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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, every good and perfect gift comes from You alone, for with You there is no variation or shadow of turning. Help us to remember that the function of prayer is not to influence You, Almighty God, but to change us. We, therefore, do not pray for an easy life but for the strength to endure a difficult one.

Give our Senators the wisdom to trust You in the small things, realizing that faithfulness with the least prepares them for fidelity with the much. May they trust You to do what is best for America in good times and in bad. May we place our hope in You and never forget how You have sustained us in the past.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators have been continuing their work across the aisle to reach an agreement on a continuing resolution that will help keep Americans safer

from Zika, provide critical funding for veterans, and keep the government open.

I have been encouraged by the progress that we have made so far, and I hope to see it continue as we work toward a final bill which will extend through December 9 at last year's enacted level.

We all know how important the measure is. So let's keep working and get this done.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE REPUBLICAN-LED SENATE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican-led Senate recently returned from the longest summer recess in more than a half a century. It is depicted here in the chart I wish to share with my colleagues. The black lines are when we are not working. Where there are not black lines is when we work, keeping in mind that many of our work days are not the work days of the people we represent. Some work days are 3 or 4 hours at the most.

The Republican Senate just simply doesn't work. The chart represents the fewest working days since 1956. Our country has grown since then. But here it is. A picture is worth a thousand words. I won't say a thousand words this morning, but I will say a few more things.

We are here today when the Republican-led Senate is on track to work fewer days in 2016 than in any year since 1956, when I was in high school. Republicans owe the taxpayers who fund their paychecks an apology—and they really do—for showing up to work fewer days this year than any Senate in all those many decades.

One would think the Republicans would be embarrassed by their indo-

lence—but apparently not. Instead of apologizing for their absenteeism, Republicans are demanding even more time off.

Today I read in the newspaper—there are news accounts all over the country—that Republicans are whining about being asked to show up to do their jobs. They are asking for more weeks of recess. They are saying that Democrats are holding up what we are doing in Congress—how about that.

We are so far down the road here that not much can be done because we are in what we call postcloture procedure in almost everything we do around here. We are going to vote in just a few hours, and it will be another time when we can't do anything because we are postcloture. But that is the calendar the Republican leader set. We didn't. That is the calendar we should stick to, I guess, is what we are being told. Let's black off a few more days. It is scary, but that is what they want. If we take more time off, the Senate will not have just worked fewer days in any year since 1956, but we may have to go back further in history to find a Senate that worked as few days as this one—a long time back.

So I have a short answer for the Republicans who complain about being asked to earn their paychecks. Cry us all a river. Stop complaining about not having enough time off.

People out there who are watching this work different kinds of jobs. Some are retired, but they worked. They know what it is like to work. They never gave themselves extra weeks of vacation whenever they felt like it and neither should Senate Republicans.

DONALD TRUMP

Mr. REID. Mr. President, working people in our great country are tired of being ripped off by really rich people—some who are billionaires and some who claim they are billionaires. During the financial crisis, Wall Street took

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Main Street to the cleaners. Oh, did it hurt the State of Nevada—all of Nevada: Reno, Las Vegas—and it clobbered rural Nevada. American families lost their savings, their livelihoods, and their businesses because of the greed of a few. The last thing the American people want or need is a President who will run another financial scam on each of them.

If elected, Donald Trump would be the scammer in chief. Trump is a fraud. That is the word that I chose. He was born with an inheritance, but he lost his daddy's wealth. That is why Donald Trump won't release his tax returns. That is certainly one of the reasons, of course. He is not worth nearly as much as he claims to be. That is the secret he doesn't want anyone to know. He wants everyone to think he is the big, rich, rich man.

We know that Trump lies about his money. I am not making that up. He once admitted he assesses his net worth on a whim. This is what he said during one of his many, many depositions, which is a court proceeding where you gather evidence, and he has appeared before many for his depositions. This is what he said on one occasion in his many sworn statements. I keep stressing that this is one of a multitude of lawsuits to which he has been a party. This is Donald Trump talking: "My net worth fluctuates, and it goes up and down with markets and with attitudes and with feelings, even my own feelings."

Simply put, Trump is faking his net worth because he doesn't want us to know that he is not a good businessman and he is not as rich as he would have us believe.

Donald Trump's business record speaks for itself. He has ruined company after company, hotel after hotel. Over the last couple of decades, we know of at least six of his companies that have gone into bankruptcy. There are Trump's other business ventures, such as Trump Steaks. Yes, that was really one—Trump Steaks, those things you eat. There was Trump Magazine, those things you read, and Trump University, those places where you are supposed to get educated. They were all flops.

Trump claims to be a titan in the real estate industry, but the Washington Post has reported that he doesn't crack the list of major real estate buyers in New York City, let alone the country.

Earlier this year, the New York Times reported that Trump has such a bad business reputation that banks do not wish to lend him money.

In lieu of real business success, Donald Trump resorts to scams like Trump University. That is a doozy, but that is one of the best scams. Now, with Trump University, he ripped off everyone from students interested in real estate to retirees looking to invest their savings. Trump University is under investigation by the New York Office of the Attorney General, and he is the de-

fendant in two other class action lawsuits. Why? Because he cheated people. He cheated them.

Litigation is nothing new to Donald Trump. Over the last decade and a half, Trump and his companies have been sued in Federal court 72 times. That doesn't take into consideration the many times he has been sued in State courts. There have been 72 Federal cases and many more times in State courts. But Trump, being the flimflammer that he is, just moves on to another scheme.

He even cheats charities. He has a charity—using a broad definition of a "charity"—called the Trump Foundation. Trump started his charity because he is desperate to get invited to fancy parties and be seen with people who give their own money. He seeks acceptance among the wealthy. Since 2008, Trump has not donated a single penny to his own charity, the Trump Foundation. Does he have the money to donate? Well, he says he should, but he doesn't. Americans are far more generous, even though they are of modest means, but they contribute generously to charities every day—not the Donald. No, instead, he goes to other individuals and charities and asks them to donate to his foundation.

The Trump Foundation isn't as much of a charity as it is Donald Trump's personal ATM machine. Trump uses the money he gets from other charities to buy himself gifts. Four years ago, Trump paid \$12,000 of charity resources to buy a football helmet signed by Tim Tebow. Tim Tebow, I am sure, is a fine man. His college career was terrific. He is a Heisman award winner. His professional career wasn't so good, but everything I know about the man indicates he is a good person. He is now 29 years old, and with his great physical attributes, he is trying baseball. He hasn't played baseball since he was in high school, but he hit almost .500 his last year in high school, and I hope he does well.

Here is the deal with the helmet. If Trump wants to buy Tim Tebow's helmet or Willie Mays' bat or Ernie Banks' glove—whatever he wants to buy—that is his right. But shouldn't he use his own money? Not Donald Trump—no, he didn't use his money to buy Tim Tebow's helmet. He didn't use his checkbook to buy that memorabilia. Instead, he used the Trump Foundation charity money—money that was supposed to be given to somebody that needed help. So for \$12,000, a big shot was bidding on a helmet, not with his own money but with the charity's money.

The Internal Revenue Service calls this sort of thing self-dealing. Self-dealing is when a person spends charity money on themselves. It is against the law. It is illegal. But Trump doesn't care about what the law is. If he doesn't have the money himself, which obviously he doesn't, then he uses other people's money—other people's money that is put into his charity, and

he spends it on himself. This is who the Republicans want to be our President. This is who Republicans—Leader MCCONNELL and Speaker RYAN want this man to prepare a budget for our country? Trump can't be trusted with his own charity. Are we supposed to believe he can manage the Nation's Treasury or provide money for our armed services or for Homeland Security?

This is a man who uses charities to bilk even police officers. In 2009, Donald Trump asked the Charles Evans Foundation for a donation to his charity, the Trump Foundation. Trump told them he needed the money to donate to the Palm Beach, FL, Police Foundation. They gave Trump's charity \$150,000. Donald Trump took that money and gave it to the Palm Beach Police Foundation. He didn't match it with a dime of his own. Trump took the Charles Evans Foundation money, and he donated it as if it were his own.

Here is where the story gets even more absurd—even worse. What kind of man is this person running for President? Well, here is a slight indication. When the Palm Beach Police Foundation wanted to use Trump's South Florida resort to honor him for his gift—remember, the gift was from somebody else, but he claimed credit for it—Trump charged them for the event, for the room, and for the food. It is estimated that the Palm Beach Police Foundation paid Trump and his hotel operation \$200,000 to honor himself.

Donald Trump ran a hustle on many different charities and netted his resort money, and he didn't spend a penny of his own money along the way.

Trump never worries about being caught because he financially rewards the people who would investigate the racket he perpetuates. In 2013, the attorney general of Florida, Pam Bondi, announced she was joining the New York investigation into Trump University. Four days after announcing the probe, Donald Trump sent \$25,000 to her campaign. The attorney general's office announced almost immediately that it would not be investigating Trump University and would not join with the State of New York. Guess what money Trump used to persuade the attorney general to change her mind. Was it his money? Oh, no. Was it money from his charity? You got it. Of course, that is illegal, but he did it anyway and got credit from the attorney general of Florida.

How can Senator MCCONNELL and Speaker RYAN continue to endorse this man? How can Republicans close their eyes to the fact that this swindler is running for President and he is ripping off the American people and our government?

This Republican Congress has spent millions of your tax dollars on political hit jobs masquerading as investigations. They have spent untold amounts of money on Benghazi, on emails, and they found nothing, of course—zero—and they have acknowledged that.

So I have another job for them. Why don't they investigate Donald Trump? They can do it quickly. They are all set to do this. They don't mind spending taxpayer dollars. All these investigations of the Clinton operation have always been taxpayer dollars. They should take a cue from the attorney general of the State of New York and hold Trump accountable for scamming charities, the IRS, and the American people.

Donald Trump desperately wants people to believe that he is a brilliant, rich, rich businessman. In reality he is a silver-spoon-toting fraud who would never make it in the real world without his father's money. That is why Trump's entire business career has been one scam after another, such as in Atlantic City where he cheated everybody and got rich at the expense of others. If there is one reason Atlantic City has gone downhill—and it has—it is Donald Trump.

He is always looking for a mark, some victim for one of his scams, because he is incapable of making money honestly. Now our country is Trump's next target. He wants this to be the biggest payoff ever.

Mr. President, I think it is time to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 516, H.R. 5325, a bill making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I can still recall the first briefing I had as a Member of Congress on something called HIV/AIDS. I didn't know much about it. I heard the words, but I didn't understand them until this briefing brought to mind and brought to light the serious threat this was to the health of thousands of people in the United States and around the world. It was a frightening moment. The information we received led us to believe quite honestly that this was the public health crisis of our time.

There was a response that I was surprised by. Despite all the controversy around all the values and issues, President Ronald Reagan and his Surgeon General Koop stepped forward and showed real leadership.

Some argued that President Reagan waited too long. I am going to put that argument aside. The day came when the Surgeon General sent a letter to every American family telling them the threat of this public health crisis. It was the right thing to do. We dealt with it in an honest, forthright way. We appropriated massive amounts of money for treatment research, and we have come a long way in saving the lives of many who were threatened by this deadly disease.

It is rare when a President of the United States steps up and says to the American people: We have a public health crisis. Because it is so rare, we should take it very seriously.

In February of this year, President Obama made that plea to Congress about a new public health crisis involving the Zika infection. Zika, of course, is borne by mosquitoes. There is evidence in countries around the world that when these mosquitoes bite someone and infect them, it has a negative health consequence, particularly on pregnant women and the babies they carry.

President Obama came to Congress in February of this year and in a rare moment announced that we had an emergency, a public health crisis that needed to be addressed. He asked for \$1.9 billion to eradicate the mosquitoes and also to develop a vaccine to protect innocent Americans.

I took that seriously. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in Congress did not. It wasn't until May, some 3 months later, that the Senate passed a response to the President's request for this public health emergency called Zika. We passed a bill that had about \$1.1 billion in it—not what the President asked for but a substantial investment toward his goal of protecting America and developing a vaccine, and we passed it with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Some 89 Senators from both parties voted for it in May of this year. That, of course, was 4 months ago.

What happened after the Senate with a strong bipartisan vote responded to the President's request for emergency funding for a public health crisis involving Zika? What happened to this bill after it passed the Senate? It went to the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, that is where it took a bad turn. Instead of passing the obvious bipartisan bill in response to the President, the House Republicans insisted on delaying it further and adding provisions that were politically controversial and really were unnecessary to our goal of protecting America from this crisis.

They added a provision that said that if you were a woman seeking family planning so that your pregnancy was not compromised by the Zika virus, you could not use the Planned Parenthood agencies for those family planning consultations. Why would they pick Planned Parenthood? Because the Republican Party is at war with

Planned Parenthood. They are willing to stop even their family planning functions.

Two million American women went to Planned Parenthood last year. They count on them for professional services they can trust and afford. The Republicans want to close it down. They have voted repeatedly to do that. So they chose this Zika emergency public health crisis bill to do that again.

They took \$500 million slated for the Veterans' Administration to expedite the consideration of claims by our veterans and eliminated that money in the VA—put it toward the Zika virus.

Third, they decided to suspend the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency when it came to monitoring and overseeing the chemicals that would be sprayed to kill these mosquitoes.

Finally, in the ultimate political act, they put in a provision that eliminated the prohibition against displaying a Confederate flag at a U.S. military cemetery. That is what happens when legislation that starts off as very simple, pointed, and direct runs amok and becomes a political freighter, carrying all of these issues.

That is what happened and, of course, the Republicans in the House knew what would follow. The bill would run into resistance, and the Senate would be bogged down. Instead of taking the simple funding bill the Senate passed overwhelmingly with a bipartisan vote, the Republicans complicated the situation dramatically and brought the whole conversation to a stop.

So here we are today. The President's request was in February; we are now in September. Congress has yet to send the President the resources he asked for. At what cost? Well, we know the cost. At this point we estimate that by the end of the year in Puerto Rico, 25 percent of the people on that island will be infected with the Zika virus, including presently about 1,000 women in Puerto Rico. We know that they are in danger and that the babies they give birth to will have serious life-threatening birth defects because of that infection—an infection that might have been slowed down or even avoided had this Congress under Republican control responded to President Obama's request for emergency public health funding for this Zika epidemic.

As of last week there were 20,870 reported cases of Zika in the United States and its territories. That included 1,897 pregnant women, and in Illinois there are 70 of these women. We estimate about 700 or 800 women in America in the continental United States have been infected by this virus, with another 1,000, as I mentioned, in Puerto Rico.

If we had responded quickly in a responsible bipartisan way when the President made his request, I don't know whether some of these families and women and their babies could have been spared. We will never know, but

we do know this for sure: The Republican-led Congress ignored the President's request, refused to send the money he asked for, and we are paying a heavy price as a nation—not as heavy a price as these women who sadly have a tragedy on their hands that maybe could have been avoided if Congress had responded in a timely fashion.

Seven months without congressional action for an emergency public health crisis called Zika is shameful. Let's not wait another day before we leave here to go back and campaign, before each party returns home to brag about what they have achieved or can achieve. Let's do our job when it comes to this Zika crisis. Let's make sure the continuing resolution that keeps the government's lights on also turns on the lights at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and at the National Institutes of Health so that we start reducing the number of people infected and also developing a vaccine to protect innocent families across the United States and perhaps around the world. That is something we desperately need to do.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. President, the for-profit college and university industry is the most heavily federally subsidized profit-making private business in America, bar none. Most of these for-profit colleges and universities, like the University of Phoenix, Kaplan, and others, have decided they want to tap into our Federal Treasury for anywhere up to 90 or 95 percent of all the revenue that comes through their universities and schools.

There is no other business in America so dependent on Federal subsidies as for-profit colleges and universities. What happens? The Federal Treasury sends money to the students who apply to these schools in the form of grants and loans. The money is then transferred to the school, and the student has a debt they have to cope with when it comes to the money that is borrowed from the Federal Government.

What happens in those circumstances where the school goes out of business? We saw it with Corinthian last year, one of the largest for-profit colleges and universities, and we just saw it 2 weeks ago with a group called ITT Tech. Here is what happens. Students have debt incurred at these for-profit schools like ITT Tech. They are approached by the Department of Education which offers them two options. The first option is, if you were a student at the school when it closed or you withdrew 120 days before it went out of business, you have a choice. You can keep your credit hours that you earned at ITT Tech and the debt incurred in earning them or walk away from both.

Also, if you happen to have been defrauded by these schools, you have something called defense to repayment. If they misled you about the courses you were going to take, how much they would cost, what kind of

loans were available to you, what kind of job you may have after graduation, then you, too, can raise that as a defense and potentially have your federal student loan debt forgiven. That is an option that many ITT Tech students now have.

There is another aspect of this that we should not overlook. These schools do not just exploit students who are fresh out of high school or coming from some other place, unfortunately, they defraud veterans. Veterans using GI bill benefits at ITT Tech have been unfairly affected by this company's practices and now its closure and bankruptcy. For years, ITT Tech has been a major recipient of GI bill benefits. According to the 2014 report by Senator Tom Harkin's HELP Committee, ITT Tech was the third largest recipient in 2012 and 2013, receiving \$161 million in GI bill funds.

When it closed earlier this month, an estimated 7,000 veterans were enrolled at the school that has now gone out of business. Not only have these veterans used up part or, in some cases, all of their limited GI bill education benefits, some of them relied on VA housing assistance to pay their rent and afford a place to live for themselves and their families.

Veterans can only receive this housing stipend if they are enrolled in a school that qualifies for GI bill benefits. So the closure of ITT Tech has put these veterans and their families at risk of being unable to afford their current housing, disrupting their lives. I support a bipartisan bill introduced by my colleagues Senators BLUMENTHAL and TILLIS, a bipartisan bill to reinstate GI bill education benefits in certain cases and give the Secretary of the VA the authority to temporarily extend housing benefits to vets, including those who attended ITT Tech.

This bill, called the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Education Relief and Restoration Act or VERRA, was included in a larger bipartisan VA reform package that I hope the Senate will still take up this year. But the closure of ITT Tech makes the need to pass VERRA urgent. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this common-sense, bipartisan legislation before we adjourn. I urge them to stop and reflect on the fact that these for-profit schools are exploiting students and families, members of the military and their families, and veterans across the United States.

Why, in good conscience, are we allowing this to continue? It is time for us to put some standards of conduct on this for-profit university industry that has taken so much money from our Federal Treasury, from \$25 to \$30 billion a year. These heavily subsidized, crony capitalist operations are a disgrace.

Ten percent of all students enrolled in postsecondary education attend for-profit colleges and universities. Forty percent of all the student loan defaults are from the students at these for-prof-

it colleges and universities. Their tuitions are outrageously high, their diplomas are outrageously worthless, and many students and innocent people pay a heavy price.

I will close with a story about one of them I represent. Laura Cotton is one of those students who was misled by ITT Tech. She is a single mom in Oak Lawn, IL, working part time. She saw the come-on advertising of ITT Tech, had a lot of conversations with their recruiters about their great programs and the job she would get with an ITT Tech degree.

She said they never bothered to talk to her about what it was going to cost and how she was going to pay for it. She ended up enrolling in an online criminal justice program. According to Laura, most of the courses had nothing to do with her program of study. ITT Tech would just send her paperwork to sign, more loans, Federal and private.

She ended up dropping out of ITT Tech when she finally added up all of the money they had enticed her to borrow. Laura has a debt of \$98,000 from ITT Tech and nothing—no degree, nothing to show for it.

In a letter she sent me, Laura wrote: "My American dream of home ownership, purchasing a new car, giving my kids an education has suffered because my credit is now shot."

I wish Laura's story was unique. I wish more Members of the Senate and Congress would sit down and talk to people just like her who have been victims of these for-profit colleges and universities. When are we going to accept our responsibility to clean up this shameful industry?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I came to talk on a different topic, but it is interesting because I noticed the front-page story of the Washington Post about a for-profit college not too many weeks ago. Headline: "Inside Bill Clinton's nearly \$18 million job as 'honorary chancellor' of a for-profit college."

I just heard this Senator talk about somebody signing something, and this article refers to this for-profit college that signed Bill Clinton to a lucrative deal as a consultant and honorary chancellor, paying him \$17.6 million over 5 years. It is very disturbing because it says:

The guest list for a private State Department dinner on higher-education policy was taking shape when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton offered a suggestion.

It says:

In addition to recommending invitations for the leaders from a community college and a church-funded institution, Clinton wanted a representative from a for-profit college company called Laureate International University, which, she explained in her email to her chief of staff that was released just last year, was "the fastest growing college network in the world."

There was another reason Clinton favored setting a seat aside for Laureate at the August 2009 event: The company was started by

a businessman, Doug Becker, “who Bill likes a lot. . . .”

Nine months later, Laureate signed Bill Clinton to a lucrative deal as a consultant and “honorary chancellor,” paying him \$17.6 million over 5 years.

So when I hear another colleague from the Senate come to the floor and talk about for-profit colleges and make reference to the fact that something needs to be done about it, it seems obvious to me that Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, they had something to do with it as well, and a \$17.6 million contract—consultant fee, honorary chancellor—to Bill Clinton.

PRESIDENT OBAMA’S LEGACY

Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk on a separate matter. We are just 4 months away from an inauguration of the next President. So President Obama is spending lots of time going around trying to polish his legacy. He is doing it today at the United Nations.

The facts we see and Americans across the country see are very different than what President Obama is trying to paint as his legacy. The President’s legacy of failure—we see it in the President’s health care law. Many people feel deceived by the President when they find themselves paying much more for health care. Many people have been hurt by the law. Republicans are trying to provide relief for the damage the President has done.

The President’s legacy of failure continues in foreign policy. America’s power, prestige, and respect around the world has declined, and in many places evaporated under President Obama. Today I want to talk about the devastating legacy the President has left in terms of failure regarding his economic policies.

According to a recent Gallup poll, people say the economy is the biggest problem facing this country today. The No. 2 concern in the poll was a tie between unemployment and dissatisfaction with government. After 7½ years of a very poor recovery from the recession, it is easy to see why Americans are so concerned about their own jobs, their own economy, and their own future.

It is also easy to see why there is a lack of faith with regard to the Obama administration, in terms of their ability to even know how to grow a strong and healthy economy. President Obama took office during a recession. The recession ended in June of 2009, just a few months after the President was in office so that was more than 7 years ago.

America has an economy that has been crawling on its hands and knees ever since. Normally, after a recession, an economy bounces back, does it vigorously, with great strength—never happened this time.

Under President Obama, the country has been struggling with the weakest recovery in the last 60 years. Millions and millions of Americans have been left behind, and they feel it. Going back to 1950, the average annual

growth for our economy has been 3.25 percent a year. So over 3 percent growth a year, on average, since the year 1950. Through good times and bad, an average of 3 percent a year.

President Obama’s average the past 7 years has been less than half of that. For the past three economic quarters, it has been growing at a 1.1-percent annual rate, 0.9 percent, 0.8 percent, well below average when it comes to his economic policies. That is not a legacy of which to be proud.

This nonexistent Obama recovery means too many Americans have gone too long without being able to find a job. There are still close to 16 million Americans who are either unemployed or underemployed who are seeking to find full-time work. Many of these are part-time workers who are trying to go and find full-time work.

Many others have given up looking for work entirely. They have tried, they can’t find anything, and they have quit actually looking so they are not even counted in the unemployment numbers. This is not a legacy for which anybody should be proud. I ask the President is he proud of this legacy.

Last month, the Congressional Budget Office came out with some new numbers about Washington’s debt. The American people know the President has added considerably to the debt of this country. He came into office, he immediately started running deficits of \$1 trillion a year—the President’s so-called stimulus package.

No one had ever seen deficits like that before. Of course, as each deficit gets added to the debt, the debt accumulates with deficit spending each year, but that wasn’t enough for this President. Oh, no. Then, he pushes a health care law that burdens taxpayers with trillions of dollars of additional debt.

According to this new report, Washington’s deficit is going to be 35 percent higher this year than it was last year. That just keeps adding to our national debt. Is President Obama proud of this legacy? Is he proud he is impacting our children, our grandchildren, sticking them with a tax bill they will never be able to repay?

There was another report that came out of the Census Bureau last week. It said the average family income actually did go up from 2014 to 2015 by 5 percent. That leaves us with an average family income that is still below the numbers from before the recession, from back in 2007. We are still below that level.

Five percent may sound good for that year—until you realize that health insurance premiums under the Obama health care law are going up 20 to 30 percent all across the country. The Wall Street Journal came out last week with a piece that said: “America Gets a Raise, Finally.”

A raise for American families is good news. It should happen every year. But why didn’t it happen sooner? Well, because of the policies of the Obama ad-

ministration—policies such as higher taxes, more regulations. The average family income is still \$900 less than it was in 2007. There are still 43 million Americans living in poverty. If President Obama is proud of his legacy, let him stand up and say it. But is he really proud of a legacy of making America wait so long for so little?

Here is how the Wall Street Journal put it in its editorial:

Last year’s encouraging progress doesn’t obscure the reality that neither the economy nor workers are reaching their full potential. The next President can build on this late uptick by changing policy direction.

That is what we need to do—change direction and policy. That is the key. These failed economic policies over the past 7½ years don’t just belong to President Obama. They belong to Democrats in Congress who have been pushing—and continue to push—along this line of more government, more spending, more regulations, and less individual choice.

These are the same ideas that have robbed Americans of opportunities every single time the Democrats have tried it.

Although President Obama and the Democrats in Congress may think the pace of this recovery has been good enough, Republicans in the Senate know this is an economy which is nowhere near as good as it should be or could be. We are focused on policies that promote real job growth so Americans can get off the sidelines and back onto a career path.

Republicans are focused on policies that free our economy—free the economy to grow like it should, not just hobble along with the lackluster pace of the last 7 years.

We are focused on policies that will rein in Washington out-of-control debt and regulations. That is the way that our children and grandchildren can afford to live the lives they would like, not just paying for Democrats’ mistakes.

We are focused on policies that allow Americans to get paid what they deserve, not just one raise every 7 years or 8 years. Republicans are ready to move beyond the President’s legacy of failure and to help the American economy really get moving again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we continue to learn more and more about the terrorist attacks that occurred last weekend on American soil. In just a short time span, on Saturday a number of innocent people became the targets of attacks in Manhattan, New Jersey, and Minnesota. In Manhattan, as we know, a bomb went off in the Chelsea neighborhood, injuring almost 30 people. Thanks to a very alert citizen, a second device—found just a few blocks away—was dismantled and did not cause any additional damages. If that hadn’t happened, obviously many more casualties would have been likely.

In neighboring New Jersey, a bomb exploded near the site of a charity race to benefit marines and their families. More bombs were found in a backpack near a train station in Elizabeth, NJ.

As we have seen in the news in Minnesota, also on Saturday, it was reported that a man with a knife began attacking innocent passersby in a mall. He stabbed nine people.

The day after the attack, the Islamic State, or ISIS, took credit. A news outlet associated with the terrorist army called the jihadist a “soldier of the Islamic State.”

Thank goodness no lives were lost in that attack. In every case, law enforcement authorities and first responders acted swiftly in order to minimize the damage. But the point is that we are living in dangerous and tumultuous times. Just last week we celebrated the 15th anniversary of the September 11 attacks on our country. I shouldn't use the word “celebrated.” We actually memorialized those terrible attacks that took the lives of about 3,000 Americans.

This week we find ourselves trying to make some sense of the violence carried out last weekend. The only rational thing for us to do here at home is to remain vigilant. As the Department of Homeland Security likes to say, if you see something, say something.

Situational awareness is always important for public safety, but we could do a lot more than just equipping the American people with a slogan that allows them to maintain situational awareness. In Congress, we need to make sure we provide all the tools necessary to our military, to our law enforcement, and to our first responders to protect the men and women whom we represent—the American people. That means we need to consider legislation that supports the victims of terrorism and their families as well. While I am not suggesting this is going to be a deterrent to terrorist attacks, just maybe it will provide some measure of justice to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of terrorist attacks on American soil.

Yesterday I talked about one small piece of that effort, the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act. This is one way we could do that and help these family members find some measure of closure and justice.

Simply, what it would do is to extend existing law that has been on the books since the late 1970s that would allow these families to hold foreign governments—that have helped finance and facilitated attacks on American soil—accountable in our courts of law.

In just a few minutes, I will have the chance to meet with several of the families of the victims of 9/11. I have to tell you that these men and women have been a remarkable example of courage and resilience for all of us. They want and they deserve a path to justice.

I hope the President stops holding up Congress from voting to override the veto he promised on this legislation.

Better yet, I would hope the President would reconsider his stated intention to veto the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act. It makes no mention of any particular country. It doesn't decide the merits of the lawsuit that will be brought. All it does is give these families access to a court of law where they can make their case if they can.

The President said he is going to veto it, but my question is this: What is he waiting for? It has been on his desk since about a week ago.

Why is he making these families wait even longer for justice? If he is going to veto it, he should do it—to stop making everybody wait on his timeline.

I hope that when the President does veto this legislation—if he is determined to do that—we will quickly vote to override. I am confident we will, given the fact that this legislation passed by unanimous consent in the Senate and was supported by all Members of the House of Representatives.

Another way we could help guard against homegrown extremism in our country is by better equipping our law enforcement personnel to track down and ultimately detain potential terrorists to stop the acts of terror before they occur—not just after they occur—and conducting an investigation and holding the person responsible accountable. Wouldn't it be great and better if we could actually stop these attacks before they occur? One way we could do that is by fixing the current gap in our laws for what is called the electronic communications and transactions records. That is a mouthful. Basically, what that would do is allow the FBI to use national security letters, which they can already do in a terrorism investigation, to access not just financial, not just phone records but also computer metadata—not content but just the Internet protocol addresses on computers in terrorist investigations—in order to put together the pieces to be able to make the case to stop terrorist attacks in the first place.

As I have said before—and I will say again—we expect our law enforcement personnel to prevent these attacks by connecting the dots. But before you can connect the dots, you have to collect dots, and that is what this important tool would help to do.

In today's Internet age, our law enforcement personnel need these tools to fight terrorists, plain and simple. Our friend, the senior Senator from Arizona, Mr. McCAIN, has been a great leader on this issue. I hope this Chamber acts on this and other similar legislation before an attack occurs, not after.

Fundamentally, at the root of the problem with the Islamic State operating in the Middle East in Syria, Iraq, and in a number of other countries, is that our President—the Commander in Chief of our military—doesn't have a strategy to combat and defeat this threat.

We let them establish a de facto state in the heart of the Middle East by pre-

cipitously withdrawing our military personnel from Iraq and leaving a vacuum. We should have learned what happens from the horrible lesson of 9/11 and Al Qaeda when we create power vacuums in the Middle East. Ultimately, this will provide a place for the terrorists to train, organize, and ultimately find a way to attack us here at home. When they can't physically come here, what they do is they radicalize people on the Internet, encouraging them to kill Americans here in place.

President Obama has called the Islamic State the JV team. Well, how in the world can a JV team resist the most powerful military in the world—the United States military? That is because the President has tied the arm of our military behind its back and basically is fighting a war of containment—not a war where victory and defeat of our opponents is the objective. It really looks as if the President is trying to run out the clock for the remainder of his term without doing the hard work and the necessary work to implement a strategy to actually defeat this threat. Because the President didn't take ISIS and its affiliates seriously, we now see them export their dangerous ideology to our shores. We saw that again just recently last Saturday in Minnesota. We saw that in Orlando with a shooter who killed 49 people and injured 50 more, who declared allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State. Unfortunately, this joins the list of other ISIS-inspired attacks throughout the country, as I said, from Orlando to San Bernardino and now to Minnesota.

We simply cannot sit back and just let them do their deadly deeds. We must have a strategy. We have to implement that strategy, both abroad and here at home.

Unfortunately, the President is exercising extreme reluctance in terms of addressing the threat. We know his wait-and-see approach has not worked, and we continue to see the dangerous consequences here at home.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Mr. President, there is another consequence to the President's failure to deal with this threat in the Middle East. This has to do with what Amnesty International has called the worst refugee crisis in over 70 years. What happens overseas doesn't necessarily stay overseas. America is the most generous country in the world when it comes to accepting refugees, when it comes to naturalizing people as American citizens who were born elsewhere. But the President has stated an intention to settle about 10,000 Syrian refugees in the United States just this year. He is conducting a conference today, Tuesday, where he will lead a summit on the need to take in additional Syrian refugees. He has now stated that his administration's goal is to raise the 10,000 limit of Syrian refugees to 110,000 Syrian refugees by next October.

Not to be outdone, Secretary Clinton has said she wants to have at least 65,000 additional Syrian refugees.

We all believe in being humanitarian and compassionate in dealing with the needs of refugees, but I would bet that every single one—or the overwhelming majority of these refugees—would rather live in place in the country of their birth than be displaced to a new and strange country as refugees.

We know the danger of improperly vetting refugees is a real threat to our safety and security here at home, but apparently the President is not paying any attention to that—calling now for an additional 100,000 Syrian refugees by next October. Sadly, about 5 million people have been displaced by the war in Syria.

We know that after the President said Bashar al-Assad would be held accountable after he crossed a red line, using chemical weapons against his own people, basically nothing happened. That emboldened Russia, our adversary, to get a toehold in Syria. It allowed them to ally with the country of Iran and terrorist groups such as Hezbollah to actually try to maintain Bashar al-Assad in office—something this President and his administration said shall not stand.

In Syria alone, nearly 5 million refugees have left that country. We know they have gone to bordering countries such as Turkey. I visited some of those refugee camps. They have been to Jordan. They are relocating in places such as northern Iraq, where the financial burden is shaking the very foundations of the regional government there. And we know that many of these refugees have made their way into Europe, causing instability there—a potential danger when refugees are not particularly well vetted to determine whether they bring with them a dangerous ideology which will be perhaps deadly to people living in those areas, places such as Germany and France, just to mention a couple.

This President seems to be absolutely blind to the consequences of his failure to have any effective strategy to deal with the Islamic State, whether it is abroad or here at home, or consequences he may not even tie to his failure to deal with this threat, such as the refugee crisis we have seen in Europe and elsewhere.

The answer to dealing with this evil is not just to accept more refugees, the answer is to have an effective strategy to provide no-fly and no-drive zones where Syrians can actually continue to live in Syria without fear of being murdered by either Bashar al-Assad and his allies, Iran and Russia, or Al Qaeda affiliates or the Islamic State. That would be a better answer, and I bet they would agree. Most of these refugees would rather live in the country of their birth rather than be displaced in the Middle East, Europe, or even the United States.

Unfortunately, under the leadership of this President, what we have seen is

one consequence after another. I hope the President will finally come up with a strategy to dismantle and defeat ISIS, but I am not holding my breath. And obviously his days as President of the United States are numbered.

There are, however, things we could do here in the Congress to draft solid legislation that will at least protect the American people here in our homeland by providing additional tools for our law enforcement personnel to collect the dots so they can connect the dots. It is not enough to just prosecute the guilty once people are murdered or injured by a terrorist attack; we need to make sure our law enforcement personnel—the FBI and others—have the tools they need to stop these attacks before they occur, if it is humanly possible to do so.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a news article from today's Washington Examiner entitled "Days after attacks, Obama pitches more refugees."

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Examiner, Sept. 20, 2016]

DAYS AFTER ATTACKS, OBAMA PITCHES MORE REFUGEES

(By Susan Crabtree)

President Obama on Tuesday will lead a special summit on the need to take in Syrian refugees, just days after weekend terrorist attacks that are raising more questions about whether the U.S. should be cracking down on immigration instead of opening the doors further.

Plans for Obama to lead the summit were months in the making, long before Ahmad Khan Rahami allegedly planted a pressure cooker bomb in New York that detonated, injuring 29 people. Rahami, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Afghanistan, is also thought to be responsible for bombs discovered in New Jersey.

The incident puts real pressure on Obama to make the case for taking in thousands of additional refugees, in the face of calls from Donald Trump and other Republican critics who say it's time to tighten the rules, not ease them. Obama's critics say the timing couldn't be worse.

"The timing of the summit just reinforces the idea that we need to get a handle on our refugee program," Rep. Brian Babin, R-Texas, told the Washington Examiner. "There is a clear and present danger posed to our national security by these poorly vetted refugees that are pouring in, and the president continues to double down on his intentions to bring in more and more of the individuals from hot spots like Syria."

Babin last week wrote a letter to Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., urging him to include provisions in the continuing resolution to fund the government that would place a moratorium on refugees coming from terrorist hotbeds in Syria, the Middle East and North Africa. Thirty-seven House GOP colleagues signed onto the letter.

The Texas Republican said his effort to put a halt to the admission of the refugees is even more important after this weekend's terrorist attacks in New York, New Jersey and Minnesota.

"The people of the United States and of Western Europe are getting very weary about the politically correct pressure that is being brought to bear by Obama and the U.N.

to take in people," including those that top U.S. national security officials have said we "cannot properly vet."

FBI Director James Comey, Department of Homeland Security Director Jeh Johnson and Director of National Security James Clapper have each testified to Congress over the last year that they couldn't certify that every single refugee admitted into the United States was not a security threat.

Those officials have all testified before several congressional panels about the challenges and information gaps that exist when screening refugees and have emphasized that there is no risk-free process. Comey, however, specifically has said the State Department and other agencies have "dramatically" improved the process over the past few years, and over the past few months, when it comes to Syrian refugees.

Holding Obama's U.N. summit meeting just after the weekend terrorist bombings is also causing headaches for Hillary Clinton, who has called for increasing U.S. admissions of Syrian refugees to 65,000. Her opponent has taken full advantage.

Just hours after the Rahami was arrested, Trump blasted Clinton for supporting policies like the admission of Syrian refugees, which he said would allow radical Islamic groups to "continue their savagery and murder."

The Republican presidential nominee and other GOP critics have also assailed the Obama administration over a new Department of Homeland Security Inspector General report that said the agency mistakenly granted citizenship to at least 858 immigrants from countries deemed to pose security concerns to the U.S.

"We need to get smart and get tough fast so that this weekend's attacks do not become the new normal here as it has in Europe and other parts of the world," Trump said in a statement Monday.

Christian Whiton, a former senior State Department adviser in the George W. Bush administration, said Obama's and Clinton's insistence on pushing for the admission of more Syrian refugees is playing into Trump's hands in the final weeks of the election.

"If you look at polls—only 35 percent of Americans want Syrian refugees to come here—I think they instinctively know that these people cannot be vetted," Whiton said.

After the weekend's bombings and Obama's U.N. summit, he predicted that Clinton would have a very difficult time defending her push for more Syrian refugees on the campaign trail.

"Hillary is pathologically committed to bringing more refugees here, knowing full well that there will be Islamists and jihadists among them," he told the Examiner. "How can she possibly think the government can screen out those who adhere to radical Islam if she won't even name that threat?"

"The twin pillars of Hillary's worldview are globalism and multiculturalism," he said. "She's just too committed to this orthodoxy to accept that Americans don't want jihadists brought here by their own government."

Obama is scheduled to address the United Nations Tuesday with broad remarks about the state of U.S. foreign policy, which will undoubtedly include a call for more admissions of Syrian refugees into the U.S. and other countries around the world.

In the afternoon, he will host the Leaders Summit on Refugees and underscore the gravity of the refugee crisis in which more than 65 million have been displaced worldwide, the largest number since World War II, according to the White House.

From Syria alone, nearly 5 million refugees have left the war-torn country,

Samantha Power, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters late last week in previewing the summit.

"All of these individuals, every one of these numbers is a face and a person with a family," she said. "They are facing very uncertain futures and they're looking to the rest of the world and to the U.N., of course, for help."

Power said several countries, including the U.S., are going to be pledging more slots for the resettlement of refugees. "You're going to see a range of announcements by different world leaders," she said.

The U.S. under Obama's direction has admitted 10,000 Syrian refugees already this year, and will increase those commitments in the final months of his administration, with the goal of accepting 110,000 Syrian refugees by next October. But that figure will depend on the next president's views and policies.

Power also argued that the U.S. can admit the refugees while "ensuring our own security."

"As a country that's admitted 3.2 million refugees since the 1970s, we are more than capable of doing that and ensuring our own security, and the highest levels of security checks are in place for the refugee program," she told reporters.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The Senator from Arkansas.

TRIBUTE TO JESS FORSTER

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize Jess Forster of Little Rock as this week's Arkansan of the Week for her work as the K-8 director at eStem Public Charter Schools in Little Rock.

First, it is important to note that Jess received a record four nominations from different people in Arkansas to be the Arkansan of the Week—an early indication of the tremendous impact she has on the Little Rock community and the State of Arkansas.

Jess is in her second year as the kindergarten through eighth grade director at eStem, where she is known for her tireless dedication to her job and her positive attitude. For example, last year Jess handwrote 1,000 personalized, encouraging notes to students before State testing. The notes took weeks to finish, but Jess never abandoned the task. And to say her students were thrilled would be an understatement.

One of her colleagues wrote:

Since Jess has taken on the Director role, I have seen more positivity in the hallways not only with our teachers but with our students as well. I feel our school is one big family and community and Mrs. Forster is our mom.

Jess's positive attitude and dedication doesn't end with her students; her fellow faculty and staff members also benefit immensely from their relationships with her. Each Friday Jess recognizes eStem's teachers' hard work by personally distributing notes and snacks that usually align with the theme she has chosen. Her positive spirit is contagious for all those who know her.

Another of Jess's colleagues said:

At one of her first meetings with the faculty, she discussed values and the importance they have in our daily lives—whether

they be at the workplace or at home. One of the values we all picked was family.

This is a value Jess definitely believes in, and it shows. Under her leadership, eStem restated its mission and vision statement to the motto "Above & Beyond: It's what WE do." Jess believes this phrase sets higher expectations for eStem and better reflects the school's positive community atmosphere.

Of all the nice things said about Jess in her nominations, I felt this description was a fitting conclusion:

Jess has had a huge impact on the eStem community, which reaches across the entirety of central Arkansas. She is a dedicated educational leader, wife and mother. I believe she should be recognized for such an outstanding performance. I cannot think of a more deserving person to be acknowledged as Arkansan of the week.

I agree, and I am proud to recognize Jess Forster as this week's Arkansan of the Week for her outstanding work as the K-8 director at eStem schools in Little Rock.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S LEGACY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the end of a Presidential administration is often a time for taking stock. In the coming months, pundits and reporters will spend a lot of time discussing President Obama's legacy. Perhaps the real measure of the President's legacy, I would argue, is how the American people are feeling at the end of his administration. Americans aren't feeling too good. After 8 years of the Obama economy and President Obama's foreign policy, two-thirds of Americans think our Nation is on the wrong track, more than half think we are less safe than we were before September 11, and 67 percent rate our economy as "not so good" or "poor"—two-thirds of Americans. It is disappointing, but it is not surprising.

On the foreign policy front, here is where we stand after 8 years of the Obama administration: Terrorism is spreading. The Middle East is more hostile and dangerous. Iran is counting pallets of ransom money and in a better position to develop a nuclear weapon. North Korea is defiantly testing nuclear weapons. Russia is more aggressive. China is more aggressive. I could go on and on.

On the domestic front, 8 years of the Obama economy has left American families struggling. While the recession technically ended 7 years ago, our economy has never really rebounded. Recoveries are usually a period of robust growth. Three to four percent or more is common in a recovery. The

Obama recovery, however, has averaged a tepid 2.1-percent growth. In fact, the Obama recovery is the worst recovery in 60 years, and things are actually going downhill. During the first half of 2016, the economy grew at a rate of less than 1 percent.

Historically, sailors refer to the area around the Equator, where their ships could become trapped for weeks, as the doldrums. Well, that is pretty much where our economy is now—it is in the doldrums, stuck, unmoving. Our economy has barely grown at all this year, and the long-term forecast is bleak. In fact, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office is estimating that our economy will grow at less than 2 percent for the next 10 years. What do those numbers mean? Sluggish economic growth means fewer jobs, lower incomes, and fewer opportunities.

We can see the effect of the sluggish Obama economy in job creation and unemployment numbers. While the unemployment rate has decreased from its recession-level highs, part of that has been driven by individuals dropping out of the workforce. The challenge of finding a job in the Obama economy has led many individuals to simply give up looking for work altogether. Millions have dropped out of the workforce, and we now have a labor force participation rate that is near a 30-year low. If the labor force participation rate were the same today as it was when President Obama took office, the current unemployment rate would be 9.1 percent. Let me repeat that because I think it is important when we talk about all these different percentages, particularly with regard to unemployment. If the labor force participation rate were the same today as it was when President Obama took office, the current unemployment rate would be 9.1 percent. That is how many people have completely dropped out of the labor force. That is how many people are no longer participating in our economy.

On the job-creation front, the Obama recovery has again lagged far behind other recoveries. So far this year, job creation has averaged just 182,000 jobs per month—far below where it should be in a strong economy. For the Obama recovery to match the job creation of other post-1960 recoveries, job creation would have to soar to 1.37 million jobs a month for the rest of the Obama Presidency, or more than seven times the number of jobs we are currently adding.

With numbers like these, it is no surprise that two-thirds of the American people rate the Obama economy as "not so good" or "poor."

Americans are tired. For the past 8 years, good jobs and opportunities have been few and far between. And that is not all Americans have had to contend with. They have also had to contend with the steep cost of health care. The

President's health care law was supposed to make health care more affordable. We were told premiums for families would drop. We were told Americans would have the freedom to keep their doctor and choose affordable plans that fit their needs. Well, the reality has been pretty much the opposite. To illustrate, I would like to read a brief article that appeared a few days ago in CNN Money. The title of the article is "Health care costs rise by most in 32 years."

Health care costs rose sharply in August. Prices for medicine, doctor appointments and health insurance rose the most last month since 1984. The price increases come amid a broader debate about climbing health care costs and high premiums for Obamacare coverage.

A recent report by Kaiser/LET Employer Health Benefits forecasts that the average family health care plan will cost \$18,142, up 3.4% from 2015. That's faster than wage growth in America.

Medical care costs altogether rose 1% just in August from July, according to the Consumer Price Index, a report on price inflation from the U.S. Labor Department.

Premiums on the Obamacare exchanges are expected to rise by double-digits this year.

Some health insurers, such as Aetna, have recently announced they would pull out of the Obamacare exchanges, saying ObamaCare patients have turned out to be sicker and costlier than expected.

Overall, workers are paying more for deductibles. Over half of U.S. workers with single coverage health insurance plans pay a deductible of \$1,000 or more, up from 31% of workers in 2011.

And the health care price increases come as inflation overall continues to be low. Consumer prices altogether rose 1.1% in August compared to a year ago.

All those statistics come from that CNN Money piece. So let's just recap what they were describing.

Prices for medicine, doctors, and health insurance are way up. The price of the average family health plan is growing faster than wages. ObamaCare premiums are soaring; individuals are facing double-digit premium increases. Deductibles are up. Insurers are pulling out of health care exchanges, reducing Americans' choices. And health care costs are growing faster than inflation. In other words, they are taking an even greater share of Americans' budgets. That is where we are after 6-plus years of the "Affordable" Care Act.

I have said before that if we wanted to coin a phrase to describe Obama's Presidency, it might be the "Presidency of diminished expectations." It is the Presidency in which Americans started to doubt the cornerstone of the American dream that their children will have a better life than they do. It is the Presidency in which we were asked to start looking at weak economic growth as somehow being the new normal. And it is the Presidency in which we were asked to look at a future of soaring costs and limited choices as the new standard for health care.

We don't need to resign ourselves to these diminished expectations. After all, the weakness of the Obama recov-

ery is not a chance or a coincidence; it is the natural consequence of the President's policies. Instead of freeing up our economy to grow, the President has weighted it down with tax hikes, spending increases, and burdensome regulations.

Over the past 8 years, the Obama administration has enacted more than 600 new major regulations, totaling \$743 billion or, to put it in perspective, \$2,300 per American. While some government regulations are necessary, every administration has to remember that regulations have consequences. The more resources individuals and businesses spend complying with government regulations, the less they have available to focus on the growth and innovation that drive our economy and create new opportunities for American workers.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration has chosen to prioritize burdensome government mandates instead of freeing up individuals and businesses to innovate. We don't have to continue that way. We can repeal burdensome regulations. We can stop overspending. We can reform our Tax Code to lift the burden on job creators and on families.

The weak economic growth of the past 8 years does not have to be the new normal. Americans don't have to resign themselves to a future of crippling health care bills either. ObamaCare had good intentions, but it has turned out to be a disaster.

If we repeal this failed law, we can start over and pass real health care reform, the kind that will actually drive down costs and provide increased access to care. Republicans are excited to work with a new President to move beyond the economic failures of the past 8 years. We have ideas to grow our economy, promote job growth, and increase opportunities for American families. Hard-working Americans deserve more than the diminished expectations of the Obama Presidency. Republicans firmly believe that a better future is possible. We are ready to get to work to get there.

ATTACKS IN NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY, AND MINNESOTA

Mr. President, before I close, I want to address the bombings and attempted bombings in New York and New Jersey this weekend, as well as the knife attack at a shopping mall in Minnesota.

My prayers are with the 29 victims in Manhattan, the 10 victims in St. Cloud, and the two wounded officers in New Jersey. My prayers are also with the families of the injured and the communities whose sense of community has been rattled. I am grateful to local, State, and Federal law enforcement personnel for their efforts to apprehend the suspect and, more importantly, prevent further injury or even death.

I am also grateful for the off-duty officer who stopped the assailant in St. Cloud. In these times of heightened threats, the service of our law enforcement officers is critical. The investigations into all of these attacks are ongoing,

but they are being viewed as potential acts of terrorism.

ISIS has claimed responsibility for the attack in Minnesota, and investigators are seeking a definitive connection, such as a declaration on social media, as we saw in the San Bernardino shooting. I am hopeful that our intelligence communities can quickly piece together the motives and possible terror links of these attacks. Doing so may lead to intelligence that could prevent future attacks and provide insight on how to better counter terror networks and prevent domestic recruitment.

This weekend's attacks underscore just how high the stakes really are. The threat of terrorism continues to grow, fueled by instability in the Middle East—instability that has been fueled by the absence of U.S. leadership.

Part of the reason we are facing ISIS today is that the President chose to prematurely withdraw our troops from Iraq. This left a gaping hole in Iraq's security, and ISIS quickly took advantage. Despite the trail of bloodshed that ISIS has left in its wake, the Obama administration continues to downplay the threat this organization poses.

Unfortunately, the consequences of downplaying this threat could haunt us for generations to come. Senate Republicans will continue to do what we can in Congress to restore America's leadership and strengthen our country's security. We will continue pushing for the resources our military needs to defeat ISIS abroad. We will continue pursuing policies that would strengthen our borders so we know who is coming in and out of our country. We will continue supporting policies that give our intelligence and security agencies the tools they need to protect our homeland.

The committee I chair—the Commerce Committee—is looking at legislation right now to strengthen security on our Nation's highways and railways. In addition to the airport security package we enacted earlier this year as part of the FAA bill, this bill will help keep families safe as they travel around our country. I am hopeful the Senate will take up this legislation in the near future.

Finally, I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance essential defense legislation like the National Defense Authorization Act and Defense appropriations, which will help undo the foreign policy failures of the Obama administration.

For too long, Senate Democrats have put politics ahead of funding our military. Democrats have filibustered the Defense appropriations bill no fewer than six times during this Congress alone. I am hopeful we will soon be able to put politics aside and fund our men and women in uniform. They serve in harm's way every day. The least we can do is give them the resources they need to carry out their jobs.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the judicial nominations that are currently pending before the Senate and the fact that we have a very serious vacancy crisis in the United States. We have a challenge based upon the unwillingness of the majority to put on the floor a number of judges who are pending and have been pending for many months.

This is a serious problem, and it is causing problems in States all around the country. We have critical challenges in performing our role of helping the judiciary—that independent branch of government—to function.

I would be wrong not to mention Judge Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court, which has now been pending before the Senate for 7 months. This is the longest period in U.S. history that a Supreme Court nominee has been pending not only for an up-or-down vote but also pending to have hearings on the qualifications of this judge. This judge would absolutely bring great qualifications. In fact, nobody has had more Federal judicial experience. Yet we refuse to move forward, to go through a process that is spelled out in the Constitution in the sense that we are supposed to make sure that the judicial branch has a full complement of judges.

For 7 months now, the Supreme Court has not been functioning as was intended by the Constitution. The Supreme Court is missing a Justice, and because of that vacancy, cases have resulted in 4-to-4 tie votes. As a result of those 4-to-4 decisions, we lack a national precedent in cases that could guide lower courts, bringing resolutions that are necessary for ordinary Americans who go before our justice system seeking justice as was intended in the Constitution. It is challenging in providing certainty to businesses. It is challenging in providing the regular course of many Americans' lives.

The Supreme Court's next term begins in just 2 weeks. It seems that we will be out in recess, but they again will be trying to do the business intended of the Court. I do not believe there is any justifiable reason that this distinguished body should not confirm Justice Garland or frankly even go through the process of having hearings and ultimately a vote.

The Supreme Court was intended to have nine Justices. We are not doing our job. Justice Garland would not be the first to be confirmed in the month of September and not the first to be confirmed during a Presidential election. In fact, a total of 13 Supreme Court Justices have been confirmed in the month of September, including Chief Justice Roberts, William Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, and Sandra Day O'Connor.

This inaction of ours is putting the Supreme Court at a disadvantage. The

disadvantage is not to the Supreme Court; it is actually ours as the American people. Across the country, though, we know that Federal judges at other levels of the judiciary are facing a real crisis. They are overworked and are understaffed because of a judicial vacancy crisis.

We now face 90 judicial vacancies in our courts across the country, and 34 of them have actually been declared judicial emergencies. This is not a subjective declaration; this is an objective declaration. Right now, in the United States of America, there are 34 judicial emergencies.

In contrast to previous administrations, by the end of September, 2008, in the last year of the Bush administration, Democrats had reduced those vacancies—not where we are right now with 90 judicial vacancies—all the way down to 34.

In addition to Judge Garland's Supreme Court nomination, 30 nominations are currently pending on the Senate Executive Calendar, all except two of whom were voted out of committee by unanimous vote in a bipartisan manner. This includes 20 district court nominees that were put forth in bipartisan spirit.

There are nominees pending on the Executive Calendar from States including Tennessee, New Jersey, New York, California, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Hawaii, Utah, Massachusetts, Maryland, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Indiana, North Dakota, South Carolina, and Idaho. These are red States and blue States and purple States. These are our States here in our country.

I believe it is time to act on people who are well-qualified. I believe it is time for us to act on people who have bipartisan support—names that have come with recommendations by Republicans and Democrats, two of whom were approved by voice vote and all of whom, except for two, were approved by voice vote.

Two weeks ago, I joined with several of my colleagues all of whom came to the Senate floor to ask for consent for the Senate to begin voting on nominees pending on the Senate Executive Calendar. Senators have the right to vote yes or no on those nominees, but we believe they should be at least brought to the Senate floor for a vote.

In rejecting our requests, Senate Republicans made the counteroffer for the Senate to vote on a package of nominees. At that time they were skipping over the next two in line. I know there has been more discussion about that, but the reality is, I cannot support skipping one of the longest standing judicial nominees, Judge Julien Neals in New Jersey, where there is now a judicial emergency, where the people who are suffering—I don't know what their political backgrounds are, but these are business people, these are citizens who are now facing unbelievably long waits as a result of these judicial emergencies.

Nominations are from red and blue States. This is a time when we should act in a way that belies the partisan rancor that is so often associated with this body. By voting on these nominees, the Senate would follow the regular order, something many of us are calling for, regardless of who is in power on the Senate floor. We should be moving on the longest pending nominees on the floor.

Mr. President, I rise today to make a request, to humbly ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 359, 362, 363, 364, 459, 460, and 461; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that 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 to the nominations; that any related statements 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?

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Senator from New Jersey and I had a similar exchange a couple of weeks ago. As I pointed out then, the Senate has treated President Obama fairly with respect to his judicial nominations.

As of now, the Senate has already confirmed 329 of President Obama's judicial nominees. That is more judicial nominees confirmed than President Bush had during all of his 8 years. I will be objecting shortly, but we have been entering into agreements to process additional nominees on a bipartisan basis. Our Democratic colleagues objected to the last proposal I made a couple of weeks ago, but I am prepared to offer another one. My proposal includes many of the nominees who were included in the proposal from the junior Senator from New Jersey. It would include a judicial nominee from Tennessee, two nominations from Pennsylvania, and a Utah nomination.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider individually the following nominations at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader: Calendar Nos. 359, 460, 461, and 569; that there be 30 minutes for debate only on each nomination equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time on the respective nomination, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination, with no other business in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have not been in the Senate that long, but when I came to the Senate, there were just

months left when the Democrats were in the majority. I am sure, as the pendulum swings back and forth, I will be in the majority again and I may have a chance to show true to what I am about to say, but I cannot imagine that I would support what I see going on right now if the Democrats were in the majority.

When I read the Constitution, it makes no claim to political parties or tit for tat or that we should have one President who gets a certain number of nominations versus another President getting another number of nominations. Should we add up the number of Republican Presidents over the last century and Democratic Presidents over the last century and somehow compare the number of judges? That was not the intention of the Constitution.

There is a branch of government independent of ours that we are strangling right now through our inaction. Any objective understanding of the functioning of the American Government should clearly demonstrate that one branch should not strangle the operations of another, undermining what is clearly in the best interests of the people. This is not a partisan tit for tat—Bush had this many, Obama had this many; this is about the fact that we have a proliferation of judicial emergencies and that our very economy is being undermined because businesses can't get a fair hearing before the judicial branch. It actually is written clearly, the idea of having a justice system that works in a timely fashion. This seems to be an affront to what the purpose of this body is as spelled out in the Constitution.

I can't go with a partisan tit for tat—that is just not in my blood—on an issue that has been so fundamentally spelled out in the Constitution. We are measuring how many Bush had versus how many Obama had. Clearly, there are so many more vacancies that happened to come through the course under the Obama administration—90 vacancies versus what we had in the Bush administration, which was significantly less.

It would be one thing if these nominations were clearly partisan, but these nominations are coming from red States and blue States. They are coming from Republican Senators—recommendations to the President, mind you—and Democratic Senators.

If we are going to indulge in a partisan analysis of this, the unanimous consent request offered by the Republican leader is for States that are red and purple States.

I represent New Jersey. I have the longest—or second longest—pending judge on the floor, a qualified judge with an incredible history of service and sacrifice to country and community. This is a judge who happens to be African American in a State that urgently needs diversity on the bench as well.

I heard a lot of talk when I first got here—and again, I am new—about how

important regular order is. Why are we skipping judges and not going through the regular order?

I have tremendous respect for the majority leader and the pressures he faces on a daily basis, but this I cannot understand. When I read the Constitution, I cannot understand why this body is strangling the functioning of the other body and why my State is dealing with this judicial emergency, unnecessarily so. When I came here, I was instructed on what to do, and I have been following regular order to fill this seat in New Jersey, so I respectfully object to the majority leader's request for unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection has been heard to the modification.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, as I said earlier, Julien Neals is someone whom I was proud to recommend to President Obama. Julien Neals is right there with the next jurist, Edward Stanton from Tennessee. They are well-qualified jurists who are the only two African Americans on the long list of the next 15. Both of these men have demonstrated skill, earned distinction, and they have incredible legal careers.

Right now, the second longest nomination pending on the floor is Judge Neals, who was first nominated over a year ago—in fact, 19 months ago. He has been nominated to fill what is now a judicial emergency, as I stated, which means more specifically that the caseload is extraordinarily high, that other good public servants in our State are doing their best to keep up but cannot, and the course of justice is being perverted.

The people of New Jersey deserve better from us as a body, and this seat should be filled. It is an act of simple justice. It is an act of mercy at this point.

A hearing was held on his nomination in September of 2015, and his nomination was passed out of committee in November of 2015. Since that time, Judge Neals' nomination has been sidelined by this body.

Judge Neals has incredibly strong qualifications, and more than that, this is a man I know. I know his family. I have seen up close and personal the sacrifices he has made. It is no surprise that the American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary has unanimously rated Judge Neals as "well qualified" to the district court. He received the highest possible ranking.

Judge Neals has extensive legal experience, a distinguished judicial career, an unwavering commitment to justice, as well as private sector experience. As an attorney, Judge Neals worked in public service, which is where I knew him, but before that in a distinguished

private practice. He has most recently been a county councilman in Bergen County. I know a county executive there who raves about him but understands the higher calling and aspirations he has to be a federal district court judge.

Judge Neals has an impressive breadth of judicial experience. He graduated from Morehouse College and Emory University School of Law. He started his career as a law clerk on the New Jersey Superior Court. Later, he served as the chief judge of the Newark Municipal Court. That is how I got to know him.

Judge Neals also has an unwavering commitment to justice and a balanced view. He is a moderate man. At a time when our Nation is working to address so many complicated issues, I believe we need this man on the bench. I believe he would make all of us proud—not Republicans or Democrats but Americans. Judge Neals understands issues. He understands scholarship. He has demonstrated his worth, his aptitude, and his thoughtfulness. This is the kind of guy I think all of us would want on the bench. There is no credible reason why we are not moving forward besides partisanship. I just can't see it.

So I rise again to ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations.

Regular order would mean that we would go to these two judges who happen to be qualified African Americans, and regular order would bring us to these longstanding men who have been sitting on the sidelines now for well over a year.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 359 and 362; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that 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 to the nominations; that any related statements 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?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I am grateful for the time. I am hoping that in the intervening hours and days we are here in Washington, DC, we can give some attention to this profound obligation we have of keeping the functioning of the three branches of government and perhaps solve this impasse.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR MURDER VICTIMS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims which occurs in just a few days on September 25.

In 2007, the Congress passed the resolution designating the National Day of Remembrance and affirming two central truths. First, the murder of a loved one is an exceptionally difficult and devastating experience for that family, and, second, that support services are very important in helping victims' friends and families as they cope with the grief and loss.

Today in Washington we have family members who can attest to the devastation of losing a loved one. They are mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and other parts of the family, each of whom have lost a loved one to violence.

They have come together to form, in this case, a Philadelphia-based violence prevention group called Mothers In Charge. I cannot imagine the pain they suffer, but the sad truth is, their ranks grow every day in our country, where about 16,000 people are murdered each year, including over 600 just in Pennsylvania, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Around two-thirds of these murders are committed with firearms.

These families know all the statistics, but the loved ones they lost aren't statistics, they are people and members of their family, and we need to remember that.

I came to the floor last week to talk about a particularly violent day in 1 city, Philadelphia, PA, in which 10 people were shot in 1 day and 5 were killed. Over the weekend, 5 more were killed and 14 wounded—just this past weekend. Two of those wounded were police officers who were targeted during a shooting rampage in Philadelphia that left another five wounded at that location.

The families and friends of the victims, like those who are with us in Washington today, will never be the same because they lost someone unique and special, someone who was the subject of their love and attention, someone whose future they invested in, believed in, and dreamed about until it was stolen away.

The resolution I referred to earlier, designating the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, which passed the Senate in 2007, reminds us of our obligation to recognize the loss these families live with every single day.

The great recording artist Bruce Springsteen, after September 11, wrote a number of songs that referred to that horrific day and how the country was dealing with it. One song he wrote was

called "You're Missing." I will not go through the lyrics, but the refrain was just that, "you're missing." At one point in the song he says:

You're missing when I turn out the lights
You're missing when I close my eyes—

And then he says—
You're missing when I see the sunrise.

That is the only way I can understand what these families have gone through. That person is missing from their lives every moment of every day, no matter where they are, whether they are falling asleep or waking up or leading their lives. So we have an obligation to remember those they lost and remember those who are in fact missing from the lives of those we think about today.

The second part of this resolution credits the support services that help grieving families. Facing pain and loss, families often need lots of help, whether that is counseling or crisis intervention or legal assistance or other services. This is also something the Philadelphia-based group Mothers In Charge know something about. These mothers took their pain and turned it into a force for good. They advocated for those affected by violence, and they provided counseling and grief support for those victims' families. They also work proactively to prevent violence by intervening with at-risk young people and working with elected officials and community leaders to create safer neighborhoods.

Today, as we commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, we also express deep gratitude for the critically important work Mothers In Charge and their allied organizations are doing to prevent future tragedies.

As we commemorate the National Day of Remembrance, we must also talk about the types of weapons that took so many lives in the first place and that take more lives every day, firearms. About two-thirds of those 16,000 annual murders are committed using firearms. Tragically, the executive director of Mothers In Charge, Dorothy Johnson Speight, who joins us here today in Washington, knows something about this. Dorothy's son was shot and killed in a dispute over a parking space—a senseless murder of a good and innocent soul. There is no weapon as widely available and as dangerously lethal as a gun, of course, and if Dorothy's work has taught us anything, it is that when tragic murders occur, they are not occasions for grief alone but also a call to action.

That is why I will continue to advocate for commonsense gun reform—from expanding background checks to banning military-style weapons and large-capacity magazines, to the passing of legislation to close loopholes that allow suspected terrorists and violent hate criminals to acquire firearms. All of these measures will make us safer. As Dorothy has often said, gun violence is a public health crisis

with more than 33,000 people killed by the pull of a trigger each year in the United States of America. If we are to do our duty on behalf of our constituents, on behalf of hard-working members of Mothers In Charge and the countless others who have lost a loved one to gun violence as we approach the National Day of Remembrance, we must act to make our communities safer.

Thank you, Mr. President, and 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. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:44 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325 ripen at 5:15 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 39

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 11:15 a.m. on Wednesday, September 21, Senator PAUL or his designee be recognized to offer a motion to discharge S.J. Res. 39; that there be up to 3 hours of debate, equally divided between the proponents and the opponents, with Senator PAUL controlling 30 minutes of the proponents' time and Senator MURPHY controlling 15 minutes of the proponents' time; and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote in relation to the motion to discharge.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

(The remarks of Mr. LEAHY pertaining to the introduction of S. 3359 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. LEAHY. 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. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, it has been 187 days since President Obama nominated Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court. That is a long time. Since March 16, we have been waiting for a hearing. It is really extraordinary when you think how long we have seen the third branch of government unable to fully function because of inaction in the U.S. Senate.

Republicans have a constitutional duty to uphold, and they have not done their job. We all have that constitutional duty. We are standing at the ready. We are willing to remain here in session until we can get this done. We need a hearing now. We need to get Merrick Garland on the Court before the Court begins its new session on October 1. Unfortunately, we are likely to leave—maybe at the end of this week or next week—without a hearing.

The Republican leadership's inability to consider Garland's nomination puts the Court at frequent risk of deadlock, which is not in the interest of families or of those whose interests are coming before the U.S. Supreme Court. It is a shame because Merrick Garland is a uniquely qualified jurist. In fact, Republican colleagues have noted his qualifications in the past, but the reason Republicans haven't acted is simple, unfortunately, and that is a political calculation.

When we look at the Court on October 1, when they are seated, it will look like this, with a vacant chair. The question is, Whom are they holding the chair for? I envision behind this chair a shadow of the Republican nominee—someone who is standing behind there. And it is clear that Republicans in the Senate are holding this seat open for Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, in hopes that he will be the next President.

I am not sure about you, but when it comes to filling this empty seat, "Celebrity Apprentice: Supreme Court Edition" is not a show I want to watch, and it is certainly not a show that the American people will benefit from.

Many of my Republican colleagues also recognize that the nominee for President on their side poses a risk to our judicial system. When the Republican nominee attacked a Federal judge's impartiality on the basis of his parents' ethnicity, the majority leader said he "couldn't disagree more with a statement like that."

Why then would he leave this seat open for that person to fill? How can you justify allowing someone to nominate a Justice to the highest Court in the land when it is clear that nominee has no respect for the judiciary as an institution?

Another one of my Republican colleagues described the Republican nomi-

nee's comments—one of many of his comments, but described one set of comments as "the literal definition of racism." Yet that person is supporting Donald Trump, and they are holding a seat open for this person who has said things that are literally the definition of racism. This colleague actually at some point came out on the record as not supporting the nominee, and he has been joined by other Republican Senators. Yet they potentially keep a seat open for this person to fill on the highest Court in the land.

Another Member of this body has referred to the Republican nominee as "a pathological liar" who "doesn't know the difference between truth and lies." Senate Republican colleagues can't justify holding up Judge Garland's confirmation, but all of my Republican colleagues are doing that, hoping that Mr. Trump is the person who gets to nominate this Justice in January. It makes no sense.

They all remain unified in their opposition to Judge Garland, who is one of the most qualified and well-respected judges of this generation. They are unified in not moving forward, even though many of them have said very positive things about him in the past, and I would expect to see that in the future. I have to wonder what exactly those Senators—especially the ones who are opposing their party's nominee—are waiting for because it is obvious to me that just about every Member of this body believes that Judge Garland would do an excellent job on the Court.

I call on all Republican colleagues to do their job to hold a hearing to bring this nomination to the floor as quickly as possible, to not hold open a spot on the highest Court in the land for someone who many of them have been running to distance themselves from.

This is a very serious issue. We talk a lot about the Constitution around here. We have three branches of government, and one right now cannot fully function in the public's interests on behalf of businesses, families, young people, older people, and children because they don't have the full membership of the Court. It is our job in the U.S. Senate to make sure they have all of the members present when the new Court sits, starting on October 1.

I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Do your job. Now is the time to do your job. The American people expect us to do our jobs. Do your job and don't hold a seat open for the Republican nominee, whom so many of you have expressed such displeasure for. It is time to do your job as the Republican majority in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO BECKY FLEESON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about a member of my staff who will soon be leaving. Becky Fleeson, our director of administration, is the embodiment of a servant leader. She is tenacious, she is dedicated, she is loyal, and she cares.

Becky is exactly the type of person you want batting for your team. For nearly a decade, I have been fortunate to have her on mine. Becky is more interested in getting the job done than in taking credit for it. She doesn't back down easily. She can be tough too. That is part of her job description, but if you want to know the truth, Becky is actually a bit of a softie.

She is also a bit of a prankster. Becky is usually someone you would trust with sensitive tasks without a second thought, but on April Fools' Day you can't trust her for a second. Take this year, for example, when Becky tried to convince us she was pregnant. Turned out she actually was and didn't know it at the time. Seems the Guy upstairs has a sense of humor as well.

Well, Becky would tell you her life has never been the same since she and her husband George welcomed little Winnie into their lives. Now they are preparing to welcome Baby Fleeson No. 2 in just a few months.

It has really been something to watch Becky mature over the years, from a fresh-faced college grad to a seasoned professional, honorary Kentuckian, and dedicated wife and mother. When confronted with hardship along the way, Becky has fought through with grace and with strength—and the support of her fellow McTeamers.

I know Becky loves her colleagues, I know Becky loves the Senate, but most of all, I know Becky loves her family. So when Becky told me she was ready to dedicate herself full time to raising her kids, I couldn't have been happier for her. We will all miss her good humor, her work ethic, and her integrity. And later this afternoon, we will look forward to celebrating her.

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. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

OBAMACARE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, in Washington, DC, today is just another day of bureaucratic rollouts, regulatory nightmares, and government overreach, but if you are in Colorado today, it is also sticker shock day because today the people of Colorado found out—thanks to the new numbers just confirmed by the Colorado Division of Insurance—that if you live in

that State, you are going to be paying, on average, an additional 20.4 percent for your health insurance this coming year under ObamaCare. That is the individual rate that was just confirmed for the 2017 plans—a 20.4-percent increase.

Remember the promises that were made when ObamaCare was put into law in the most partisan of fashions. The promise that if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor has been proven untrue. And if you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan has been proven untrue. Why do we know that? Because in Colorado alone, over the past 3 years, over 750,000 Coloradans have had their insurance plans canceled.

Let's just go through those numbers. Over 92,000 people with individual plans from UnitedHealthcare, Humana, Rocky Mountain Health Plans, and Anthem will be forced to find new plans in 2017. In May, UnitedHealthcare and Humana announced they were not going to be offering plans in Colorado at all. We have seen Aetna reduce significantly the number of plans they will be offering. We know the health care co-op in Colorado collapsed because it was unsustainable thanks to the way ObamaCare was designed, costing over 80,000 Coloradans their health insurance. Back in August of 2013, we saw hundreds of thousands more in Colorado lose their health insurance. That doesn't sound like a promise that has been kept to me. That is a promise that has been broken.

We also know ObamaCare promised it would reduce the premiums by \$2,500 per family. Yet here we are today talking about a 20.4-percent rate increase on the Colorado people alone. We know from studies that one-third of Colorado counties aren't even going to have a choice of more than one insurance provider to choose from. Despite the third ObamaCare promise that the people of this country would have more opportunities to buy different insurance products, more choice, more consumer insurance options, over one-third of the counties in this country will have only one choice or perhaps even fewer.

That is why two pieces of legislation introduced in recent days by Senator McCAIN and Senator SASSE are so important. What do they do? Senator SASSE has introduced legislation that says if an insurance increase is more than 10 percent, then you don't have to abide by the individual mandate forcing people to pay these outrageous increases thanks to ObamaCare. It also says, if you are paying 8 percent of your income in insurance premiums, you don't have to abide by the mandate of ObamaCare. It gives people the ability to actually have that financial certainty they are looking for—the certainty ObamaCare promised but failed to deliver.

Senator McCAIN's legislation says, if a county has one or fewer health insurance options to choose from, they also will receive relief from ObamaCare's individual mandate.

These are important because in States such as Colorado, the government is forcing you to pay at least 20.4 percent more if you are in the individual market. That is the average rate increase. While the 20.4-percent increase in the 2017 plans is certainly a significant amount, that is on top of last year's rate increases. If you live on the Western Slope of Colorado, last year you saw average premium rates in the individual market increase by 25.8 percent. One of the most expensive markets in the country is the Western Slope of Colorado—the mountains of our State.

We have not been able to break down what it means for the Western Slope. That individual impact might even be higher for Colorado's Western Slope. We don't have those numbers broken down because it was just released today—this massive increase under ObamaCare—but if you just take the statewide average of the individual plan with a 20.4 percent, along with the 25.8 percent from last year, that is an almost 50-percent increase in insurance over the past 2 years. In 2017, it will increase 20.4 percent, on average, and this past year it increased 25.8 percent. That is a nearly 50-percent increase.

The people of Colorado can't afford ObamaCare. ObamaCare can't keep its promises. We have to find real solutions for the American people, and I urge the President to come forward with the acknowledgment that his signature law is a signature failure.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. AYOTTE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, in order to have a quick discussion with colleagues about the state of play on the short-term CR, we will push the vote back a few minutes.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:10 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 5:39 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. GARDNER).

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we just had another good conversation on

this side with our Members and are now prepared to proceed to the bill that we used as a shell for the CR-Zika legislation.

I might say to all of our Members that we continue to work toward an agreement on the legislation. We hope to have that completed and available for review very soon. With a little cooperation on both sides, I think we can get that finished and begin the debate.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 516. H.R. 5325, an act making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Orrin G. Hatch, Shelley Moore Capito, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Marco Rubio, Cory Gardner, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, Steve Daines, Daniel Coats, John Thune, Thad Cochran, Susan M. Collins.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325, an act making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) would vote "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 89, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 144 Leg.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Collins	Heitkamp
Ayotte	Corker	Hirono
Baldwin	Cornyn	Hoeven
Barrasso	Cotton	Inhofe
Bennet	Crapo	Isakson
Blumenthal	Daines	King
Blunt	Donnelly	Kirk
Booker	Durbin	Klobuchar
Boozman	Enzi	Leahy
Boxer	Ernst	Manchin
Brown	Feinstein	Markley
Burr	Fischer	McCain
Cantwell	Flake	McCaskill
Capito	Franken	McConnell
Cardin	Gardner	Menendez
Carper	Gillibrand	Merkley
Casey	Graham	Mikulski
Cassidy	Grassley	Moran
Coats	Hatch	Murkowski
Cochran	Heinrich	Murphy

Murray	Sanders	Tillis
Nelson	Schatz	Toomey
Peters	Schumer	Udall
Portman	Scott	Vitter
Reed	Shaheen	Warner
Reid	Shelby	Warren
Risch	Stabenow	Whitehouse
Roberts	Sullivan	Wicker
Rounds	Tester	Wyden
Rubio	Thune	

NAYS—7

Cruz	Lee	Sasse
Heller	Paul	
Lankford	Perdue	

NOT VOTING—4

Coons	Kaine
Johnson	Sessions

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 89, the nays are 7.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Montana.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, due to a prior commitment, I regret I was not present to vote on H.R. 5985, the VA Expiring Authorities Act of 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted in support of the legislation.

KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL OF REMEMBRANCE ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to applaud Senate passage of H.R. 1475, the Korean War Veterans Memorial Act, which is the House companion to the bill I introduced with Senator BOOZMAN, S. 1982. This legislation honors Americans who died during the Korean war by adding a wall of remembrance to the Korean War Veterans Memorial without the use of public funds.

The Korean war, often referred to as the Forgotten War, began on June 25, 1950, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a surprise attack on the neighboring Republic of Korea. Against the expectations of the North Koreans and the Soviet Union, the United States immediately provided military support to South Korea, and the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution, UNSC resolution 82, demanding a North Korean withdrawal to the 38th Parallel. The conflict ended with the signing of an armistice on July 27, 1953. By the time this armistice was signed, 36,575 Americans had sacrificed their lives, 103,284 were wounded, 7,140 were captured, and 664 were missing.

To honor the Americans who served during the Korean war, Congress passed a law on October 28, 1986, au-

thorizing the construction of a Korean War Veterans Memorial. This Korean War Veterans Memorial, however, does not honor the Americans who died during the war by displaying the names of the fallen.

The wall of remembrance H.R. 1475 authorizes will list the names of members of the Armed Forces of the United States who died in theater in the Korean war, as well as the number of servicemembers who were wounded in action, or who were prisoners of war during the Korean war. The wall may also list the number of members of the Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army, the Republic of Korean Armed Forces, and other nations of the United Nations Command who were killed in action, wounded in action, are listed as missing in action, or were prisoners of war.

Building a wall of remembrance to honor the 36,575 Americans who died in the Korean war would not deviate from the norm: many countries who fought in the war also honor their fallen, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall contains the name of Americans who died during that war. Korean war veterans' memorials that display the names of a nation's fallen soldiers can be found across the globe in the 22 UN coalition countries. The Republic of Korea even displays the personal names of the 36,575 Americans who died during the war. These names are etched on bronze tablets and listed by home State. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial's wall also lists the names of those who died in the theater of its respective war. It has also been augmented with the additions of the three-soldier sculpture and Nurse Memorial.

The addition of the wall of remembrance would also not cost any taxpayer dollars. Korean war veterans who have campaigned for this wall have also been raising money for the wall's construction. This legislation would not allow any Federal funds to be used for the construction of this wall. Construction, therefore, would be privately financed.

I want to thank Senator BOOZMAN and the other Senators who cosponsored S. 1982 and have helped me to pass this legislation. I also want to thank my colleagues in the House of Representatives—especially Representatives SAM JOHNSON, CHARLIE RANGEL, and JOHN CONYERS—for their service to our Nation during the Korean war and for their tireless efforts to honor their fellow servicemen and women. And finally, I want to thank the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation, Inc., for its support, on behalf of all Korean war veterans, to build this wall. Authorizing the construction of a wall of remembrance is just one way we can help ensure that those who died while serving our country in the "Forgotten War" are no longer forgotten.

HONORING CAPTAIN DAVE MELTON

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today I would like to honor the life of police captain Dave Melton, a law enforcement officer who served 17 years on the force of the Kansas City Police Department and was tragically killed on duty earlier this summer.

On Tuesday, July 19, Captain Melton joined officers in pursuit of suspected participants of a driveby shooting. Shortly after law enforcement arrived, the driver of the suspects' vehicle was apprehended. While following one of the other suspects, Captain Melton came under fire and suffered multiple gunshots. Captain Melton was then taken to the University of Kansas Medical Center where he ultimately died from his wounds.

Captain Melton was described by Kansas City, KS, Police Chief Terry Ziegler as someone who always chose to "lead from the front."

The brave sacrifices Captain Melton made to keep his community safe will not be forgotten.

Captain Melton's history of service, both to Kansas and our country, extends beyond his 17 years with the Kansas City Police Department. In addition to 9 years with the Wyandotte County Sheriff's Department, Captain Melton served in the Kansas Army National Guard as a soldier for more than a decade and then as an officer from 1997–2012. During the course of a military career that included a 15-month tour of duty in Iraq and a 13-month tour in Afghanistan, Melton earned the Bronze Star and numerous other honors.

Captain Melton's law enforcement colleagues remember him as an industrious and professional leader. Described as a goodhearted man who loved his family, Melton brought joy to those around him and helped those in need.

Dave Melton is survived by his son, David, two daughters, Sarah Wilt and Elizabeth, and girlfriend, Zeta Bates, who is expecting a child.

I join the Kansas City community and law enforcement offices around the country as we grieve the loss of this fallen hero and pray for the Melton family.

These feelings are tragically familiar. On May 18, I spoke on the Senate floor to remember and honor the life of Kansas City Police Detective Brad Lancaster, who was also killed on duty while responding to a call. Following Lancaster's death, it was Captain Melton that took the initiative to honor Detective Lancaster by establishing protocols for the memorial services of those killed on duty.

I stand with the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department as they work to mourn and recover from the loss of both of these men.

Congress and community leaders must continue working to better protect the men and women who take great risk to protect the rest of us.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING PEA RIDGE
NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

• Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, in honor of the National Park Service's 100th birthday year, I want to recognize Pea Ridge National Military Park in northwest Arkansas. Pea Ridge National Military Park is one of the best preserved Civil War battlefields in the United States and its history deserves to be shared.

The Battle of Pea Ridge took place in March of 1862 when 26,000 Union and Confederate soldiers fought for 2 straight days. The battle was hard-fought, but in the end, the Union forces, led by General Samuel Curtis, were victorious, and the Union won complete control of the State of Missouri.

Pea Ridge National Military Park officially became part of the National Park system on July 20, 1956, thanks largely to the efforts of the Arkansas congressional delegation. And it was officially dedicated as a national park during the Nation's Civil War Centennial in 1963.

Today 4,300 acres of battlefield are preserved for visitors. The grounds include a recreation of the Elkhorn Tavern—an important landmark of the battle—as well as a visitors center and a museum. The park is also home to 2 and a half miles of the Trail of Tears, another important United States landmark.

Arkansas is a State full of rich history, and heritage and Pea Ridge National Military Park is a critical part of that history. If you find yourself in the picturesque Ozarks of northwest Arkansas this fall, take some time to drive through or walk the grounds of Pea Ridge National Military Park and see for yourself.●

REMEMBERING RODGER
McCONNELL

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a Vietnam war veteran who became an incredible hometown advocate for other veterans. Sadly, Rodger McConnell passed away on July 21, 2016, in Great Falls, MT.

Rodger served his country honorably during the Vietnam war, but like so many returning veterans, he struggled with PTSD and homelessness. Rodger was able to overcome these issues and went on to serve veterans in many ways. He helped create the Veterans Drug Treatment Court and acted as a mentor to the participants. He organized the annual homeless Veterans Stand Down. He also helped bring a replica of the Vietnam Memorial to Great Falls.

Rodger was a selfless, caring individual who will be missed by the entire community. Because of his commitment to veterans, his presence will continue on through so many programs that he created. One that was very dear

to him was "On Point: Veterans Talk Radio," a radio program for veterans that he hosted on the local public radio station. Some of these interviews with wartime veterans will be submitted to the Veterans History Project through the Library of Congress. Rodger may not be with us any longer, but his talks with veterans will be preserved for all to hear.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARGARET
BEESON

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Dr. Margaret Beeson is a generous and inspiring doctor, who inexhaustibly serves her profession, her community, and the world with compassion and integrity. She is a strong yet humble leader, whose healing presence has awakened and nurtured souls from all walks of life. She is a consummate professional, conducting every aspect of her life with dignity, decorum, and propriety.

Her brilliance is not only found in her intellect, but in the dynamic legacy she has created. Her vision is manifest in the thousands of patients she has cared for, the myriad of doctors she has mentored, and is embodied throughout her very essence.

Dr. Beeson is a loving mother and an enduring friend, generous of time, spirit, and compassion.

She has served as a medic in the U.S. Navy and was selected to participate in an elite naval medical corps training program. This was a San Diego Naval Hospital based PA program. She trained for 6 months there and subsequently worked for a year in the outpatient clinic. She ran a chronic care clinic treating patients with high blood pressure and diabetes. She was a licensed vocational nurse, rotating through five hospitals, and traveled to India, the Netherlands, and England attaining her midwifery license. She became a naturopathic physician in 1989 and is associate clinic faculty at Bastyr University in Seattle.

Dr. Beeson is the founder and medical director of the Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic in Billings, MT. Her clinic in the heart of Billings is also an accredited residency program through the Naturopathic Education and Research Consortium, providing opportunities for graduates of Naturopathic medical schools in a primary care setting. She has worked diligently to create collaborative relationships between conventional and traditional medicine. Additionally, she is the president of the board of directors of the Paul Gardner Veterans Pain Relief Foundation, an organization dedicated to facilitate access to nonnarcotic pain treatments for veterans by providing financial resources for access to safe, effective treatments.

Earlier this year, the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians named Dr. Beeson its "2016 Physician of the Year." Dr. Beeson was selected for her strong leadership, authenticity, and great mentoring skills. The role of

mentor is one she is particularly proud of, as her clinic runs a residency for oncology in collaboration with St. Vincent Healthcare's Frontier Cancer Center.●

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1886. A bill to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114-354).

S. 2644. A bill to reauthorize the Federal Communications Commission for fiscal years 2017 and 2018, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114-355).

By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 3270. A bill to prevent elder abuse and exploitation and improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases.

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. SCOTT (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 3353. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from carrying out seizures relating to a structuring transaction unless the property to be seized derived from an illegal source or the funds were structured for the purpose of concealing the violation of another criminal law or regulation, to require notice and a post-seizure hearing for such seizures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 3354. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude income attributable to certain real property from gross income; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WICKER, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LANFORD, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 3355. A bill to prohibit funding for the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in the event the United Nations Security Council adopts a resolution that obligates the United States or affirms a purported obligation of the United States to refrain from actions that would run counter to the object and purpose of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 3356. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit individuals eligible for Indian Health Service assistance to qualify for health savings accounts; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 3357. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide an additional tool to prevent certain frauds against veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. VITTER):

S. 3358. A bill to provide special rules for the use of retirement funds for relief relating to severe flooding in the Mississippi Delta; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 3359. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize grants for heroin and methamphetamine task forces; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 3360. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to support the access of marginalized youth to sexual health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 3361. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish an interagency coordinating committee on pulmonary hypertension, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 3362. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to support fire safety education programs on college campuses; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. KIRK, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 3363. A bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 3364. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to accept the donation of facilities and related improvements for use by the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL:

S. 3365. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the treatment of pension and employee benefit plans maintained by tribal governments; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. Res. 572. A resolution designating November 5, 2016, as National Bison Day; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 437

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 437, a bill to provide for congressional approval of national monuments and restrictions on the use of national monuments, to establish requirements for the declaration of marine national monuments, and for other purposes.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 1148

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1148, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the distribution of additional residency positions, and for other purposes.

S. 1559

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1559, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 1679

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1679, a bill to amend the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 to require that certain buildings and personal property be covered by flood insurance, and for other purposes.

S. 1714

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1714, a bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to transfer certain funds to the Multiemployer Health Benefit Plan and the 1974 United Mine Workers of America Pension Plan, and for other purposes.

S. 2216

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2216, a bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 2448

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2448, a bill to provide for the appointment of additional Federal bankruptcy judges, and for other purposes.

S. 2489

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2489, a bill to ensure that persons who form corporations in the United States disclose the beneficial owners of those corpora-

tions, in order to prevent the formation of corporations with hidden owners, stop the misuse of United States corporations by wrongdoers, and assist law enforcement in detecting, preventing, and punishing terrorism, money laundering, tax evasion, and other criminal and civil misconduct involving United States corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 2595

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2595, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 2645

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2645, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 2774

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2774, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income certain amounts realized on the disposition of property raised or produced by a student farmer, and for other purposes.

S. 2800

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2800, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide an exclusion from income for student loan forgiveness for students who have died or become disabled.

S. 2890

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2890, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of Christa McAuliffe.

S. 2989

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2989, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States merchant mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

S. 2997

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2997, a bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to commence proceedings related to the resiliency of critical telecommunications networks during times of emergency, and for other purposes.

S. 3065

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3065, a bill to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to invest in funding prevention and family services to help keep children safe and supported at home, to ensure that children in foster care are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like, and appropriate settings, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3065, *supra*.

S. 3179

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3179, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve and extend the credit for carbon dioxide sequestration.

S. 3198

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3198, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 3270

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3270, a bill to prevent elder abuse and exploitation and improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases.

S. 3297

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3297, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exemption to the individual mandate to maintain health coverage for certain individuals whose premium has increased by more than 10 percent, and for other purposes.

S. 3308

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3308, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit prescription drug plan sponsors and MA-PD organizations under the Medicare program from retroactively reducing payment on clean claims submitted by pharmacies.

S. RES. 199

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 199, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding establishing a National Strategic Agenda.

S. RES. 527

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 527, a resolution recognizing the 75th anniversary of the opening of the National Gallery of Art.

S. RES. 536

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 536, a resolution proclaiming the week of October 30 through November 5, 2016, as "National Obesity Care Week".

S. RES. 564

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 564, a resolution condemning North Korea's fifth nuclear test on September 9, 2016.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 3359. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize grants for heroin and methamphetamine task forces; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have come to this floor many times to speak about the toll the abuse of prescription opioids and heroin has taken on our communities. When I talk with Vermonters about this crisis, whether at our Judiciary Committee field hearings in Vermont or in conversations at kitchen tables or on street corners, I hear how opioid abuse destroys lives, tears apart families, and overwhelms communities.

As a lifelong Vermonter, I am proud of our small State. I see law enforcement and community leaders joining together. They have taken a real constructive approach to fighting addiction. They have created innovative and successful programs, such as the Rapid Intervention Community Court in Burlington and Project VISION in Rutland. The Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Vermont are working with schools and public health officials to help children affected by this epidemic. They are trying to keep them from being swept up into that world. Our local television stations are participating in public awareness campaigns. They are educating our citizens about drug abuse. These are the positive efforts that make me proud to be a Vermonter. But I am not just here to praise the good work in my State. I am here to work for my State and for all States that are coping with this drug addiction scourge—because all States are.

Earlier this year, Congress took an important step forward by passing the

Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA. This new law treats addiction as the public health crisis it is. I was proud to support this legislation in the Senate. But the final product fell short. CARA did not include the funding necessary to put its programs to work. The final legislation stripped out many of the best practices that were included in the Senate bill, including, among others, my provision to authorize the anti-heroin task force program I helped to establish. This provision was approved overwhelmingly by the Senate, and I thank my colleagues—Republicans and Democrats—who joined with me on that. But it was stripped out at the last minute by the House. That was really a shortsighted decision. It could hamper law enforcement agencies' ability to keep illegal opioids out of our communities.

So today I am introducing bipartisan legislation along with Senator GRASSLEY to help ensure that State and local law enforcement agencies can get the necessary funding and the support for anti-heroin task forces around the country. Our bill would authorize the Attorney General to provide grants to law enforcement agencies—those agencies that are engaged in statewide collaborative efforts to investigate and stop the unlawful trafficking of heroin, fentanyl, carfentanil, and prescription opioids. The bill also authorizes grants to support task forces to combat the trafficking of methamphetamines.

Our States are seeing an influx of powerful, deadly opioids that have never been seen by law enforcement before. Communities that have been struggling with heroin and prescription drug abuse are now encountering opioids such as fentanyl and carfentanil. What is so frightening about these is that they can kill the user even in small amounts. So I think we have a responsibility—all of us in Congress—to support smart policies and reduce the demand for these poisons. We must support targeted enforcement efforts to keep them out of our communities in the first place.

Now, I know these task forces work. Last month I heard from Vermont law enforcement officials who shared examples of how the Vermont Drug Task Force is helping to combat heroin trafficking in our State. The Vermont Drug Task Force has seen a significant increase in heroin investigations so far this year—up 70 percent from the same period last year. The task force has seized the equivalent of more than 94,000 bags of heroin this year alone, with a street value of more than \$1 million. Now, in an urban area that might not seem like much, but our State has 625,000 people. The largest city in our State has 38,000 people. We are being hammered by this.

But there is good news. The recent addition of five new investigative positions, as a result of Vermont's \$1.4 million anti-heroin task force grant, could not come at a more critical time. So this legislation will provide the anti-

heroin task force program with the resources they need to help more States, just like it is helping in Vermont.

I say this because we should know and the American public should know that our work in Congress on opioid abuse and addiction did not end when we passed CARA. In fact, I would say that it only began. If we are serious about combating drug addiction—and all of us will say we are against it, but if we are really serious—then we have to invest in our communities. Let us build on what we know is working. Let us give law enforcement agencies the tools they need to do their job effectively.

In my State of Vermont, I spend considerable time every month. I was there just a couple of days ago. We are a special State because you can talk with people. My wife Marcelle and I will talk with people coming out of church on Sunday or in the grocery store or just walking down the street to pick up our paper. Some of the stories we hear are so sad. We hear from people we have known for years—wonderful families, pillars of the community—who will tell us of their son or daughter suffering from opioid and other addictions. The saddest, though, are those people we have known who have lost a member of their family because of the powerful new drugs coming on the market.

I saw a lot of terrible things in this area when I was a prosecutor, but nothing like what we are seeing today. So let us look at the legislation that Senator GRASSLEY and I are introducing. Let us stop trying to fight this with slogans and goodwill. Let us fight it with real tools.

Again, I would add, let us not just rely—any of us—on saying we are against this. Let us do something. It is too bad the House stripped out much of what we had done well in our bill, but there is no reason why we cannot fight to put it back in. There is no reason why we cannot get the funding necessary. This will only work if we have the tools and the money.

I know that in our State it is not just law enforcement but the faith community, educators, parents, Boys & Girls Clubs, and medical professionals who are all working together. It is not just numbers. Every one of us—almost every one of us in our State—knows people who have suffered. I want to go back home and say that we are doing something to help them.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 3364. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to accept the donation of facilities and related improvements for use by the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the CHIP IN for Vets Act.

Lengthy delays and cost overruns have impeded construction of new

health care facilities for our veterans, raising roadblocks between them and the quality health care they have earned. These delays and overruns have not only negatively impacted our veterans' access to care, but also our nation's confidence in their health care system.

My legislation would create a 5-year pilot program that would allow communities to contribute real property toward on-time and on-budget construction projects. Partnerships between veterans, their local communities, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, will allow previously appropriated funds to be put to good use. Through five initial projects, community leaders and private sector experts can lead construction projects from start to finish and test a model that can be expanded into the future.

State or local authorities, and specified non-federal entities, will be eligible to partner with the VA. Entities would comply with the Department of Veterans Affairs' standards, except to the extent the Secretary determines otherwise, as permitted by law. Eligible projects would be limited to those for which funding has already been appropriated, or those on the VA's long-term planning list. The VA's financial obligation for these projects would be limited to the amount previously appropriated. The VA would select the project and community partner, but it would not influence, control, or be involved with either the management or construction of these projects. The Secretary would include information regarding real property and improvements donated under this legislation in the budget submitted to Congress. The Comptroller General would also submit to Congress a report on the donation agreements entered into under this legislation not less frequently than once every 2 years until its termination.

A significant amount of work went into revising this bill. I very much appreciate the support of Senator FEINSTEIN, who serves as lead cosponsor. Chairmen ISAKSON and ALEXANDER are supportive of this legislation. They, and the members of their staff, have been extraordinarily helpful through this process. The Department of Veterans Affairs staff has also been actively involved in the crafting of this legislation. They fully support it. The Congressional Budget Office has stated this bill would have an "insignificant impact on direct spending," or less than \$500,000 total.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this common sense, bipartisan legislation. Thank you.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 572—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 5, 2016, AS NATIONAL BISON DAY

Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. INHOFE,

Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 572

Whereas on May 9, 2016, the North American bison was adopted as the national mammal of the United States;

Whereas bison are considered a historical symbol of the United States;

Whereas bison were integrally linked with the economic and spiritual lives of many Indian tribes through trade and sacred ceremonies;

Whereas there are more than 60 Indian tribes participating in the Intertribal Buffalo Council;

Whereas numerous members of Indian tribes are involved in bison restoration on tribal land;

Whereas members of Indian tribes have a combined herd on more than 1,000,000 acres of tribal land;

Whereas the Intertribal Buffalo Council is a tribal organization incorporated pursuant to section 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the "Indian Reorganization Act") (25 U.S.C. 477);

Whereas bison can play an important role in improving the types of grasses found in landscapes to the benefit of grasslands;

Whereas a bison has been depicted on the official seal of the Department of the Interior since 1912;

Whereas bison hold significant economic value for private producers and rural communities;

Whereas, as of 2012, the Department of Agriculture estimates that 162,110 head of bison were under the stewardship of private producers, creating jobs, and contributing to the food security of the United States by providing a sustainable and healthy meat source;

Whereas a bison is portrayed on 2 State flags;

Whereas the bison has been adopted by 3 States as the official mammal or animal of those States;

Whereas the buffalo nickel played an important role in modernizing the currency of the United States;

Whereas several sports teams have the bison as a mascot, which highlights the iconic significance of bison in the United States;

Whereas a small group of ranchers helped save bison from extinction in the late 1800s by gathering the remaining bison of the diminished herds;

Whereas on December 8, 1905, William Hornaday, Theodore Roosevelt, and others formed the American Bison Society in response to the near extinction of bison in the United States;

Whereas on October 11, 1907, the American Bison Society sent 15 captive-bred bison from the New York Zoological Park, now known as the "Bronx Zoo", to the first big game refuge in the United States, now known as the "Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge";

Whereas in 2005, the American Bison Society was reestablished, bringing together bison ranchers, managers from Indian tribes, Federal and State agencies, conservation organizations, and natural and social scientists from the United States, Canada, and Mexico to create a vision for the North American bison in the 21st century;

Whereas there are bison herds in National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, and National Forests;

Whereas there are bison in State-managed herds across 11 States;

Whereas there is a growing effort to celebrate and officially recognize the historical, cultural, and economic significance of the North American bison to the heritage of the United States; and

Whereas members of Indian tribes, bison producers, conservationists, sportsmen, educators, and other public and private partners have celebrated the annual National Bison Day since 2012 and are committed to continuing this tradition annually on the first Saturday of November: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates November 5, 2016, the first Saturday of November, as National Bison Day; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 5079. Mr. SASSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 5325, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 5080. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 5325, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 5081. Mr. DAINES (for Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 3076, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish caskets and urns for burial in cemeteries of States and tribal organizations of veterans without next of kin or sufficient resources to provide for caskets or urns, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 5079. Mr. SASSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 5325, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

PROHIBITION ON CITIZENSHIP FOR ALIENS ORDERED DEPORTED AND DIGITIZATION OF FINGERPRINT RECORDS

SEC. _____. (a)(1) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or funds collected and deposited into the Immigration Examinations Fee Account may be used to carry out any activity to grant United States citizenship to any individual subject to a final order of deportation.

(2) This subsection shall be in effect until December 9, 2016.

(b) The Secretary of Homeland Security is authorized and directed—

(1) to set aside such sums as necessary from the Immigration Examinations Fee Account to complete the digitization of fingerprints of aliens who were fugitives, convicted criminals, subject to deportation orders, or had other derogatory information dating back to 1990 under the project known as the Historical Fingerprint Enrollment Program; and

(2) to store such digitized fingerprints along with relating biographical data in the Department of Homeland Security's IDENT database.

SA 5080. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the bill H.R. 5325, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. No funds may be made available under this title for foreign assistance to any country that was a significant exporter of illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, or fentanyl precursor chemicals during the calendar year preceding the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 5081. Mr. DAINES (for Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 3076, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish caskets and urns for burial in cemeteries of States and tribal organizations of veterans without next of kin or sufficient resources to provide for caskets or urns, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 2, line 9, insert “veterans” after “or in a”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 20, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “An Examination of Wells Fargo’s Unauthorized Accounts and the Regulatory Response.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Nominations.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 20, 2016, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the

Senate on September 20, 2016, at 2:45 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “South Sudan: Options in Crisis.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 September 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “Laboratory Testing in the Era of Precision Medicine.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on September 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “Consolidation and Competition in the U.S. Seed and Agrochemical Industry.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 20, 2016, at 11:30 a.m., in room SH-219 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 20, 2016, 2:30 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MARCELINO SERNA PORT OF ENTRY

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5252 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 bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5252) to designate the United States Customs and Border Protection Port of Entry located at 1400 Lower Island Road in Tornillo, Texas, as the “Marcelino Serna Port of Entry.”

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DAINES. 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. 5252) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CHARLES DUNCAN BURIED WITH HONOR ACT OF 2016

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 3076 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 bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3076) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish caskets and urns for burial in cemeteries of States and tribal organizations of veterans without next of kin or sufficient resources to provide for caskets or urns, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I further ask that the Blumenthal amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 5081) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To make a technical correction)

On page 2, line 9, insert "veterans'" after "or in a".

The bill (S. 3076), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 3076

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 "Charles Duncan Buried with Honor Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. CASKETS AND URNS FOR BURIAL OF CERTAIN VETERANS IN CEMETERIES OF STATES AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Section 2306(f) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "for burial in a national cemetery of a deceased veteran" and inserting "for burial of a deceased veteran in a national cemetery or in a veterans cemetery of a State or tribal organization for which the Department has provided a grant under section 2408 of this title"; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking "the burial of the veteran in a national cemetery" and inserting "such burial".

VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES CENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 586, H.R. 2615.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2615) to establish the Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DAINES. 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. 2615) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

NATIONAL BISON DAY

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 572, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 572) designating November 5, 2016, as National Bison Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DAINES. 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. 572) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

AUTHORIZING THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION TO ACQUIRE, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN THE LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL IN MARNES-LA-COQUETTE, FRANCE

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5937, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5937) to amend title 36, United States Code, to authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to acquire, operate, and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in Marnes-la-Coquette, France, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered 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. 5937) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 106-567, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Public Interest Declassification Board: Kenneth L. Wainstein of Virginia.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, September 21; 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 resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325, postcloture; finally, that all time during recess or adjournment of the Senate count postcloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:36 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, September 21, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.