a new skill. Never one to shy away from challenges or to view something as impossible, Bill, as a member of the Smithtown Conservative Party, decided to run for U.S. Congress at 32 years old. In 1977, with Barbara's backing and the support of a handful of what would prove to be life-long friends, Bill beat the odds and was elected to represent the First Congressional District of New York. Bill Carney is the only person ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a member of the New York State Conservative Party, having run on both the Conservative and Republican lines. During his political career, Bill enjoyed phenomenal staff, advisors and friends. He served four terms in the House before deciding to retire and open his own boutique consulting firm in 1986.

Bill and Barbara are joined in celebrating their 50th Anniversary this month by their daughters, sons-in-law, four grandchildren and scores of friends and family. I would like to congratulate Bill on fifty years of marriage and thank him for his remarkable service to his country and especially to the First Congressional District of New York. It is my hope that many will follow in his footsteps and give back to their country as graciously as he did.

TRIBUTE TO RITA AND STEVE VALLINCH

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Rita and Steve Vallinch of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1951 at St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Omaha, Nebraska, by Father Stanislaus Golik.

Rita and Steve's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Ann, Jean, Kathie, and family, truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 65th anniversary, may their commitment grow even stronger, and continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

I salute this great couple on their 65th year together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Rita and Steve on this momentous occasion.

HONORING ZACKRIE GORDON

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Zackrie Gordon of Davie, Florida for receiving Broward County Public Schools' Best in Class Award. With perfect attendance throughout elementary, middle, and high school, Zackrie has demonstrated a sincere dedication to his studies, a passion for learning, and a commitment to his school community.

It is with great pleasure that I honor Zackrie in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and wish him all the best as he graduates from Western High School.

CONGRATULATING UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA STUDENTS

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate the University of Central Florida for winning the 2016 Raytheon National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition (NCCDC) for the third consecutive year. The competition, held April 22–24 in San Antonio, Texas, brought together the top ten college and university teams from across the country.

More than 180 colleges and universities and 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students participated in competitions leading up to the national championship which was sponsored by Raytheon. The Raytheon competition models real-world scenarios in which teams are required to maintain operational needs of their businesses and user demands amidst cyber attacks. Preparing the next generation of cyber security leaders is critical to defending our nation against ever-increasing threats.

Again, congratulations to the University of Central Florida team for bringing home the Raytheon NCCDC Alamo Cup for the third consecutive year and establishing the University as a national leader in cyber security.

HONORING MELODY CHALMERS

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Melody Chalmers, a North Carolinian who has had a wonderful impact on many of our state's children. Earlier this month, Melody was named the Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year for her service as principal of E.E. Smith High School in Cumberland County.

Chalmers was selected after a rigorous statewide process involving both interviews and on-site visits. It is clear that she is a truly exceptional principal.

Chalmers is long-time North Carolinian, who graduated from North Carolina A&T State University with a bachelor's degree in English in 1998. From there, she continued her education at Fayetteville State University, graduating in 2005 with a master's degree in School Administration.

As a leader in North Carolina's public schools, Melody Chalmers previously served as an assistant principal at E.E. Smith High and Warrenwood Elementary. She was later principal of Cross Creek Early College High before assuming her current role at E.E. Smith High School.

Chalmers has been widely praised for her work in our state's schools. North Carolina State Superintendent June Atkinson lauded her as an ''innovative problem solver who is committed to the academic and personal growth of each of her students and teachers.'' In presenting the award to Chalmers, Juan Austin, senior vice president of Community Affairs at Wells Fargo Carolinas, noted that she has the unique ability to ''recruit and retain

quality teachers,'' an especially difficult task given the low pay and long hours our state's teachers cope with on a daily basis.

As principal of E.E. Smith High School, Chalmers works with more than 1,000 students and 70 teachers each year. She has fostered a family atmosphere at E.E. Smith that encourages her students to grow into future leaders.

I also want to thank Wells Fargo for their continued support of the Principal of the Year program. Their 33-year partnership with the State of North Carolina has touched hundreds of educators and thousands of students, providing resources for schools to continue to grow their inventive programs

I wish Melody Chalmers well as she continues her tireless work in North Carolina, creating an environment where every child can reach his or her full potential. She has touched many lives, and the effects of her service will reverberate for years to come.

HONORING SARAH CONROY ON BEING ACCEPTED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF FUTURE PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL SCIENTISTS AS A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS OF FUTURE MEDICAL LEADERS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sarah Conroy, of Ozark, Missouri, who has been accepted by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors-only program that is designed to motivate and direct the top students in the United States. It is specifically for students who aspire to be physicians or enter into the field of medical research, and helps to provide a path and mentorship for students to accomplish those dreams. It takes place at the University of Massachusetts over 3 days, and helps to spark meaningful dialogues and exchanges of ideas between future leaders in the medical field.

To be considered for acceptance as a delegate, applicants must be recommended by either a teacher or member of the Academy based on a proven track record of academic excellence. Students must have a minimum of a 3.5 GPA and represent all 50 states and Puerto Rico. It is an incredibly selective opportunity, and those students who qualify for selection have done so because of their hard work and diligence to their studies, not to mention their impressive intellect.

Mr. Speaker, Sarah Conroy, who attends Ozark High School, has shown a true passion for anatomy, biology and health science. Moreover, Sarah has excelled in her academics and will no doubt make Missouri proud as one of our delegates. I would like to extend my personal congratulations for her achievement, and on behalf of the 7th District of Missouri, I would like to thank her for representing our district.

TRIBUTE TO KATHERINE AND TOMMIE STONER, SR.

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Katherine and Tommie Stoner, Sr. on the very special occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. Tommie and Katherine were married on May 20, 1951.

Their lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa's values. As the years pass, may their love continue to grow even stronger and may they continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many more years to come.

I salute this lovely couple on their 65 years of life together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

IN RECOGNITION OF MAESTRO ALVIN MILLS OF SANTA MONICA

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Maestro Alvin Mills of Santa Monica, California who is retiring on May 15, 2016 at the age of 94 after being the conductor of the Brentwood Westwood Symphony Orchestra for 63 years.

I want to commend Maestro Mills for his commitment to bringing joy and music to thousands of people who are not able to afford to go to the Philharmonic concerts.

Maestro Mills began studying violin at the age of 8 and later studied with Pierre Monteux at the Ecole Monteux in Hancock, Maine. As a violinist he performed with the Kansas City Philharmonic and the Hollywood Bowl Symphony. In 1949 he became the Founder and Conductor of the Lompoc California Symphony.

Maestro Mills founded the Brentwood Westwood Symphony Orchestra in 1953. He also served as its conductor and musical director since its inception, and has championed the cause of keeping alive the arts and classical music by giving free quality classical symphonic concerts in these communities.

Maestro Mills also championed the youth in Los Angeles as a music teacher and with a contest that he started 30 years ago entitled, ''The Artists of Tomorrow Competition'' which gives the opportunity for 6 to 7 young artists who win the contest each year to receive scholarships and perform with the orchestra. Many of them have gone on to successful careers in music.

Through his inspiration, talents and leadership, Maestro Mills has exemplified the best ideals of community service. I am proud to honor Maestro Mills of Brentwood, California and thank him for his dedication to culturally enriching the residents of the 33rd Congressional District.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, due to an obligation in my district, I regrettably missed Roll Call votes 190, 191, 192 and 193. Had I been present, I would have voted ''nay'' on Roll Call Vote 190, ''nay'' on Roll Call Vote 191 and ''yea'' on Roll Call Vote 191, and ''yea'' on Roll Call Vote 193.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MINISTER ASENATH KATHERINE TALLEY

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Minister Asenath Katherine Talley of Philadelphia, who passed away last Wednesday.

Asenath Katherine Brown, known affectionately as Sennie, was born in Philadelphia on June 10th, 1942. The youngest of Benjamin and Hattie Brown's eight children, Asenath was involved in the church from an early age. She was a member of the Baptist Young People's Union, Sunday school, and the junior choir at Enon Baptist Church. Her family and friends often said that singing in the choir was one of her greatest joys as a child.

Asenath devoted her life to serving others long before she was ordained. She could frequently be seen preaching on the streets, prisons, and shelters of Philadelphia and Camden. Her compassion for the less fortunate was without peer, and her involvement in her community only grew after she became an ordained minister in 2000. A natural-born teacher, Asenath taught at Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and New Life Bible School. Of course, she never stopped singing in the choir.

Preceded in death by her husband Leonard M. Talley, Asenath is survived by three children, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, as well as nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends beyond count. She left behind a legacy of love and compassion that will endure through every life she touched.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring the life and memory of Minister Asenath Talley.

TRIBUTE TO KENT GRIES

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Deputy Kent Gries for being awarded the Commissioner's Special Award for Excellence in Traffic Safety. Mr. Gries is a Deputy in the Guthrie County Sheriff's Office based in Guthrie Center, Iowa.

This award recognizes an officer's efforts to "aggressively pursue drug-impaired and alcohol-impaired drivers." Deputy Gries was involved in about 90 arrests through the Guthrie County Sheriff's Office in 2015. Those incidents include 10 felony violations, 32 operating-while-intoxicated arrests and 50 drug arrests. He also administers the Guthrie County Sheriffs Office Facebook page. He developed and led a Citizen's Academy in Guthrie County.

Mr. Speaker, Deputy Kent Gries is an Iowan who has served his community and state well. It is with great honor that I recognize him today. I ask that my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives join me in honoring Kent and wish him continued success, health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF MONSIGNOR JAMES EDWIN PETERSEN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Monsignor James Edwin Petersen of Madera, California who passed away on May 3, 2016 at the age of 82. Monsignor Petersen will be missed greatly by his family, friends, and the entire community.

Msgr. Petersen was born in Los Angeles, California on November 8, 1933. His family moved to Randsburg, California in the Mojave Desert, where his parents operated a general store. Monsignor Petersen realized his calling to become a priest at an early age. He attended seminary school in Columbus, Ohio at the Josephinum Seminary, where he completed high school, college, and post-graduate theology.

Msgr. Petersen was ordained into priesthood in 1959, and he took his first assignment at the Shrine of St. Therese in Fresno, California. For over 40 years, he served throughout California's Central Valley in various roles, serving as a pastor for numerous churches including Our Lady of Sorrows in Parlier, California, Our Lady of Mercy, in Merced California, St. Anthony of Padua in Fresno, and as the Executive Director for the California Catholic Conference in Sacramento California. Msgr. Petersen served as a priest at the Shrine of St. Therese until his retirement.

Throughout his priesthood and well into retirement, Msgr. Petersen served on numerous committees and boards and gave mass at the Nazareth House in Fresno on a weekly basis. Furthermore, he served the people of the San Joaquin Valley with grace, humility, and integrity. His commitment to faith and making a difference in the community truly made him a beloved individual.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering a true community servant and man who put God above all else. Msgr. Petersen's memory will live on through his family and will be remembered by many in our community.

IN HONOR OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF SANDIA CALIFORNIA

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Sandia National Laboratories of Livermore. Through 60 years of collaborative research and pioneering to solve our nation's security issues, Sandia's workers have focused on keeping America's technology on the cutting edge.

From nuclear stockpile stewardship to chemical weapons disposal, from cybersecurity to fuel cells, their work has made every American safer. I am particularly thankful for Sandia's Energy and Climate program, which works toward a secure energy future for our nation. Moving us toward a sustainable, domestically sourced energy supply and more reliable infrastructure might be among the greatest gifts they are giving to Americans for generations to come.

Our cars are cleaner, our cybersecurity is stronger, and our energy options are widening because of Sandia's innovative work that will help maintain America's position as a premier technological leader.

Sandia has become an integral part of the Livermore community, helping to turn the area into a bustling and vibrant center of innovation. The entire 15th Congressional District is better for it. I am honored to represent the great minds of Sandia's workforce, and would like to congratulate them on 60 years of innovation and groundbreaking science.

HONORING RYAN DIRKSEN ON BEING ACCEPTED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF FUTURE PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL SCIENTISTS AS A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS OF FUTURE MEDICAL LEADERS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ryan Dirksen, of Springfield, Missouri, who has been accepted by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors-only program that is designed to motivate and direct the top students in the United States. It is specifically for students who aspire to be physicians or enter into the field of medical research, and helps to provide a path and mentorship for students to accomplish those dreams. It takes place at the University of Massachusetts over 3 days, and helps to spark meaningful dialogues and exchanges of ideas between future leaders in the medical field.

To be considered for acceptance as a delegate, applicants must be recommended by either a teacher or member of the Academy based on a proven track record of academic excellence. Students must have a minimum of a 3.5 GPA and represent all 50 states and Puerto Rico. It is an incredibly selective opportunity, and those students who qualify for selection have done so because of their hard work and diligence to their studies, not to mention their impressive intellect.

Mr. Speaker, Ryan Dirksen, who attends Springfield Catholic High School, has shown a level of dedication and aptitude for the health sciences that will leave him well prepared to represent Missouri at this Congress. I would like to extend my personal congratulations for his achievement, and on behalf of the 7th District of Missouri, I would like to thank him for representing our district.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE 27TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INAUGURATION OF NELSON MANDELA AS PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remember the anniversary of the inauguration of Nelson Mandela, the President of South Africa, who was a leading antiapartheid revolutionary and philanthropist.

On May 10, 1994, Nelson Mandela, a leading figure in the anti-apartheid movement, was inaugurated as South Africa's first black President.

The inauguration ceremony took place in the Union Buildings amphitheatre in Pretoria, South Africa; and politicians and dignitaries from more than 140 countries around the world were in attendance.

This historic day, for the people of South Africa, signified a monumental shift towards progress and away from hatred for those once treated as second-class citizens.

Nelson Mandela's historic election marked the end of an oppressive apartheid regime.

His inaugural speech, addressing the South African people, called for the continuation of work towards national and social reconciliation.

Jubilant scenes on the streets of Pretoria followed the ceremony as sects of all people celebrated together.

More than 100,000 South African men, women, and children of all races sang and danced with joy.

The crowd went wild when the new President, flanked by First Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Second Deputy President FW de Klerk, appeared on the Botha Lawn.

Ever aware of the past and the history that had brought him to this moment, President Mandela honored his predecessor, President FW de Klerk, by acknowledging the indispensable role he played in South Africa's transformation.

Pursuing human rights through tireless efforts to create a better society, President Mandela's speech thematically echoed the importance of forgiveness for those previously committing many travesties on their brethren before the nation could begin to move forward.

He also spoke of the human disaster that was apartheid, recounting: "We saw our country tear itself apart in terrible conflict . . . The time for healing of wounds has come . . . Never, never again will this beautiful land experience the oppression of one by another."

Even after his term concluded, President Mandela continued to dedicate his life as an advocate for peace and equality in Africa and throughout the world.

The world mourned on December 5, 2013, the day Nelson Mandela passed, surrounded by his family at his Johannesburg home.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in this chamber to honor President Mandela who was freed after enduring 27 years of imprisonment, who nonetheless managed to use his inaugural platform to inspire the world.

President Mandela taught us that we all have the right to be free and the will to be compassionate.

TRIBUTE TO MARILYN AND CECIL NICHOLS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Marilyn and Cecil Nichols of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary. They were married on May 5, 1946, in Council Bluffs.

Marilyn and Cecil's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Linda, Nick, and Diane, nine grandchildren, twenty great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 70th anniversary may their commitment grow even stronger, and continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

I salute this great couple on their 70th year together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Marilyn and Cecil on this momentous occasion.

HONORING HAROLD BRADLEY

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, over sixty years ago, two brothers who shared a love for music banded together and bought a home on 16th Avenue South in the heart of Nashville. They turned the home into a recording studio and soon after, because of their impact, the neighborhood began its transformation into what is known today as Music Row.

Harold and Owen Bradley built Nashville's first recording and film studio, welcoming legends Patsy Cline and Brenda Lee among others to record the songs we all know and love. A talent in his own right, Harold played on cuts by Elvis Presley, Conway Twitty, Hank Williams, and more. His own albums include, ''Misty Guitar'', ''The Bossa Nova Goes to Nashville'', and ''Guitar For Lovers Only''. Later in his career, Harold became the first president of the Nashville chapter of NARAS and a member of the Grammy organization's Board of Governors. He was awarded the Trustees Award at the 52nd Grammy Awards. A 2006 inductee of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Harold was part of the original ''A Team'' of Nashville super pickers, who are collectively members of The Musicians Hall of Fame. Bradley served from 1991–2008 as President of the Nashville Association of Musicians, Local 257 of the American Federation of Musicians, and also was elected as the international vice president until 2010.

Today we celebrate the legend and talent that is Mr. Harold Bradley as he is presented with The Cecile Scaife Visionary Award. This is an award given annually to an individual whose life and work have made it possible for future generations to realize careers in the music industry. In true reflection of this honor, students at the Mike Curb College of Entertainment and Music Business at Belmont University are now using the very studio Mr. Bradley and his brother built, as a working study studio, and one of them will be the recipient of a scholarship in his name under The Cecil Scaife Endowment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me today as we honor and memorialize the life and work of Harold Bradley.

HONORING ANA ROSALINDA GARCIA DE HERNANDEZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the accomplishments of the First Lady of Honduras, Ana Rosalinda Garcia de Hernandez, a steadfast advocate for the rights and welfare of unaccompanied migrant children.

First Lady Ana Rosalinda Garcia de Hernandez was born on September 21, 1969 in Tegucigalpa, Municipality of the Central District, Honduras. She is the daughter of Jose Guillermo Garcia Castellanos, a physician; and Carlota Carias Pizzatti. Ms. Garcia de Hernández received her law degree in legal and social sciences, with distinction, from the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) in 1991.

She met her future husband, Juan Orlando Hernandez, while she was a student. The couple married in 1990, and they have three children: Juan Orlando, Ana Daniela, and Isabella. She and her husband have lived in the United States, where she pursued a Certificate of Graduate Studies in Public Sector Management at the University at Albany, completing her studies in 1995. In 2002, she passed the Lawyer and Public Notary examination from the Supreme Court of Justice of Honduras.

The couple first began their social services work in Lempira, Honduras, where they demonstrated their commitment to humanitarian work by aiding the neediest families in that area of the country. In 2006 they began what came to be called ''Por Una Vida Mejor'' (''For a Better Life''), a pillar of success in the Honduran government's program for families. Vida Mejor emphasizes early childhood education.

While her husband was serving as President of the National Congress from 2010 to 2014, Ms. Garcia Carias initiated, developed, and led social service projects through the Office of Social Development, building ''Vida Mejor'' into one of the most successful national programs.

First Lady Garcia de Hernandez leads a commission, created by her husband Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez, to help address the crisis of unaccompanied minors leaving Honduras. She has traveled to visit many immigration detention centers in the United States, where she listens to the stories of mothers and children who have taken great risks in search of opportunity. She advocates for the human rights of these migrants and ensures that their experiences are not forgotten. First Lady Garcia de Hernandez is committed to ensuring the welfare of these children in the detention centers as well as their dignified and safe repatriation process.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have the opportunity to recognize the First Lady of Honduras Ana Garcia de Hernandez a compassionate leader and devoted servant to her people.

IN RECOGNITION OF JASON O'DONNELL AND VINCENT CINIELLO

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jason O'Donnell and Vincent Ciniello for their selfless and heroic actions to save a woman's life. The efforts of Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Ciniello are truly deserving of this body's recognition.

On May 4, 2016, Jason O'Donnell and Vincent Ciniello, along with another Good Samaritan responded to the cries of a woman who had fallen into Wesley Lake in Ocean Grove, New Jersey. After Mr. Ciniello and another person pulled the woman out of the frigid water, Mr. O'Donnell, a former Bayonne firefighter, performed CPR on the unresponsive victim until Asbury Park and Neptune first responders arrived on scene. The woman was transported to a local hospital in stable condition.

Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Ciniello are both employees at public relations firm Kivvit's New Jersey office, located in Asbury Park on the opposite side of the lake where the woman fell. Mr. O'Donnell, a former Assemblyman representing New Jersey's 31st Legislative District, was a long time member of the Bayonne Fire Department, reaching the rank of Captain. Mr. O'Donnell received his Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Science from New Jersey City University. His experience and training helped save the woman's life. A 2015 graduate of Rutgers University, Mr. Ciniello embodied his membership in the school's National Honor Society of Leadership and Success with his actions to pull the woman to safety.

Both Jason O'Donnell and Vincent Ciniello have exemplified the meaning of hero with their fearless and brave actions. I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in thanking both of them, along with the other bystanders and the first responders, for their efforts to save a life.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLOTTE AND RON BENTON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Charlotte and Ron Benton of Cumberland, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary. They were married on April 29, 1961 in Creston, Iowa.

Charlotte and Ron's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Teresa, Terry, Tony, and Todd, and their six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 55th anniversary may their commitment grow even stronger, and continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

I salute this great couple on their 55th year together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

RECOGNIZING MS. REBECCA GODDARD FOR BEING NAMED A PBS LEARNINGMEDIA DIGITAL INNOVATOR

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Rebecca Goddard for being named a PBS LearningMedia Digital Innovator. This distinction celebrates teachers from across the country who successfully integrate technology into the classroom as part of a dynamic approach to student learning.

Ms. Goddard, or ''Becky'' as she is known by her colleagues, spends her days challenging the minds of our youngest generation of students at Bostian Elementary School in China Grove, North Carolina. Her unique approach to the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields allows students to engage in these high-demand subject areas while tying into classroom teachings. In her role as a technology facilitator, she is able to work across ages and subjects by engaging students with activities that include Legos, robotics, coding, and more.

As part of her recognition as a Digital Innovator, Ms. Goddard will have the opportunity to participate in professional development opportunities including virtual training sessions, custom PBS LearningMedia resources, and various networking opportunities. She will also travel to Denver, Colorado to attend the PBS LearningMedia Digital Summit and the International Society for Technology in Education conference. I have no doubt that she will use these opportunities to bring back new and innovative ideas to North Carolina.

This year, the Digital Innovators Program had a record number of applicants representing almost every state in the country, making Ms. Goddard's selection even more impressive. As one of the 52 teachers chosen in the program, she joins a special group who is on the cutting edge of classroom technology. Our community is fortunate to have Ms. Goddard dedicate her time and talents to educating our students.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating Ms. Goddard for being named a PBS LearningMedia Digital Innovator and wish her well as she continues to make a positive difference in the lives of her students.

HONORING NORMA HARRIS ON BEING ACCEPTED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF FUTURE PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL SCIENTISTS AS A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS OF FUTURE MEDICAL LEADERS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Neosho High School Student Norma Harris on her being accepted as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors-only program that is designed to motivate and direct the top students in the United States. Specifically, it's designed for students aspiring to become physicians or medical researchers, and provides a path and mentorship for students to accomplish their goals.

To be considered for acceptance as a delegate, applicants are either recommended by a teacher or member of the Academy based on a proven track record of academic excellence. Delegates represent all 50 states plus Puerto Rico, and must have a minimum 3.5 GPA. Students like Harris who qualify for this incredibly selective honor exemplify top-tier diligence and academic talent.

Mr. Speaker, as a perennial Honor Roll student at her high school, Norma Harris has displayed elite academic qualifications, which will undoubtedly serve her future aspirations well. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating her for this achievement. On behalf of Missouri's Seventh Congressional District, I wish Norma the best of luck in all her future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO JANICE AND ED CARLSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ed and Janice Carlson on the very special occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary. They were married on February 20th, 1956.

Ed and Janice's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa's values. As the years pass, may their love continue to grow even stronger and may they continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many more years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this lovely couple on their 60 years of marriage and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Chair, this week the House considers the National Defense Authorization Act, and I rise to recognize the Armed Services Committee for its actions to expand paid parental leave for thousands of service members.

On the heels of Secretary Carter's expansion of paid maternity leave to 12 weeks, this bill will increase parental leave to 14 days and also grant paid leave for adoptive parents.

This is real progress, but we cannot leave out the more than 2.5 million non-military federal employees who still lack any paid parental leave.

As the Pentagon recognizes, the lack of paid leave for new parents threatens the government's ability to recruit and retain a talented, productive workforce.

I am encouraged by the DOD's updated family leave policy, and hope that we can work in Congress to guarantee this essential workplace right for all federal employees.

7TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE WAR IN SRI LANKA

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 7th anniversary of the end of the war in Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka won the war to keep the Sinhalese and Tamil communities within one country, but has not yet won the peace. A new president and a new government in 2015 have led to hopes that a different path will be trod towards a plural state in which all religions and ethnicities may live with dignity and security.

The leaders of the new government have made many ambitious promises to advance toward the goal of a stable and prosperous future for all. Now is the time to turn those promises into concrete action. The US, must assist and support in any way we can, but we must also keep incentives in place such as conditions on military and other aid until the government has accomplished real reform.

The government of Sri Lanka has made commitments on transitional justice and accountability, a political settlement of the ethnic

problem, security sector reform, the return of land, the release of Tamil political prisoners, actions to end human rights violations and other ambitious reforms. Unfortunately, not enough improvement has yet been seen by the Tamils, Christians and Muslims who feel marginalized and discriminated against. Courageous leadership is needed to gain trust if reconciliation is the goal, not just promises. Now is the time for real action.

HONORING LESLIE ANN MILLER AND RICHARD B. WORLEY

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Leslie Ann Miller and Richard B. Worley. Ms. Miller and Mr. Worley, married in 1987, are the deserving recipients of the Union League of Philadelphia's 2016 Crystal Award. The Crystal Award is presented to a person of distinction who by their actions has gained community or national prominence in the arts, or for their humanitarian efforts.

Leslie Ann Miller is a Philadelphia attorney and was the first woman to be elected President of The Pennsylvania Bar Association. A practicing litigator for more than 25 years, she has also served as an advisor to Mayor Michael Nutter in Philadelphia and General Counsel to the Honorable Edward G. Rendell.

Ms. Miller is active in a wide variety of nonprofit and cultural and organizations in Philadelphia and the East Coast. She served as acting President of The Kimmel Center when it opened in 2001; she chaired the Board of Trustees at Mount Holyoke College; currently chairs the Art Museum Board at Colonial Williamsburg and recently chaired the Philadelphia 2016 Flower Show. She is a member of the Boards of: The Philadelphia Museum of Art; Penn Medicine; Temple Law School; The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; The Committee of Seventy and The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.

A cum laude graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Ms. Miller received an MA from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, a JD from The Dickinson School of Law and an LLM with honors from Temple University's School of Law.

Richard B. Worley is Managing Partner of Permit Capital LLC which he founded in 2002. He began his career in 1970 as an economist at Goldman Sachs. In 1978 he joined Miller Anderson and Sherrerd, an independent investment management firm in the Philadelphia area. At MAS he was elected Partner in 1980 and Chairman in 1988, a position he held until the firm was acquired by Morgan Stanley in 1996. At Morgan Stanley he served in several capacities including as President and CEO of Morgan Stanley Investment Management. Mr. Worley holds a Bachelor of Sciences degree from the University of Tennessee.

Currently, Mr. Worley is the Chairman of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association, a position he has held since 2009. He is also a member of the board of directors of Neuberger Berman, a global investment management company headquartered in New York City, a member of the American Philosophical Society and a director at Philadelphia Media Network.

Mr. Worley is a former trustee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Medicine, the National Constitution Center and he is a former director of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the Independence Seaport Museum and the mutual funds board of Putnam Investments.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in honoring two incredibly deserving individuals: Leslie Ann Miller and Richard B. Worley. I congratulate them on their award and thank them for their years of service to our community.

HONORING OFFICER RICARDO GALVEZ DURING NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, this is National Police Week, a time to salute the courageous men and women who serve in our police forces, and to pay tribute to the brave officers we have lost.

In my district, we continue to honor and celebrate the life and achievements of Downey Police Officer Ricardo Galvez, who was shot and killed last November. I never had the opportunity to meet Officer Galvez—or Ricky, as he was called by those who knew him—but I have been deeply impressed to hear of his patriotism as a United States Marine, his work ethic, his dedication to service as a Downey policeman, his generosity, and his infectious smile.

His memory will live on not just in the hearts of his friends and family, but on the wall of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC.

During National Police Week, it was my privilege to attend Sunday's National Peace Officers' Memorial Service honoring Ricky and the many other police officers who lost their lives in 2015. Also in attendance were Ricky's family and many of his fellow Downey police officers. The ceremony was a solemn event and a reminder of the sacrifice police officers, like Officer Ricardo Galvez, and their families make to keep our communities safe.

On behalf of myself and the communities I represent, I salute all our law enforcement officers and thank them for their service.

OVERSIGHT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S COUNTERTERRORISM BUREAU

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, nearly two years after the President vowed to ''degrade and ultimately destroy'' ISIS, the terrorists are still holding their sanctuary in Iraq and Syria. Foreign fighters are still flocking to ISIS' so-called caliphate to fight alongside the terrorist group and tyrannize local populations.

But ISIS has not stopped there. In 2015, ISIS significantly stepped up its attacks outside Iraq and Syria. From the Charlie Hebdo attack last January to the attack last May at the Muhammad cartoon contest in Texas, ISIS has illustrated its dangerous capability to strike outside of its territory. The bloody year was finally capped off with the tragic massacre in Paris that left 130 people dead. Then came the attacks in Brussels only two months ago. ISIS suicide bombers killed 32 people and wounded over 300 in the heart of the European Union. The attacks showed the world that despite a year of pulling off these coordinated attacks, ISIS' appetite for carnage and its ability to strike have not abated.

Besides the looming threat of ISIS, terrorism has continued to plague countries the world over. Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Egypt, Israel, Bangladesh. These are just a few countries facing serious and destabilizing terrorist threats. In fact, more people were killed by terrorists in 2014 than ever before. There was an 80 percent increase in terrorist-related deaths in 2014 compared to 2013. Yet in the midst of this struggle against terrorism, the Administration wants to cut the main anti-terrorism account by 25 percent while increasing a general foreign aid account by 41 percent.

The State Department's Counter-Terrorism Bureau is not saved from this cut. In fact, State Department wants 31 percent less dollars for 2017 than 2016 for the CT Bureau. That budget request does not match the Administration's rhetoric that countering terrorism is a top priority.

Originally set up as an office back in 1972 in response to the terrorist attack at the Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, the primary mission of the Bureau for Counterterrorism is to forge partnerships with non-state actors, multilateral organizations, and foreign governments to advance the counterterrorism objectives and national security of the United States. Under that broad mission it has five principal responsibilities: 1) countering violent extremism; 2) capacity building; 3) counterterrorism diplomacy; 4) U.S. counterterrorism strategy and operations; and 5) homeland security coordination.

As the Bureau has grown in size, it has struggled to keep up with evaluating its programs to see if they really work. Even though the Bureau accepts the idea that it should be spending 3 to 5 percent of program resources on monitoring and evaluation, it has no way of tracking how much was actually spent so it can know if it is meeting that goal. Over the last 5 years, the Bureau has completed 5 evaluations. It needs to be doing more. It also needs to be doing better evaluations. The Bureau should do an impact evaluation to see if its project really made any difference. The Bureau should go back a year or longer after a project is completed to see if that project made a lasting difference.

This year, the Bureau is putting strong emphasis on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Even as it faces a 31 percent cut, the Bureau wants to set up a new office, hire more staff, and expand its CVE programs. But CVE, which the Administration hails as a ''pillar'' of its counterterrorism strategy, has never even been evaluated by the Bureau. A GAO study stated that while the Bureau has promised to evaluate CVE since 2012 it still has not evaluated it. I'm glad to hear the Bureau finally has plans in the works to evaluate CVE, but if this evaluation was done years ago, we could be a lot more confident the new dollars going to CVE would be well spent.

In January, the State Department announced the establishment of another office, the Global Engagement Center (GEC). Outside of the CT Bureau, it is tasked with coordinating messaging that delegitimizes violent extremists. It is not yet clear how the Bureau will engage and coordinate with the GEC or how it will not duplicate efforts.

A big part of countering violent extremism is winning the battle online, especially over social media. ISIS has been able to recruit over 20,000 foreign fighters, from more than 90 different countries, partly because of the organization's use of social media. In 2011, the White House acknowledged terrorists' use of social media to spread hate and promised a strategy to prevent online radicalization. Five years later, we are still waiting. In a time of limited resources and dangerous terrorist threats; we cannot afford to waste any dollars. Our national security depends on it.

It is clear that terror attacks are on the rise. Despite the Administration's so-called progress at winning back territory in Iraq and Syria, terrorists successfully conduct deadly attacks worldwide. ISIS and Al Qaeda affiliates continue to grow deeper roots in local communities thanks in large part to their use of social media. Now more than ever is a time to be vigilant about our counterterrorism efforts. The Department of State's role in this fight is not to be taken lightly. We need to make sure these programs are effective at combatting radicalization and the threat of terrorist attacks. The State Department must prioritize the monitoring and evaluation of their programs and ensure that lessons from such evaluations are implemented in a timely manner. We must develop a better understanding of what is working and what is not. The safety of Americans and our allies depends on it.

And that's just the way it is.

SUPPORT EN BLOC AMENDMENTS

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the En Bloc Amendment package Number 2 offered by Chairman THORNBERRY. I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member SMITH for including my amendment, marked as Sewell Amendment Number 34, in this package.

My amendment is a very simple one that not only promotes our continued efforts to increase training and readiness in the area of cybersecurity but also helps encourage and promote the critically important pipelines between our senior military colleges, local educational agencies and ROTC programs. The need for improvement in the area of cybersecurity is increasingly apparent. Over the past several years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of cyberattacks that threaten our national security and economic stability. This bill seeks to address this emerging threat by establishing ROTC cyber institutes at our senior military colleges. My amendment simply allows for these cyber institutes to place a special emphasis on entering into partnerships with local educational agencies that service rural, underserved, or underrepresented communities.

Our nation's ROTC programs around the country help provide students with invaluable character education and promote student achievement, leadership, and diversity. These cooperative efforts between our military branches and local educational institutions help produce successful students and citizens. In particular, in rural and underserved communities, like the ones I represent in the 7th Congressional District of Alabama, ROTC programs not only provide the critically important tools to be successful academically and socially, but also represent an opportunity to improve their social mobility and expand their world beyond their communities.

The outcomes of these programs are both apparent and convincing. They help increase the odds of students graduating high school, finding employment, going to college and becoming an even more productive member of society. The new ROTC cyber institutes established in this legislation are a perfect symbiosis between a program with a proven track record and an emerging national security threat that will require recruitment and training of the best and brightest from ALL walks of life.

Again I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for supporting this common sense yet critically important amendment. This is a win for everyone involved.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, May 19, 2016 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 24

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Defense

Business meeting to mark up an original bill entitled, ''Fiscal Year 2017 Department of Defense Appropriations''.

SD–192

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the multistakeholder plan for transitioning the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority.

SR–253

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine debt versus equity, focusing on corporate integration considerations.

SD–215

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine United States-India relations, focusing on balancing progress and managing expectations.

SD–419

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine understanding the role of sanctions under the Iran Deal.

SD–538

11 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Homeland Security

Business meeting to mark up an original bill entitled, ''Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, Fiscal Year 2017''.

SD–138

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine S. 2919, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide greater flexibility to States in carrying out the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program and employing local veterans' employment representatives, S. 2896, to eliminate the sunset date for the Veterans Choice Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand eligibility for such program, and to extend certain operating hours for pharmacies and medical facilities of the Department, S. 2888, to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's review and publication of illness and conditions relating to veterans stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and their family members, S. 2883, to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the requirement of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on the capacity of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the specialized treatment and rehabilitative needs of disabled veterans, S. 2679, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits, S. 2520, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the care provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to newborn children, S. 2487, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to identify mental health care and suicide prevention programs and metrics that are effective in treating women veterans as part of the evaluation of such programs by the Secretary, S. 2049, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a continuing medical education program for non-Department medical professionals who treat veterans and family members of veterans to increase knowledge and recognition of medical conditions common to veterans and family members of veterans, an original bill to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an original bill to make certain improvements in the provision of automobiles and adaptive equipment by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and an original bill to expand eligibility for hospital care and medical services under section 101

of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to include veterans in receipt of health services under the pilot program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for rural veterans.

SR–418

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife

To hold hearings to examine the implementation of the definition of Waters of the United States.

SD–406

MAY 25

10 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy

To hold hearings to examine international cybersecurity strategy, focusing on deterring foreign threats and building global cyber norms.

SD–419

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 2834, to improve the Governmentwide management of unnecessarily duplicative Government programs and for other purposes, S. 1378, to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government, S. 2849, to ensure the Government Accountability Office has adequate access to information, S. 2480, to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect unpaid interns in the Federal Government from workplace harassment and discrimination, S. 461, to provide for alternative financing arrangements for the provision of certain services and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure at land border ports of entry, S. 2852, to expand the Government's use and administration of data to facilitate transparency, effective governance, and innovation, H.R. 4902, to amend title 5, United States Code, to expand law enforcement availability pay to employees of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Air and Marine Operations, S. 2465, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15 Rochester Street in Bergen, New York, as the Barry G. Miller Post Office, S. 2891, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 525 North Broadway in Aurora, Illinois, as the ''Kenneth M. Christy Post Office Building'', H.R. 136, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1103 USPS Building 1103 in Camp Pendleton, California, as the ''Camp Pendleton Medal of Honor Post Office'', H.R. 1132, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1048 West Robinhood Drive in Stockton, California, as the ''W. Ronald Coale Memorial Post Office Building'', H.R. 2458, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5351 Lapalco Boulevard in Marrero, Louisiana, as the ''Lionel R. Collins, Sr. Post Office Building'', H.R. 2928, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 B Street in Perryville, Arkansas, as the ''Harold George Bennett Post Office'', H.R. 3082, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5919 Chef Menteur Highway in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the ''Daryle Holloway Post Office Building'', H.R. 3274, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4567 Rockbridge Road in Pine Lake, Georgia, as the ''Francis Manuel Ortega Post Office'', H.R. 3601, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7715 Post Road, North Kingstown, Rhode Island, as the ''Melvoid J. Benson Post Office Building'', H.R. 3735, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 Town Run Lane in Winston Salem, North Carolina, as the ''Maya Angelou Memorial Post Office'', H.R. 3866, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1265 Hurffville Road in Deptford Township, New Jersey, as the ''First Lieutenant Salvatore S. Corma II Post Office Building'', H.R. 4046, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 220 East Oak Street, Glenwood City, Wisconsin, as the Second Lt. Ellen Ainsworth Memorial Post Office, H.R. 4605, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 615 6th Avenue SE in Cedar Rapids, Iowa as the ''Sgt. 1st Class Terryl L. Pasker Post Office Building'', an original bill entitled, ''DHS Accountability Act of 2016'', an original bill entitled, ''Biodefense Strategy Act of 2016'', an original bill entitled, ''Disaster Management Act of 2016'', an original bill entitled, ''Office of Special Counsel Reauthorization Act of 2016'', an original bill entitled, ''GAO Mandates Revision Act of 2016'', an original bill entitled, ''District of Columbia Judicial Financial Transparency and Courts Improvement Act'', an original bill entitled, ''National Urban Search and Rescue Response System Act of 2016'', an original bill entitled, ''Grant Reform and New Transparency Act of 2016'', and an original bill entitled, ''Federal Information Systems Safeguards Act of 2016''.

SD–342

2 p.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard

To hold hearings to examine improvements in hurricane forecasting and the path forward.

SR–253

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine the transformative impact of robots and automation.

SD–106

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine understanding the role of sanctions under the Iran Deal, focusing on Administration perspectives.

SD–538

4:30 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To receive a closed briefing on trafficking in persons, focusing on preparing the 2016 annual report.

S–116

MAY 26

9 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues

To hold hearings to examine cartels and the United States heroin epidemic, focusing on combating drug violence and the public health crisis.

SD–419

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine a review of the United States livestock and poultry sectors, focusing on marketplace opportunities and challenges.

SH–216

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine protecting America from the threat of ISIS.

SD–342

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Small Business Administration's 7(a) loan guaranty program.

SR–428A

JUNE 8

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine a review of the Department of Veterans Affairs' electronic health record (VistA), progress toward interoperability with the Department of Defense's electronic health record, and plans for the future.

SD–124

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2915–S3001

Measures Introduced: Nine bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2943–2951, and S. Res. 469–471. **Page S2973**

Measures Reported:

Special Report entitled "Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals For Fiscal Year 2017". (S. Rept. No. 114–257)

S. 2943, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. (S. Rept. No. 114–255)

S. 1724, to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 114–256)

H.R. 3114, to provide funds to the Army Corps of Engineers to hire veterans and members of the Armed Forces to assist the Corps with curation and historic preservation activities.

S. 2754, to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 300 Fannin Street in Shreveport, Louisiana, as the "Tom Stagg Federal Building and United States Courthouse", with amendments. **Page S2973**

Measures Passed:

POLICE Act: Senate passed S. 2840, to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds for active shooter training. **Pages S2933–35**

National Public Works Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 471, designating the week of May 15 through May 21, 2016, as "National Public Works Week". **Page S2998**

Dannie A. Carr Veterans Outpatient Clinic: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2814, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Sevierville, Tennessee, the Dannie A. Carr Veterans Outpatient Clinic, and the bill was then passed. **Page S2998**

Measures Considered:

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of H.R. 2577, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S2922–33, S2935–69**

Adopted:

Collins (for Paul) Amendment No. 3967 (to Amendment No. 3896), to provide for the identification of certain high priority corridors on the National Highway System and to include and designate certain route segments on the Interstate System. **Pages S2964–65**

Collins (for Johnson) Amendment No. 3992 (to Amendment No. 3896), to ensure timely access for Inspectors General to records, documents, and other materials. **Page S2965**

Collins (for Nelson) Amendment No. 4011 (to Amendment No. 3896), to ensure the safety of properties covered under a housing assistance payment contract. **Page S2965**

Collins (for Isakson) Amendment No. 4024 (to Amendment No. 3896), to direct the Secretary of Transportation to issue a final rule requiring the use of speed limiting devices on heavy trucks not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act. **Page S2965**

Collins (for Warner/Kaine) Amendment No. 4042 (to Amendment No. 3896), to provide additional funds for the National Park Service for certain projects. **Pages S2965–66**

Collins (for Kirk) Amendment No. 3997 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the inspection of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs. **Page S2966**

Collins (for Tester/Moran) Amendment No. 3998 (to Amendment No. 3896), to provide for coverage under the beneficiary travel program of the Department of Veterans Affairs of certain disabled veterans for travel in connection with certain special disabilities rehabilitation. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Perdue) Amendment No. 3933 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require a report on modernizing and replacing hangers of the Army's Combat Aviation Brigade. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Mikulski) Amendment No. 4030 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide access to therapeutic listening devices to veterans struggling with mental health related problems, substance abuse, or traumatic brain injury. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Daines/Tester) Amendment No. 4008 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require a report on the use of defense access road funding to build alternate routes for military equipment traveling to missile launch facilities. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Brown) Amendment No. 3920 (to Amendment No. 3896), to extend the requirement of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on the capacity of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the specialized treatment and rehabilitative needs of disabled veterans. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Inhofe/Lankford) Amendment No. 3969 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require that amounts be made available to Directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks to assess, evaluate, and improve the health care delivery by and business operations of medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Boxer) Modified Amendment No. 3935 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to treat certain marriage and family therapists as qualified to serve as marriage and family therapists in the Department of Veterans Affairs. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Flake) Amendment No. 4038 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs of an inspection or audit of the use of a grant to renovate a veteran's cemetery in Guam. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Manchin) Amendment No. 4043 (to Amendment No. 3896), to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use amounts appropriated under this Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve the veteran-to-staff ratio for each program of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code. **Page S2967**

Collins (for Flake/McCain) Amendment No. 3980 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan on modernizing the system of the Veterans Health Administration for processing claims by non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers for reimbursement for health care provided to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary. **Pages S2967–68**

Collins (for Feinstein) Amendment No. 3944 (to Amendment No. 3896), to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility projects for which appropriations are being made for fiscal year 2016. **Page S2968**

Collins (for Johnson) Amendment No. 3993 (to Amendment No. 3896), to ensure timely access for Inspectors General to records, documents, and other materials. **Page S2968**

Collins (for Klobuchar) Amendment No. 3910 (to Amendment No. 3896), to authorize the use of amounts for Medical Services to be used to furnish rehabilitative equipment and human-powered vehicles to certain disabled veterans. **Page S2968**

Collins (for Heller) Amendment No. 4005 (to Amendment No. 3896), to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the progress of the Department of Veterans Affairs in completing the Rural Veterans Burial Initiative. **Page S2968**

Collins (for Durbin) Amendment No. 4029 (to Amendment No. 3896), to make funds available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire Medical Center Directors and employees for other management and clinical positions with vacancies. **Page S2968**

Collins (for Sasse) Amendment No. 4023 (to Amendment No. 3896), to protect congressional oversight of the executive branch by ensuring individuals may speak with Congress. **Page S2968**

Pending:

Collins Amendment No. 3896, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S2922**

McConnell (for Lee) Amendment No. 3897 (to Amendment No. 3896), to prohibit the use of funds to carry out a rule and notice of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. **Pages S2922, S2925–33, S2958–64**

McConnell (for Nelson/Rubio) Amendment No. 3898 (to Amendment No. 3896), making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2016 to respond to Zika virus. **Page S2922**

McConnell (for Cornyn) Modified Amendment No. 3899 (to Amendment No. 3896), making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016. **Page S2922**

McConnell (for Blunt) Modified Amendment No. 3900 (to Amendment No. 3896), Zika response and preparedness. **Page S2922**

Collins (for Blunt) Amendment No. 3946 (to Amendment No. 3900), to require the periodic submission of spending plan updates to the Committee on Appropriations. **Page S2922**

McCain/Blumenthal Amendment No. 4039 (to Amendment No. 3896), to extend and expand eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs and to establish consistent criteria and standards relating to the use of amounts under the Medical Community Care account of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Pages S2956–58

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 11:15 a.m., on Thursday, May 19, 2016, that all post-cloture time be considered expired on McConnell (for Blunt) Modified Amendment No. 3900 (to Amendment No. 3896) (listed above); that if cloture is invoked on Collins Amendment No. 3896 (listed above), McConnell (for Cornyn) Modified Amendment No. 3899 (to Amendment No. 3896) (listed above), and McConnell (for Nelson/Rubio) Amendment No. 3898 (to Amendment No. 3896) (listed above), be withdrawn, that it be in order for Senator Collins, or her designee, to call up Amendment No. 3970, and that there be no second-degree amendments in order to Amendment No. 3970, or to McConnell (for Lee) Amendment No. 3897 (to Amendment No. 3896) (listed above). **Page S2969**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, May 19, 2016, with the time until 11:15 a.m., equally divided between the two managers, or their designees.

Page S2999

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, with respect to the stabilization of Iraq; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–49) **Page S2972**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

9 Coast Guard nominations in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Coast Guard and Foreign Service. **Pages S3000–01**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Frances Marie Tydingco-Gatewood, of Guam, to be Judge for the District Court of Guam for the term of ten years.

Carole Schwartz Rendon, of Ohio, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio for the term of four years.

34 Army nominations in the rank of general.

2 Navy nominations in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, and Foreign Service. **Page S2999**

Messages from the House: **Pages S2972–73**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S2973**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S2973**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2973–76**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S2976–78**

Additional Statements: **Pages S2971–72**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S2978–97**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S2997–98**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S2998**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 8:14 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 19, 2016. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on pages S2998–99.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Telephone Consumer Protection Act at 25, focusing on effects on consumers and business, after receiving testimony from Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller, Indianapolis; Becca Wahlquist, Snell and Wilmer L.L.P., Los Angeles, California, on behalf of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for Legal Reform; Margot Saunders, National Consumer Law Center, and Monica Desai, Squire Patton Boggs, both of Washington, D.C.; and Richard Lovich, American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management, Burbank, California.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 2816, to reauthorize the diesel emissions reduction program;

S. 2795, to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1479, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to grants;

S. 921, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a nonregulatory program to build on and

help coordinate funding for restoration and protection efforts of the 4-State Delaware River Basin region;

H.R. 3114, to provide funds to the Army Corps of Engineers to hire veterans and members of the Armed Forces to assist the Corps with curation and historic preservation activities;

S. 2754, to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 300 Fannin Street in Shreveport, Louisiana, as the ''Tom Stagg Federal Building and United States Courthouse'', with amendments;

General Services Administration resolutions; and

The nomination of Jane Toshiko Nishida, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine assessing the security of critical infrastructure, focusing on threats, vulnerabilities, and solutions, after receiving testimony from Major General Donald P. Dunbar, Wisconsin Adjutant General, Madison; Thomas L. Farmer, Partnership for Critical Infrastructure Security Cross-Sector Council, and Scott I. Aaronson, Edison Electric Institute, on behalf of the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council, both of Washington, D.C.; and Ted Koppel, *Lights Out: A Cyberattack, a Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath*, Potomac, Maryland.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT IMPLEMENTATION

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Every Student Succeeds Act implementation, focusing on perspectives from education stakeholders, after receiving testimony from Tony Evers, Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Madison; Lily Eskelsen Garcia, National Education Association, Randi Weingarten, American Federation of Teachers, Nora E. Gordon, Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, and Janet Murguia, National Council of La Raza, all of Washington, D.C.; Thomas Ahart, Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines, Iowa; and Denise Marshall, Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Towson, Maryland.

INDIAN AFFAIRS LEGISLATION

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S. 2785, to protect Native children and promote public safety in Indian country, S. 2916, to provide that the pueblo of Santa Clara may lease for 99 years certain restricted land, and S. 2920, to amend the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act to provide for advancements in public safety services to Indian communities, after receiving testimony from Michael Black, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Tracy Toulou, Director, Office of Tribal Justice, Department of Justice; Michael Chavarria, Santa Clara Pueblo, Espanola, New Mexico; Dana Buckles, Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation, Poplar, Montana; and Alfred L. Urbina, Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona, Tucson.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Donald Karl Schott, of Wisconsin, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit, who was introduced by Senator Baldwin, Paul Lewis Abrams, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, Stephanie A. Finley, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, Claude J. Kelly III, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, and Winfield D. Ong, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana, who was introduced by Senators Coats and Donnelly, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

RANSOMWARE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism concluded a hearing to examine ransomware, focusing on understanding the threat and exploring solutions, including S. 2931, to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect Americans from cybercrime, after receiving testimony from Richard W. Downing, Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice; Charles C. Hucks, Jr., Horry County Schools, Conway, South Carolina; Adam Meyers, CrowdStrike, Inc., Washington, D.C.; and Charles Blauner, Citigroup, Inc., Warren, New Jersey, on behalf of the American Bankers Association.

SMALL BUSINESS AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee concluded a hearing to examine small business and the Affordable Care Act, including S. 1697, to provide an exception from certain group health plan requirements to allow small businesses to use pre-tax dollars to assist employees in the purchase of policies in the individual health insurance market, S. 379, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand and modify the credit for employee health insurance expenses of small employers, S. 1099, to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide States with flexibility in determining

the size of employers in the small group market, and S. 1996, to streamline the employer reporting process and strengthen the eligibility verification process for the premium assistance tax credit and cost-sharing subsidy, after receiving testimony from Richard Frank, Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Planning and Evaluation; Tom Kunkel, Full House Marketing and Print, Edgewood, Maryland; Mike Brey, Hobby Works, Laurel, Maryland; and Kevin Kuhlman, National Federation of Independent Business, Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 10 public bills, H.R. 5272–5281; and 5 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 132; and H. Res. 737–740 were introduced. **Page H2844**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2845–46**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 5077, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–573). **Page H2844**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Webster (FL) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2703**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:02 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H2709**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend Dr. Patricia Venegas, Without Spot or Wrinkle Ministries, La Verne, California. **Page H2709**

Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, a seminal moment in Ireland's journey to independence: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Res. 716, as amended by Representative King (NY), commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, a seminal moment in Ireland's journey to independence. **Pages H2712–13**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''Recognizing the deep and abiding friendship between the United States and Ireland and recommending actions to further strengthen those ties.''. **Page H2713**

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017: The House passed H.R. 4909, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, by a recorded vote of 277 ayes to 147 noes, Roll No. 216. Consideration began yesterday, May 17th. **Pages H2721–28, H2730–86, H2812–13**

Rejected the Clyburn motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Armed Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with amendments, by a recorded vote of 181 ayes to 243 noes, Roll No. 215. **Pages H2809–12**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.''. **Page H2813**

Agreed to:

Poe (TX) amendment (No. 14 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–569), as modified, that was debated on May 17th that inserts a proposed new text for Sec. 1048 (by a recorded vote of 243 ayes to 180 noes, Roll No. 205); **Pages H2731–32**

Pearce amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that transfers, in accordance with BRAC 1988, specified lands of the former Fort Wingate Depot Activity in McKinley County, New Mexico to the Department of the Interior to be held in trust for the Zuni Tribe and the Navajo Nation; **Pages H2735–37**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 1 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Schweikert (No. 4) that directs that the Secretary of Defense may coordinate unmanned Aerial System training missions along our southern border in support of the Department of Homeland Security's counter narcotic trafficking efforts; Davis (CA) (No. 13) that allows dual military couples who adopt to split 36 days of leave according to family needs; Costello (PA) (No. 15) that requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to report to Congress on extending student loan protections for active duty borrowers under the Servicemember Civil Relief Act; Hastings

(No. 16) that excludes reimbursements for medical expenses from the VA's calculation of annual income when determining pension eligibility for veterans; Larson (CT) (No. 17) that preserves access to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) for children with autism who are covered by TRICARE; Kelly (PA) (No. 19) that prohibits funds from being used to implement the UN Arms Trade Treaty unless the Senate approves a resolution of ratification for the Treaty and implementing legislation for the Treaty has been enacted into law; Mulvaney (No. 21) that codifies criteria developed by OMB in 2010 to clarify when military spending should be designated as contingency operations and properly be part of the Overseas Contingency Operation budget; Himes (No. 22) that requires a report from the Secretary of Defense on policies, doctrine, procedures and authorities governing Department of Defense activities in response to a malicious cyber activity carried out against the United States or United States persons by foreign states or non-state actors; Tsongas (No. 24) that requires the Secretary of the Navy to submit a report to the Congressional Defense Committees regarding future capabilities for the P–8 Poseidon aircraft; Blumenauer (No. 26) that requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a report on the total cost of research, production and maintenance of the B–21 aircraft; Kildee (No. 29) that expresses as a Sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should work with State and local health officials to prevent human exposure to perflourinated chemicals; Poliquin (No. 30) that requires that the Department of Defense submit a report to Congress on the annual travel expenses incurred by members of the national guard and reservists for travel to monthly and annual training requirements; and Farenthold (No. 31) that encourages the Department of Defense to enter into contracts with third party vendors to provide free access to wireless high-speed internet to all members of the Armed Forces who are deployed overseas at any United States military facility; **Pages H2737–42**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 2 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: DeSantis (No. 8) that prohibits funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Defense may be used for any bilateral military-to-military contact, cooperation, or related security conferences between the Governments of the United States and Cuba until the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, certify to the appropriate congressional committees and Congress convincing assurances that the anti-American posture of the Castro regime has undergone a material change; DeSantis (No. 14) that creates a career military justice litigation track for United States Army & Air Force JAGs similar to what currently exists for United States Navy JAGs; LaMalfa (No. 25) that provides that no funds may be used by the Air Force to retire, prepare to retire, or place in storage or on backup aircraft inventory status any U–2 aircraft; Hudson (No. 27) that requires a briefing on the acquisition strategy for the Ground Mobility Vehicle program; Sanford (No. 28) that requires the Army and the Marine Corps to use the same variant of 5.56mm rifle ammunition within one year of the date of enactment; provides that the Secretary of Defense may waive the requirement in the event that he determines a state of emergency requires the use of different variants of 5.56mm rifle ammunition; Cartwright (No. 32) that establishes a formal process to provide Government agencies outside the Department of Defense with information on the availability of surplus, serviceable ammunition for the purpose of reducing the overall storage and disposal costs related to such ammunition; Forbes (No. 33) that increases the minimum active-duty end strength of the Navy from 322,900 to 324,615 to make it consistent with the end strength authorized in the HASC mark. A; Jones (No. 34) that states that the Secretary of Defense shall ensure that commissary stores accept as payment the Military Star Card; Allen (No. 35) that allows Colleges with ROTC programs currently selected for partnership by Cyber Institutes at Individual Service Academies to be included in Section 562; DeSaulnier (No. 38) that requires Transition Assistance Program (TAP) counselors to inform separating members of the U.S. Armed Forces that any separation pay received may reduce the amount of VA disability benefits received; Keating (No. 40) that expresses the Sense of Congress in support of fully implementing a service-wide expansion of the Army's Gold Star Installation Access Card; provides entry to military installations for events and memorials for the survivors of members of the Armed Forces who have died while serving on certain active or reserve duty; Kaptur (No. 41) that requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a report detailing the quantity, composition, and lost income of survivors currently affected by the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset to the Survivor Benefit Program; Kildee (No. 42) that amends Sec. 741 to include veterans in the identification and resource availability for units with high rates of suicide; and Jackson Lee (No. 45) that requires increased collaboration with NIH to combat Triple Negative Breast Cancer; **Pages H2746–50**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 3 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Thornberry (No. 20) that establishes a Global Engagement Center to lead and coordinate

efforts to track foreign propaganda and disinformation efforts intended to undermine U.S. national security interests, and to develop strategies for countering such campaigns; it would also create a fund that could be used to support outside groups in analyzing, reporting on, and refuting foreign disinformation efforts, and implements reforms to the Broadcasting Board of Governors; Comstock (No. 36) that requires the Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness to evaluate the effectiveness of transition programs in which civilian businesses and organizations provide internships, apprenticeships, and other on-the-job training in an effort to increase likelihood of employment for separating service members; requires the Undersecretary to issue guidance to unit commanders encouraging them to permit separating service members to engage in these programs, provided that unit readiness is not degraded; Farenthold (No. 37) that provides that when a nominee of a Senator, Representative, or Delegate is selected for appointment as a cadet at a Service Academy, the Senator, Representative, or Delegate shall be notified at least 48 hours before the official notification or announcement of the appointment is made; Hunter (No. 39) that strikes the second sentence of Title 38, Section 167, Paragraph (f)4, ensuring that the Service branch fulfills its obligation to notify a service member's spouse in the event that a service member declines SGLI Coverage; Meng (No. 48) that reauthorizes for one year an existing suicide prevention and resilience program for members of the National Guard and Reserves that is likely to expire prior to passage of the next NDAA; Maxine Waters (CA) (No. 49) that requires GAO to conduct a 5 year study and report to Congress on contracting by minority and women owned businesses with the DOD; Sanford (No. 52) that requires the Secretary of Defense to account for the total cost of National Guard flyovers at public events and publish them in a public report; Walz (No. 53) that includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States as a state for purposes of State Adjutants General approval authority over all Army and Air Force National Guard flyover missions in their states; Polis (No. 59) that requires the Secretary of Defense to provide a report on the impact potential changes to the existing carrier air wing force structure, and the impact a potential reduction would have on overall fleet readiness should personnel and aircraft be distributed through remaining air wings; and Courtney (No. 63) that amends the Occupational Safety and Health Act to make permanent the Maritime Advisory Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (MACOSH);

Pages H2753–58

Zinke amendment (No. 10 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that prevents changes to the alert status or unilateral reduction in the quantity of deployed intercontinental ballistic missile forces; requires a report on the ability of the Air Force to ensure that the ICBM force is capable of deploying multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) on Minuteman III ICBMs; **Pages H2758–60**

Thornberry amendment (No. 18 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that assures the management of spectrum auctions and national security equities;

Pages H2762–63

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 4 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Rogers (AL) (No. 23) that updates current law concerning the management of spectrum auctions and the protection of Global Positioning System (GPS) adjacent frequency bands; Carter (GA) (No. 43) that clarifies that, under the Pilot Program for Operation of Network of Retail Pharmacy under TRICARE Pharmacy Benefits Program, retail pharmacies shall also include small business pharmacies; Comstock (No. 44) that directs the DOD secretary to study programs with locked vials; Lamborn (No. 46) that extends DoD technology transfer authority until Dec. 31, 2021; Jenkins (WV) (No. 47) that increases the funding authorized for National Guard Counter-Drug Programs, Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Activities, Defense-Wide by $30 million, offset by equivalent decreases to funding for the lines for Common Ground Equipment and Advanced Innovative Technologies; Guinta (No. 50) that increases funding to USNORTHCOM for Joint Task Force North by $3,000,000 to be used for counter narcotics operations; Walberg (No. 51) that requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress on the effectiveness of efforts to combat the trafficking of heroin and fentanyl into the United States from Central America and Mexico; Ellmers (NC) (No. 54) that requires the Secretary of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Army to report to HASC and SASC quarterly on Joint Airborne Air Transportability Training occurring at Fort Bragg to ensure there is no negative impact to military readiness; Jackson Lee (No. 64) that expresses the sense of Congress regarding the importance of increasing the effectiveness of the Northern Command (''NORTHCOM'') in fulfilling its critical mission of protecting the U.S. homeland in event of war and to provide support to local, state, and federal authorities in times of national emergency; Lewis (GA) (No. 65) that requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Commissioner of the Internal

Revenue Service and the Director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, to post to cost of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria to each American taxpayer on the Department of Defense's website; Bordallo (No. 66) that grants USCIS greater flexibility to approve H–2B visa application renewals for contractors performing work on Guam for the duration of the realignment construction plans; Sean Patrick Maloney (NY) (No. 67) that updates Department of Defense regulations to ensure service members receive adequate consumer protections with respect to collection of debt; and Langevin (No. 69) that expands the talent-exchange authorities of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, to allow DoD employees to gain experience at private companies and bring industry leaders to DoD; **Pages H2763–68**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 5 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Gosar (No. 55) that requires the Secretary to provide a briefing to the House Armed Services Committee on the status of DOD efforts to maintain a systems-based inventory of Department buildings, land, and other real property assets following recommendations made by GAO; Russell (No. 56) that provides that not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall provide to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives a briefing on the adjustment and diversification assistance authorized by subsections (b) and c) of section 2391 of title 10, United States Code; Pitts (No. 57) that brings accountability to countries granting consent to Russian naval vessels calling into port by amending Section 1238(a)(2)(B) to include transient Russian naval vessels' to the reporting requirement; Young (IA) (No. 58) that requires the DoD to brief Congress on the Department's efforts to protect our service members and their families' personal information from data breaches, including DoD employees; the DoD will also include any trends they are aware of on fraudulent activity targeting service members, their families, or employees of the DoD specifically; Fitzpatrick (No. 60) that recognizes the role played by the 16 million women known as Rosie the Riveters during World War Two; Forbes (No. 61) that authorizes the Army to recover firearms that were provided to a foreign country on a grant basis and subsequently became excess to the needs of such country; Young (IN) (No. 62) that adopts program management principles for government projects and requires formulation of program management standards and best practices to ensure on-time & on-budget projects; Young (AK) (No. 68) that provides DoD temporary direct hire authority for military technicians (dual-status), enabling units to fill critical manpower shortages and increase mission readiness; Connolly (No. 70) that expresses a sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should develop an assessment, monitoring, and evaluation framework for security cooperation; Blumenauer (No. 74) that reforms the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program for at-risk Afghan allies; Welch (No. 77) that adds to the semiannual Report on Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan the progress on implementing the Afghan Personnel and Pay System; and Kilmer (No. 82) that amends the existing security assistance authority titled "South China Sea Initiative" to "Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative"; additionally, the amendment would require DoD to include a description of Chinas activities in the South China Sea in their Congressionally-required annual report on Chinese military power; **Pages H2768–74**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 6 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Rooney (FL) (No. 71) that requires a report on the Department of Defense's implementation of the prohibition on the provision of certain security assistance to foreign security forces implicated in gross human rights violations; Poe (TX) (No. 72) that adds a fourth condition that the Administration must certify Pakistan has met before releasing $450 million in aid: "Pakistan has shown progress in arresting and prosecuting Haqqani network senior leaders and mid-level operatives"; Rohrabacher (No. 73) that adds an additional requirement that the Secretary of Defense certify to Congress that Pakistan is not using its military or any funds or equipment provided by the United States to persecute minority groups seeking political or religious freedom; Rohrabacher (No. 75) that adds a sense of the Congress that Dr. Shakil Afridi is an international hero and that the Government of Pakistan should release him immediately from prison; Walberg (No. 76) that requires the Department of Defense to submit to Congress a report on the extent to which the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan has adequate access to financial records of the Government of Afghanistan; Fortenberry (No. 78) that expresses the Sense of Congress that safe areas should be secured for the resettlement and reintegration of indigenous ethnic and religious minorities, including victims of genocide, into their homelands; affirms that this position is a critical component of a safe, secure, and sovereign Iraq; Fortenberry (No. 79) that empowers local security forces in Iraq—including ethnic and religious minority groups—to deter, hold, or roll back the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Iraq; Cicilline (No. 88) that requires a report be completed by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments and the Secretary of State on efforts made to in-

form American manufacturers on procurement opportunities for equipping foreign military entities approved to receive U.S. assistance; this report should also include any plans or strategies to raise awareness of these opportunities among U.S. manufacturers; Cooper (No. 89) that requires a report on Open Skies Treaty and Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty; Frankel (FL) (No. 90) that expresses the sense of Congress that continued United States leadership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is critical to the national security of the United States; Higgins (No. 91) that authorizes assistance to Israel to improve maritime security and maritime domain awareness; Ted Lieu (CA) (No. 92) that expresses a sense of Congress that it is policy of the United States to support a denuclearized Korean peninsula; **Pages H2774–76**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 7 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Pearce (No. 80) that expresses a sense of Congress encouraging the Administration and DOD to utilize all necessary capabilities to combat ISIS oil production and sale; Yoho (No. 81) that provides for a prohibition on transfer of man-portable air defense systems to any entity in Syria; Poe (TX) (No. 83) that prohibits government contracts with entities that have contributed to Russia's violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty; Pompeo (No. 84) that requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress on cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation and to what extent such cooperation affects United States national security and strategic interests; Roskam (No. 85) that establishes the sense of Congress that Israel should be able to defend its vital national interests and protect its territory and population against existential threats and mandates that the President report on the necessary defensive mechanisms required and requested by Israel to protect itself against existential threats and on the availability for sale or transfer of these items to Israel; Roskam (No. 86) that requires the President to report on the use by the Government of Iran of commercial aircraft and related services for illicit military or other activities; Walker (No. 87): that directs the Secretary of Defense to grant observer status to the military forces of Taiwan in any maritime exercise known as the Rim of the Pacific Exercise; Meng (No. 93) that authorizes the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, to enter into agreements with governments of foreign countries, such as Israel and other nations that excel in addressing water scarcity and water resource development issues, in order to develop land-based water resources in support of and in preparation for contingency operations; Meng (No. 94) that extends the requirement for three years, consistent with the FY13 NDAA, that the President report to Congress on the use of certain Iranian seaports by foreign vessels and the use of foreign airports by sanctioned Iranian air carriers; Moulton (No. 95) that requires the President to officially notify Congress whenever Iran conducts a ballistic missile launch (including ballistic missile tests) and inform the Congress as to actions the President will take in response, including diplomatic efforts to pursue additional sanctions, including through passage of a United Nations Security Council resolution; Peters (No. 96) that expresses the Sense of Congress that the United States should work with our Gulf Cooperation Council allies to encourage and enable an integrated ballistic missile defense system to prevent an attack by Iran against such countries; and Ruiz (No. 97) that authorizes assistance and training to countries bordering the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, or Mediterranean Sea in an effort to deter and counter illicit smuggling and related maritime activity by Iran; the program will run through FY2020; **Pages H2776–79**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 8 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Loretta Sanchez (CA) (No. 98) that expresses a Sense of Congress that increased military relations with Vietnam should be contingent on Vietnam's commitment to implement human rights reforms; Jackson Lee (No. 99) that requires the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress report on efforts to assist Nigeria security forces in combatting Boko Haram In Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin; Holding (No. 100) that enhances and promotes greater defense trade and military cooperation between the United States and India by encouraging and supporting a range of measures such as joint military planning and co-development; Smith (WA) (No. 101) that eases restrictions related to funding for development of rocket propulsion and launch systems to end reliance on the RD–180; Ted Lieu (CA) (No. 102) that requires a report on the use of spacecraft assets of the Space-Based Infrared System's Wide-Field-of-View program for other space programs; Rogers (AL) (No. 103) that requires the Secretary of Defense to evaluate the security of defense information and to issue regulations to improve it; Meehan (No. 104) that expresses a sense of Congress that reiterates the importance of strong communications systems for the National Guard in the event of a cyber or terrorist attack; Hanna (No. 105) requires the Secretary of the Army to brief Congress on a strategy for incorporating Army National Guard Cyber Protection Teams into the Cyber Mission Force; Peters (No. 106) that expresses the Sense of Congress that DOD, when practical, should seek to maximize the hiring of veterans for MILCON

projects; Brat (No. 107) that creates a process for foreign governments to petition DOD to return surplus property to that government; expands use of residual value obtained from returned foreign property from facility maintenance and operations to readiness programs; Carter (GA) (No. 108) that relocates the Saint Marys Airport away from Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay because of security issues with civilian air traffic; codifies the Navy's steps in the relocation of the airport; Pearce (No. 109) that prohibits the Department of Defense from transferring administrative jurisdiction of Fillmore Canyon to the Department of the Interior; and Culberson (No. 110) that provides competitively awarded grant funding for the preservation of our nation's historic battleships in a manner that is self-sustaining and has an educational component; requires grantees to provide a 1:1 matching of any federal funding received pursuant to this grant program; the grant program sunsets on September 30, 2023; **Pages H2779–82**

Thornberry en bloc amendment No. 9 consisting of the following amendments printed in H. Rept. 114–571: Newhouse (No. 111) that requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide a report detailing how the Corps acquired 34 miles of shoreline property along the Columbia River in the Tri-Cities region of Central Washington; the report will include specific legal documentation and information on the process by which the properties were acquired to discern how the federal government acquired the land, whether by paying Fair Market Value or through other means of procurement; Ben Ray Lujan (NM) (No. 112) that expresses the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Energy should ensure that each laboratory operating contractor or plant or site manager of a National Nuclear Security Administration facility adopt generally accepted and consistent accounting practices for laboratory, plant, or site directed research and development; Foster (No. 113) that requires the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Energy to provide a briefing to the appropriate committees on the feasibility and potential benefits of a dialogue between the United States and France on the use of low-enriched uranium in naval reactors; Peters (No. 114) that clarifies that the definition of advanced nuclear reactor includes a nuclear fusion reactor; Donovan (No. 115) that expedites processing of applications for transportation security cards for separating members of the Armed forces and veterans to facilitate employment in the maritime industry; Frankel (FL) (No. 116) that classifies a vessel being repaired or dismantled to be a ''recreational vessel'' if the vessel shares elements of design and construction of traditional recreational vessels and is not normally engaged in a military or commercial undertaking when operating; Wilson (SC) (No. 117) that provides a conforming name change for the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Fund within sections 4102 and 4103 of H.R. 4909; Meng (No. 118) that makes conspiracy to commit rape or sexual assault an offense requiring dismissal or dishonorable discharge under the Uniform Code of Military Justice; and Rogers (AL) (No. 120) that provides authority for the Secretary of Energy to issue regulations to protect certain NNSA sites from potential threats posed by UAVs; **Pages H2782–85**

Bordallo amendment (No. 119 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that authorizes the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States to settle claims resulting from the occupation of Guam during World War II based on other war claims programs previously authorized by Congress for other Americans; and **Pages H2785–86**

Fleming amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that prohibits funds for Executive Orders 13653 and 13693 that require DOD to meet certain green energy mandates and to incorporate climate change reviews within DOD operations, acquisition, and planning (by a recorded vote of 227 ayes to 198 noes, Roll No. 209). **Pages H2734–35, H2805–06**

Rejected:

McKinley amendment (No. 10 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–569) that was debated on May 17th that sought to require the Secretary of Defense to ensure that every tactical missile program of the Department of Defense that uses solid propellant as the primary propulsion system shall have at least two fully certified rocket motor suppliers in the event that one of the rocket motor suppliers is outside the national technology and industrial base (by a recorded vote of 211 ayes to 213 noes, Roll No. 203); **Pages H2730–31**

Nadler amendment (No. 12 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–569) that was debated on May 17th that sought to remove funding prohibitions on the closure of the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (by a recorded vote of 163 ayes to 259 noes, Roll No. 204); **Page H2731**

Buck amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that sought to require the DOD to evaluate the cost of different types of energy and purchase the most cost effective option available (by a recorded vote of 159 ayes to 266 noes, Roll No. 208); **Pages H2732–34,H2804–05**

Lee amendment (No. 5 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that sought to repeal the 2001 AUMF after 90 days of enactment of this Act (by a recorded vote of 138 ayes to 285 noes, Roll No. 210); **Pages H2742–44, H2806–07**

Polis amendment (No. 6 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that sought to reduce the base Defense

Department budget by 1% excluding military/reserve/National Guard personnel, as well as Defense Health Program account (by a recorded vote of 63 ayes to 360 noes with 1 answering ''present'', Roll No. 211); **Pages H2744–46, H2807**

Ellison amendment (No. 7 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that sought to strike language that calls on the President to expand the scope of the mission in Afghanistan (by a recorded vote of 131 ayes to 292 noes with 1 answering ''present'', Roll No. 212); **Pages H2750–52, H2807–08**

Ellison amendment (No. 9 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that sought to reduce funding for base budget procurement items from Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds to $1,287,871,000, in accordance with the President's request. $9,440,300,000 is transferred to OCO Operations & Maintenance fund in order to fund operations overseas, with $26 million designated for suicide prevention (by a recorded vote of 132 ayes to 289 noes with 1 answering ''present'', Roll No. 213); and **Pages H2752–53, H2808–09**

Sanford amendment (No. 12 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that sought to require the Government Accountability Office to study the Maritime Security Fleet (by a recorded vote of 41 ayes to 383 noes, Roll No. 214). **Pages H2760–62, H2809**

Withdrawn:

Lamborn amendment (No. 11 printed in H. Rept. 114–571) that was offered and subsequently withdrawn that would have struck conditions on recognizing the National World War II Aviation Museum. **Page H2760**

Agreed that the Clerk be authorized to make technical and conforming changes to reflect the actions of the House. **Page H2813**

H. Res. 735, the rule providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4909) was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 230 yeas to 175 nays, Roll No. 200, after the previous question was ordered without objection. **Pages H2721–28**

Zika Response Appropriations Act, 2016: The House passed H.R. 5243, making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, to strengthen public health activities in response to the Zika virus, by a yea-and-nay vote of 241 yeas to 184 nays, Roll No. 207. **Pages H2787–H2804**

Agreed to table the appeal of the ruling of the chair on a point of order sustained against the Castor (FL) motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on the Budget with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yea-and-nay vote of 240 yeas to 183 nays, Roll No. 206. **Pages H2800–04**

H. Res. 736, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 4974) and (H.R. 5243) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 241 ayes to 183 noes, Roll No. 202, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 240 yeas to 182 nays, Roll No. 201. **Pages H2728–30**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, May 19. **Page H2813**

Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017: The House began consideration of H.R. 4974, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017. Consideration is expected to resume tomorrow, May 19th. **Pages H2728–30, H2813–42**

Agreed to:

Wagner amendment that redirects $801,000 in funding within the Military Construction Defense-Wide fund; **Pages H2823–26**

Gosar amendment that increases funding for Veterans Health Administration, Medical Services by $4,000,000 and reduces funding for Departmental Administration, General Administration by $5,500,000; **Pages H2826–27**

Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM) amendment that redirects $10,000,000 in funding within Veterans Health Administration Medical Expenses; **Pages H2827–28**

Keating amendment that redirects $1,500,000 in funding within Departmental Administration, General Administration; **Pages H2828–29**

Clawson (FL) amendment that increases funding, by offset, for the Informational Technology Systems, by $5,000,000; **Page H2829**

Keating amendment that redirects $1,000,000 in funding within Departmental Administration, General Administration; **Pages H2829–30**

Ruiz amendment that redirects $5,000,000 in funding within General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration; **Pages H2830–34**

Ratcliffe amendment (No. 2 printed in the Congressional Record of May 17, 2016) that prohibits the use of funds to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round; and **Page H2837**

Grayson amendment that prohibits the use of funds to prohibit the use of funds to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies that the offeror or any of its principals have been convicted of or had a civil judgement against it for fraud. **Page H2841**

Rejected:

Fitzpatrick amendment that sought to prohibit the use of funds to procure the birth control known as Essure. **Pages H2849–41**

Point of Order sustained against:

Boustany amendment that sought to prohibit the use of funds to pay any bonus or monetary award under chapter 45 of 53 of title 5, United States Code, to an employee of the Chief Business Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is responsible for processing emergency medical care claims until the percentage of emergency medical care claims processed within 30 days reached 90 percent; and **Pages H2841–42**

Gohmert amendment that sought to prohibit the use of funds to establish, maintain, employ, or enter into any contract or agreement with any organization, including a political party, that endorsed, embraced, or encouraged any form of slavery, nor to display the name of such organization nor to have its name displayed in any facility in which or for funds made available in this act are used. **Page H2842**

Proceedings Postponed:

Mulvaney amendment that seeks to strike Overseas Contingency Operations, Military Construction, Army; **Pages H2834–35**

Mulvaney amendment that seeks to strike Overseas Contingency Operations, Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps; **Pages H2835–36**

Mulvaney amendment that seeks to strike Overseas Contingency Operations, Military Construction, Air Force; **Page H2836**

Mulvaney amendment that seeks to strike Overseas Contingency Operations, Military Construction, Defense-Wide; **Pages H2836–37**

Blumenauer amendment (No. 3 printed in the Congressional Record of May 17, 2016) that seeks to prohibit the use of funds to implement, administer, or enforce any Veterans Health Administration Directive relating to the prohibition on VA providers from completing forms seeking recommendations on opinions regarding a Veteran's participation in a state marijuana program; **Pages H2837–38**

Fleming amendment that seeks to prohibit the use of funds to modify a military installation in the United States, including construction or modification of a facility on a military installation, to produce housing for unaccompanied alien children; and **Pages H2838–39**

Huffman amendment that seeks to prohibit the use of funds to implement section 8(d)(2) of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration Directive 3220 of November 22, 2005. **Pages H2839–40**

H. Res. 736, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 4974) and (H.R. 5243) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 241 ayes to 183 noes, Roll No. 202, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 240 yeas to 182 nays, Roll No. 201. **Pages H2728–30**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency declared with respect to the stabilization of Iraq is to continue in effect beyond May 22, 2016—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–137). **Page H2787**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H2730.

Senate Referrals: S. 2840 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. S. 1335 was held at the desk. **Page H2842**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes and thirteen recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2728, H2728–29, H2729–30, H2730–31, H2731, H2731–32, H2803–04, H2804, H2805, H2805–06, H2806, H2807, H2807–08, H2808, H2809, H2811–12, H2812–13. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 12:56 a.m. on Thursday, May 19, 2016.

Committee Meetings

SERVICE IN THE FIELD: VETERAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Service in the Field: Veteran Contributions to National Food Security". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a markup on the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2017. The Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2017, was forwarded to the full committee, without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies held a markup on the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2017. The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2017, was forwarded to the full committee, without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a markup on H.J. Res. 87, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of Labor relating to ''Interpretation of the 'Advice' Exemption in Section 203(c) of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act''; and H.R. 5003, the ''Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016''. H.J. Res. 87 was ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 5003 was ordered reported, as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Full Committee concluded a markup on H.R. 4775, the ''Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2016''; and H.R. 4979, the ''Advanced Nuclear Technology Development Act of 2016''. H.R. 4775 and H.R. 4979 were ordered reported, as amended.

EXAMINING THE CFPB'S PROPOSED RULEMAKING ON ARBITRATION: IS IT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND FOR THE PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS?

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit held a hearing entitled ''Examining the CFPB's Proposed Rulemaking on Arbitration: Is It in the Public Interest and for the Protection of Consumers?''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H. Res. 374, recognizing the 50th anniversary of Singaporean independence and reaffirming Singapore's close partnership with the United States; H. Res. 650, 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; H. Con. Res. 129, expressing support for the goal of ensuring that all Holocaust victims live with dignity, comfort, and security in their remaining years, and urging the Federal Republic of Germany to reaffirm its commitment to this goal through a financial commitment to comprehensively address the unique health and welfare needs of vulnerable Holocaust victims, including home care and other medically prescribed needs; S. 284, the ''Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act''; and S. 1252, the ''Global Food Security Act of 2016''. The following legislation was ordered reported, as amended: H. Res. 374, H. Res. 650, H. Con. Res. 129, and S. 284. S. 1252 was ordered reported, without amendment.

DEMOCRACY SUPPORT STRATEGIES IN AFRICA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled ''Democracy Support Strategies in Africa''. Testimony was heard from D. Bruce Wharton, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, Department of State; Thomas Staal, Acting Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development; Steven Feldstein, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs held a hearing on H.R. 4289, to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Tanana Tribal Council located in Tanana, Alaska, and to the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation located in Dillingham, Alaska, and for other purposes; and S. 246, the ''Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act''. Testimony was heard from Senator Heitkamp; Gary Hartz, Director, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services; Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Lillian Sparks-Robinson, Commissioner, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services; and public witnesses.

EXAMINING EMPLOYEE MISCONDUCT AT EPA

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Examining Employee Misconduct at EPA''. Testimony was heard from Stanley Meiburg, Acting Deputy Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; and Patrick Sullivan, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, Office of Inspector General, Environmental Protection Agency.

THE FEDERAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REFORM ACT SCORECARD 2.0

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Information Technology; and Subcommittee on Government Operations, held a joint hearing entitled ''The Federal Information Technology Reform Act (FITARA) Scorecard 2.0''. Testimony was heard from Steven I. Cooper, Chief Information Officer, Department of Commerce; Dawn

Leaf, Chief Information Officer, Department of Labor; Michael M. Johnson, Chief Information Officer, Department of Energy; Renee P. Wynn, Chief Information Officer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and David A. Powner, Director, IT Management Issues, Government Accountability Office.

NEXT STEPS TO MARS: DEEP SPACE HABITATS

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Space held a hearing entitled ''Next Steps to Mars: Deep Space Habitats''. Testimony was heard from Jason Crusan, Director, Advanced Exploration Systems, Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and public witnesses.

BORDER STATION CONSTRUCTION: MINIMIZING COSTS AND LEVERAGING PRIVATE DOLLARS

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management held a hearing entitled ''Border Station Construction: Minimizing Costs and Leveraging Private Dollars''. Testimony was heard from Michael Gelber, Deputy Commissioner, Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration; Eugene Schied, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Administration, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 5178, the ''Veterans Success on Campus Act of 2016''; H.R. 5229, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a study to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, especially in regards to women veterans and minority veterans, in transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes; H.R. 4138, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup relocation expenses paid to or on behalf of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; H.R. 3286, the ''HIRE Vets Act''; H.R. 3471, the ''Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2015''; H.R. 3974, the ''Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2015''; H.R. 3989, the ''Support Our Military Caregivers Act''; H.R. 2460, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans; H.R. 3956, the ''VA Health Center Management Stability and Improvement Act''; H.R. 4782, the ''Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016''; H.R. 4087, the ''Fair Treatment for Families of Veterans Act''; and H.R. 3715, the ''Final Farewell Act of 2015''. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 5178, H.R. 5229, H.R. 3286, H.R. 3471, H.R. 3974, H.R. 3956, H.R. 4782, H.R. 4087, H.R. 3715, and H.R. 3989. The following bills were ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 4138 and H.R. 2460.

PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY FROM WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing entitled ''Protecting Social Security from Waste, Fraud, and Abuse''. Testimony was heard from Patrick P. O'Carroll, Inspector General, Social Security Administration.

THE HEROIN EPIDEMIC AND PARENTAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE: USING EVIDENCE AND DATA TO PROTECT KIDS FROM HARM

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Human Resources held a hearing entitled ''The Heroin Epidemic and Parental Substance Abuse: Using Evidence and Data to Protect Kids from Harm''. Testimony was heard from Representatives Bass and Marino; and Tina Willauer, Director, Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams, Department for Community Based Services, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D480)*

S. 32, to provide the Department of Justice with additional tools to target extraterritorial drug trafficking activity. Signed on May 16, 2016. (Public Law 114–154)

S. 125, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020. Signed on May 16, 2016. (Public Law 114–155)

S. 2755, to provide Capitol-flown flags to the immediate family of firefighters, law enforcement officers, members of rescue squads or ambulance crews, and public safety officers who are killed in the line of duty. Signed on May 16, 2016. (Public Law 114–156)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2016

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Farm Credit System, focusing on the outlook of the current economic climate, 10:15 a.m., SR–328A.

Committee on Appropriations: business meeting to mark up an original bill entitled, ''Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017'', and an original bill entitled, ''Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2017'', 10:30 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment, to hold hearings to examine improving communities' and businesses' access to capital and economic development, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's 2017–2022 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the international Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on November 3, 2001, and signed by the United States on November 1, 2002 (the ''Treaty'') (Treaty Doc. 110–19), and the Convention on the Law Applicable to Certain Rights in Respect of Securities Held with an Intermediary (the ''Convention''), done at The Hague on July 5, 2006, and signed by the United States on that same day (Treaty Doc. 112–06), 10 a.m., SD–419.

Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 2942, to extend certain privileges and immunities to the Gulf Cooperation Council, an original resolution entitled, ''Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, a seminal moment in the journey of Ireland to independence'', and routine lists in the Foreign Service, 11:30 a.m., S–116, Capitol.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 247, to amend section 349 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to deem specified activities in support of terrorism as renunciation of United States nationality, S. 356, to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications, and the nominations of Ronald G. Russell, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah, Inga S. Bernstein, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, Stephanie A. Gallagher, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland, and Suzanne Mitchell, and Scott L. Palk, both to be a United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, to hold hearings to examine the Administration's immigration policies, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Examining H.R. 3299, Strengthening Public Health Response Act'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Settling the Question: Did Bank Settlement Agreements Subvert Congressional Appropriations Powers?'', 9:15 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice, hearing entitled ''Examining Legislation to Promote the Effective Enforcement of the ADA's Public Accommodation Provisions'', 9 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''Examining Deficiencies in Transparency at the Department of the Interior'', 9 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Help Wanted: Small Business Providing Opportunities for All'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 19

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of H.R. 2577, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. At 11:15 a.m., Senate will vote on the motion to waive the budget with respect to McConnell (for Blunt) Modified Amendment No. 3900 (to Amendment No. 3896), adoption of McConnell (for Blunt) Modified Amendment No. 3900 (to Amendment No. 3896), and the motion to invoke cloture on Collins Amendment No. 3896.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, May 19

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Complete consideration of H.R. 4974—Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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Blum, Rod, Iowa, E732
Brady, Robert A., Pa., E732, E737, E741
Brooks, Susan W., Ind., E733
Cartwright, Matt, Pa., E733
Costa, Jim, Calif., E738
Crawford, Eric A. ''Rick'', Ark., E733
Cuellar, Henry, Tex., E739
Curbelo, Carlos, Fla., E735
Davis, Danny K., Ill., E740
Dold, Robert J., Ill., E730
Hastings, Alcee L., Fla., E735
Higgins, Brian, N.Y., E731
Hudson, Richard, N.C., E734, E740
Hunter, Duncan, Calif., E731
Jackson Lee, Sheila, Tex., E738
Johnson, Eddie Bernice, Tex., E734
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