United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2017 No. 20

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 6, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ADRIAN SMITH to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair would now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MESSER) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Eternal God, through whom we see what we could be, and what we can become, thank You for giving us another day.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House to encourage them in their official tasks. Be with them and with all who labor here to serve this great Nation and its people.

Assure them that whatever their responsibilities, You provide the grace to enable them to be faithful in their duties and the wisdom to be conscious of their obligations and fulfill them with integrity.

Remind us all of the dignity of work and teach us to use our talents and abilities in ways that are honorable and just and are of benefit to those we serve.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. EMMER 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.

VETERAN JOHN GRAW, WELCOME TO MINNESOTA'S SIXTH

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome an incredible individual who is new to Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District.

John Graw, a World War II veteran, recently moved to Ramsey to be closer to his daughters. Upon his arrival in Ramsey—which was, coincidentally, the day before Veterans Day—the Ramsey City Council awarded John with a key to the city and a letter welcoming him to the community.

John was a master sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Force and served with the Mediterranean Allied Air Force that fought in the North African Campaign as well as the European theater in Italy and France during World War II.

I am so glad that John received such a warm welcome to Ramsey, especially because he came to the defense of our Nation during one of its darkest times. It is inspiring to know that this hero lives among us, and it is an honor to stand here today and welcome this member of the Greatest Generation to our community.

ARMY RECOGNITION FOR ARKANSAS CONGRESSMAN STEVE WOMACK

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievement of a true Arkansas leader, my colleague and friend, Representative STEVE WOMACK.

Early this year, STEVE was awarded the Department of the Army's Decoration for Distinguished Civilian Service, which is the highest award the Secretary of the Army may bestow upon a civilian.

Before being elected Representative for Arkansas' Third Congressional District, STEVE dedicated most of his adult life to the Arkansas Army National Guard where he retired as a colonel after 30 years of service.

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He has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Legion of Merit. His example is one all Americans and Arkansans can admire, and I treasure our work together here in the 115th Congress representing our State of Arkansas.

NOAA BETRAYED THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a whistleblower has charged that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration falsified data in a study that attempted to disprove the widely accepted 15-year halt in global warming. This was done in an effort to garner public support for the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan and the United Nations' Paris climate agreement.

NOAA's officials suppressed internal debate about the study and actively obstructed the House Science Committee's investigations of concerns about the data. However, one brave scientist decided to step forward and blow the whistle on NOAA.

According to Dr. John Bates, NOAA put its thumb on the scale to justify their predetermined conclusions and support the President's agenda, even if that meant violating their own scientific integrity rules.

The Science Committee will continue to investigate this scandal. Americans have a right to unbiased science.

We can thank Dr. Bates for his heroic act and for having the courage to step forward in the face of the liberal media's smear campaigns.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 3, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 3, 2017, at 1:52 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 305.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:45 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1645

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky) at 4 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

CRAGS, COLORADO LAND EXCHANGE ACT OF 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 618) to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 618

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 ''Crags, Colorado Land Exchange Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate the land exchange set forth herein; and

(2) to promote enhanced public outdoor recreational and natural resource conservation opportunities in the Pike National Forest near Pikes Peak, Colorado, via acquisition of the non-Federal land and trail easement.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BHI.—The term ''BHI'' means Broadmoor Hotel, Inc., a Colorado corporation.

(2) FEDERAL LAND.—The term ''Federal land'' means all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to approximately 83 acres of land within the Pike National Forest, El Paso County, Colorado, together with a non-exclusive perpetual access easement to BHI to and from such land on Forest Service Road 371, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Proposed Crags Land Exchange–Federal Parcel–Emerald Valley Ranch'', dated March 2015.

(3) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term ''non-Federal land'' means the land and trail easement to be conveyed to the Secretary by BHI in the exchange and is—

(A) approximately 320 acres of land within the Pike National Forest, Teller County, Colorado, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Proposed Crags Land Exchange–Non-Federal Parcel–Crags Property'', dated March 2015; and

(B) a permanent trail easement for the Barr Trail in El Paso County, Colorado, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Proposed Crags Land Exchange–Barr Trail Easement to United States'', dated March 2015, and which shall be considered as a voluntary donation to the United States by BHI for all purposes of law.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture, unless otherwise specified.

SEC. 4. LAND EXCHANGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If BHI offers to convey to the Secretary all right, title, and interest of BHI in and to the non-Federal land, the Secretary shall accept the offer and simultaneously convey to BHI the Federal land.

(b) LAND TITLE.—Title to the non-Federal land conveyed and donated to the Secretary under this Act shall be acceptable to the Secretary and shall conform to the title approval standards of the Attorney General of the United States applicable to land acquisitions by the Federal Government.

(c) PERPETUAL ACCESS EASEMENT TO BHI.—The nonexclusive perpetual access easement to be granted to BHI as shown on the map referred to in section 3(2) shall allow—

(1) BHI to fully maintain, at BHI's expense, and use Forest Service Road 371 from its junction with Forest Service Road 368 in accordance with historic use and maintenance patterns by BHI; and

(2) full and continued public and administrative access and use of FSR 371 in accordance with the existing Forest Service travel management plan, or as such plan may be revised by the Secretary.

(d) ROUTE AND CONDITION OF ROAD.—BHI and the Secretary may mutually agree to improve, relocate, reconstruct, or otherwise alter the route and condition of all or portions of such road as the Secretary, in close consultation with BHI, may determine advisable.

(e) EXCHANGE COSTS.—BHI shall pay for all land survey, appraisal, and other costs to the Secretary as may be necessary to process and consummate the exchange directed by this Act, including reimbursement to the Secretary, if the Secretary so requests, for staff time spent in such processing and consummation.

SEC. 5. EQUAL VALUE EXCHANGE AND APPRAISALS.

(a) APPRAISALS.—The values of the lands to be exchanged under this Act shall be determined by the Secretary through appraisals performed in accordance with—

(1) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions;

(2) the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice;

(3) appraisal instructions issued by the Secretary; and

(4) shall be performed by an appraiser mutually agreed to by the Secretary and BHI.

(b) EQUAL VALUE EXCHANGE.—The values of the Federal and non-Federal land parcels exchanged shall be equal, or if they are not equal, shall be equalized as follows:

(1) SURPLUS OF FEDERAL LAND VALUE.—If the final appraised value of the Federal land exceeds the final appraised value of the non-Federal land parcel identified in section 3(3)(A), BHI shall make a cash equalization payment to the United States as necessary to achieve equal value, including, if necessary, an amount in excess of that authorized pursuant to section 206(b) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1716(b)).

(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Any cash equalization moneys received by the Secretary under paragraph (1) shall be—

(A) deposited in the fund established under Public Law 90–171 (commonly known as the ''Sisk Act''; 16 U.S.C. 484a); and

(B) made available to the Secretary for the acquisition of land or interests in land in Region 2 of the Forest Service.

(3) SURPLUS OF NON-FEDERAL LAND VALUE.—If the final appraised value of the non-Federal land parcel identified in section 3(3)(A)

exceeds the final appraised value of the Federal land, the United States shall not make a cash equalization payment to BHI, and surplus value of the non-Federal land shall be considered a donation by BHI to the United States for all purposes of law.

(c) APPRAISAL EXCLUSIONS.—

(1) SPECIAL USE PERMIT.—The appraised value of the Federal land parcel shall not reflect any increase or diminution in value due to the special use permit existing on the date of the enactment of this Act to BHI on the parcel and improvements thereunder.

(2) BARR TRAIL EASEMENT.—The Barr Trail easement donation identified in section 3(3)(B) shall not be appraised for purposes of this Act.

SEC. 6. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

(a) WITHDRAWAL PROVISIONS.—

(1) WITHDRAWAL.—Lands acquired by the Secretary under this Act shall, without further action by the Secretary, be permanently withdrawn from all forms of appropriation and disposal under the public land laws (including the mining and mineral leasing laws) and the Geothermal Steam Act of 1930 (30 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.).

(2) WITHDRAWAL REVOCATION.—Any public land order that withdraws the Federal land from appropriation or disposal under a public land law shall be revoked to the extent necessary to permit disposal of the Federal land parcel to BHI.

(3) WITHDRAWAL OF FEDERAL LAND.—All Federal land authorized to be exchanged under this Act, if not already withdrawn or segregated from appropriation or disposal under the public lands laws upon enactment of this Act, is hereby so withdrawn, subject to valid existing rights, until the date of conveyance of the Federal land to BHI.

(b) POSTEXCHANGE LAND MANAGEMENT.—Land acquired by the Secretary under this Act shall become part of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest and be managed in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations applicable to the National Forest System.

(c) EXCHANGE TIMETABLE.—It is the intent of Congress that the land exchange directed by this Act be consummated no later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) MAPS, ESTIMATES, AND DESCRIPTIONS.—

(1) MINOR ERRORS.—The Secretary and BHI may by mutual agreement make minor boundary adjustments to the Federal and non-Federal lands involved in the exchange, and may correct any minor errors in any map, acreage estimate, or description of any land to be exchanged.

(2) CONFLICT.—If there is a conflict between a map, an acreage estimate, or a description of land under this Act, the map shall control unless the Secretary and BHI mutually agree otherwise.

(3) AVAILABILITY.—Upon enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall file and make available for public inspection in the headquarters of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest a copy of all maps referred to in this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 618, the Crags, Colorado Land Exchange Act of 2017 that I introduced along with Congressman TIPTON and Congressman POLIS. This legislation will facilitate a mutually beneficial land exchange between the U.S. Forest Service and the Emerald Valley Ranch in El Paso and Teller Counties in Colorado.

Specifically, this legislation would convey to the United States the 320-acre Crags property located on the west side of Pikes Peak that is currently owned by The Broadmoor Hotel, and a perpetual public-access easement for the lower portion of the popular Barr Trail. In exchange, an 83-acre Federal parcel located at Emerald Valley Ranch on the southeast side of Pikes Peak and a perpetual access easement along two Forest Service roads would be granted to The Broadmoor. This would eliminate the management and liability issues currently facing the United States because of the significant upgrades and improvements The Broadmoor has made to the Emerald Valley Ranch parcel.

This land exchange is intended to provide increased recreational opportunities for the public on the Pike National Forest. The 320-acre Crags property is completely surrounded by the Pike National Forest and has been the top acquisition priority for the Pikes Peak Ranger District for several years. The property provides several opportunities to connect Forest Service trails emanating from the Crags campground with trails in the Putney Gulch area. In addition, existing trails within the property could become key links in the proposed Ring the Peak trail.

I thank Chairman BISHOP and Chairman MCCLINTOCK and the entire staff of the Subcommittee on Federal Lands for all of their work and bringing this bill to the floor.

I urge the adoption of the measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the Speaker for the recognition and Mr. LAMBORN for bringing forward this bill.

H.R. 618 is legislation I am proud to cosponsor because it is a commonsense land exchange in my home State of Colorado. It authorizes the Forest Service to exchange the Emerald Valley Ranch for the larger ecologically sensitive Crags parcel. The world-famous Broadmoor Hotel—that I visited many times and attended many education conferences at—currently has a 25-year special use permit to operate the guest ranch on the Emerald Valley parcel. This parcel has lost its National Forest character, and conveying it out of Pike National Forest will simplify management at that site and replace it with a parcel that is more appropriate.

In exchange, the Forest Service will receive the 320-acre Crags parcel and a permanent trail easement for the historic Barr Trail. The Crags property connects with several Forest Service trails in the Pikes Peak Ranger District and has been identified by the Forest Service as a priority for acquisition. I am glad that, under this bill, we can accomplish that priority.

The exchange eliminates a large private inholding in the National Forest and removes the need for Federal land management of the Emerald Valley Ranch. It is a win-win scenario. Essentially, this legislation simplifies land management around Pikes Peak, while protecting public lands and growing our economy.

The Forest Service testified in support of H.R. 618. I support its adoption, as do stakeholders across the spectrum.

It has been a pleasure to work with my colleagues, Mr. LAMBORN and Mr. TIPTON, on this bill, and I appreciate their hard work and constructive work for this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I echo what my colleague has just said about those of us from Colorado working together. Of the six bills that we are going to be discussing today, four of them are from Colorado; and yourself, myself, and Representative TIPTON from southwest Colorado have collaborated on these four bills. It is bipartisan and we have worked hard and have gotten some good legislation to offer to the House for consideration. I look forward to doing this through the rest of the afternoon, plus two other bills as well.

Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I, as well, am prepared to close and I just want to highlight my agreement with the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN). When people work together, these are the kind of commonsense results we get. Unfortunately, on these bills, I don't think we will be making the front page of The Washington Post or The New York Times or the FOX News Talk hour, but that is so much of the workhorse-type work that we need to do in this body.

What we have done with Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LAMBORN, and myself is we have been able to put together the commonsense priorities around public land management. The district I have the honor of representing is 65 percent public land. So these are everyday issues that my constituents deal with living in and around public land.

It is very exciting to be passing H.R. 618 and allowing getting rid of the private inholding, putting some appropriate land in the management of the Forest Service and, of course, doing something that will also benefit one of our iconic conference centers and hotels in Colorado Springs that I have

had the opportunity to be a guest and a conferee at so many times.

I deeply appreciate the work of Mr. TIPTON and Mr. LAMBORN. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 618.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELKHORN RANCH AND WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 698) to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 698

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 ''Elkhorn Ranch and White River National Forest Conveyance Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. LAND CONVEYANCE, ELKHORN RANCH AND WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST, COLORADO.

(a) LAND CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.—Consistent with the purpose of the Act of March 3, 1909 (43 U.S.C. 772), all right, title, and interest of the United States (subject to subsection (b)) in and to a parcel of land consisting of approximately 148 acres as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Elkhorn Ranch Land Parcel–White River National Forest'' and dated March 2015 shall be conveyed by patent to the Gordman-Leverich Partnership, a Colorado Limited Liability Partnership (in this section referred to as ''GLP'').

(b) EXISTING RIGHTS.—The conveyance under subsection (a)—

(1) is subject to the valid existing rights of the lessee of Federal oil and gas lease COC–75070 and any other valid existing rights; and

(2) shall reserve to the United States the right to collect rent and royalty payments on the lease referred to in paragraph (1) for the duration of the lease.

(c) EXISTING BOUNDARIES.—The conveyance under subsection (a) does not modify the exterior boundary of the White River National Forest or the boundaries of Sections 18 and 19 of Township 7 South, Range 93 West, Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado, as such boundaries are in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) TIME FOR CONVEYANCE; PAYMENT OF COSTS.—The conveyance directed under subsection (a) shall be completed not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. The conveyance shall be without consideration, except that all costs incurred by the Secretary of the Interior relating to any survey, platting, legal description, or other activities carried out to prepare and issue the patent shall be paid by GLP to the Secretary prior to the land conveyance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 698, the Elkhorn Ranch and White River National Forest Conveyance Act sponsored by my colleague, Congressman SCOTT TIPTON of the great State of Colorado, and cosponsored by Congressman POLIS and myself, resolves a longstanding surveying issue in the White River National Forest in western Colorado.

In the early 20th century, the U.S. Government issued a series of patents conveying Federal land to private landowners in the region. However, a land survey conducted in 1949 brought these conveyances into question, and the ownership of the land has been in dispute for nearly 70 years. In 2014 the White River National Forest conducted a survey to finalize the land ownership and concluded that 148 acres were improperly within the forest's boundary.

This legislation simply conveys this land back to its rightful ownership. This land conveyance is consistent with the existing forest management plan, and the Forest Service is managing this land as though it were already private property.

This bill has the support of a wide range of stakeholders in the community and I thank the Congressman from Colorado for his work on this legislation. I would point out, as we discussed earlier, there is bipartisan support from within the Colorado delegation for this bill as well.

I urge adoption of the measure and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Living in and around public land, as Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LAMBORN, and I do, we often have these kinds of bills to address the interactions between our communities and our Federal lands in Colorado.

H.R. 698 is another bill that addresses public lands. I am proud to join Mr. TIPTON as a cosponsor of this bill. It will convey 148 acres of land to the Gordman-Leverich Partnership, a company in Colorado, which will remedy a land dispute between a private landowner and the Forest Service.

Way back in 1947, just a few years after my dear mother—who is watching us on C–SPAN as we speak—and my father were born, an administrative error occurred that shifted the boundary between the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest. This survey placed 148 acres of private land inside the forest boundary without providing consideration to the landholders. Since then, the title of the ranch has changed several times, but the administrative error has never been corrected.

We all know how we hold private property rights dear in this country, and this bill will correct the error, acknowledge the correct boundary of the Elkhorn Ranch, providing the current owner with a clear and free title rather than the encumbrance that the disputed nature of the land previously provided.

It will help avoid costly litigation to both sides, provides clarity for landowners and the Forest Service. It recognizes today's reality on the ground and it will help local officials in the Forest Service as well.

I thank my colleague, Mr. TIPTON, for his good work on this legislation, working with stakeholders. I want to point out that the Forest Service testified in support of this bill. I join my colleagues in urging its adoption.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate those comments. I would point out, for anyone who is interested, that the three of us who are here—and I am about to yield the floor to Representative TIPTON—we are all on the Natural Resources Committee. This is a committee that is going to be doing a lot of exciting and interesting things in this Congress. We are going to be very busy. I am looking forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON), my friend and colleague, who is also a member of the committee.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my thanks to my colleagues, Mr. POLIS and Mr. LAMBORN. I think among our three congressional districts, we hold the vast majority of public lands in the State of Colorado. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to work with you on these significant bills, to be able to address many of the challenges that we have, and to be able to work together in a bipartisan manner as well.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me time to be able to discuss this important legislation. H.R. 698 is a very straightforward bill, which Congressmen LAMBORN and POLIS and I have reintroduced this year that confirms private ownership of 148 acres of land in my congressional district.

The lands concerned were patented into private ownership via the United States land patents issued in 1914, 1917, and 1957, but their ownership came into question by virtue of a 1949 government

survey which erroneously showed them to be National Forest land rather than private land. A long-held U.S. law specifically states that a government resurvey cannot take away private property or private property rights.

Mr. Speaker, the Forest Service and the private landowner of the Elkhorn Ranch only became aware of the potential title issue in the early 2000s, and thereafter, the Forest Service conducted a lengthy and thorough review of the matter. Upon completion of their review in 2014, both the supervisor and the surveyor of the White River National Forest concluded the ownership of the 148 acres should be confirmed in the successors in interest to the original patentee; namely, the Elkhorn Ranch.

In reaching this conclusion, the Forest Service noted that the land has never been managed as National Forest land and, indeed, has been fenced and occupied with stock ponds, developed springs, roads and other private improvements, and has been used as private land for ranching and agriculture for the better part of the past 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a simple matter of fairness and equity to a private landowner to honor government land patents that were granted by the Federal Government to the landowner's predecessors 60 to 100 years ago. The bill is supported by both the surveyor and supervisor of the White River National Forest; the Garfield County surveyor; the Garfield County Commissioner; the city of Rifle; Colorado Club 20, which represents 20 Colorado counties; and Piceance Energy, which has a lease on part of the area.

□ 1700

In addition, the legislative hearing that was held on the same bill in 2015, the administration testified that this bill is a practical and workable way to address this longstanding issue. This bill is identical to the one that passed out of the House by voice vote in the last Congress, and I once again urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Once again, I extend my thanks to my colleagues Congressman LAMBORN and Congressman POLIS for all of their hard work on this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight, as Mr. TIPTON said, a number of the bills that we are going through, including this one, have passed the House before, and yet the Senate failed to send them to the President's desk. These are real issues that our constituents face.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Senate to simply take up these noncontroversial bills, pass them, and allow President Trump to sign them so we can resolve these real-life issues that affect our constituents. While it feels good to pass a bill as a legislator—and Mr. TIPTON deserves credit, and I look forward to being able to argue for the passage of a bill that I am a lead sponsor on shortly; and, of course, we recently passed, by voice vote, Mr. LAMBORN's bill—these issues will remain pending until the Senate acts.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to bring forward these bills so we can address these pressing concerns that our constituents have and deal with them in an appropriate multistakeholder manner, where Democrats and Republicans can join in support of addressing the real-life issues that those of us who represent areas in and around public land have.

I urge a ''yes'' vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 698.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ARAPAHO NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 688) to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 688

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 ''Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. ARAPAHO NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The boundary of the Arapaho National Forest in the State of Colorado is adjusted to incorporate the approximately 92.95 acres of land generally depicted as ''The Wedge'' on the map entitled ''Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment'' and dated November 6, 2013, and described as lots three, four, eight, and nine of section 13, Township 4 North, Range 76 West, Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado. A lot described in this subsection may be included in the boundary adjustment only after the Secretary of Agriculture obtains written permission for such action from the lot owner or owners.

(b) BOWEN GULCH PROTECTION AREA.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall include all Federal land within the boundary described in subsection (a) in the Bowen Gulch Protection Area established under section 6 of the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 539j).

(c) LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND.—For purposes of section 200306(a)(2)(B)(i) of title 54, United States Code, the boundaries of the Arapaho National Forest, as modified under subsection (a), shall be considered to be the boundaries of the Arapaho National Forest as in existence on January 1, 1965.

(d) PUBLIC MOTORIZED USE.—Nothing in this Act opens privately owned lands within the boundary described in subsection (a) to public motorized use.

(e) ACCESS TO NON-FEDERAL LANDS.—Notwithstanding the provisions of section 6(f) of the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 539j(f)) regarding motorized travel, the owners of any non-Federal lands within the boundary described in subsection (a) who historically have accessed their lands through lands now or hereafter owned by the United States within the boundary described in subsection (a) shall have the continued right of motorized access to their lands across the existing roadway.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 688, sponsored by Congressman JARED POLIS and cosponsored by Congressman TIPTON and myself, would adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest in the State of Colorado to incorporate 93 acres. It passed the House under suspension of the rules during the 113th and 114th Congresses.

The legislation would incorporate 10 undeveloped parcels of land into the Arapaho National Forest. The parcels sit between the Arapaho and the Rocky Mountain National Park and will help the Forest Service to better manage this land. The bill ensures that private landowners with parcels within the national forest will continue to have access through these parcels. Additionally, the land purchased by the Forest Service must be with the written consent of the landowner.

I urge adoption of the measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have introduced the Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment Act, also known as the Wedge Act.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I wish all of my bills could come to the floor so quickly, within a week of introducing them. But I am very glad, on behalf of Grand County, which I am honored to represent, that we could move so expeditiously, at least through the House, through this body.

Once again, I will call upon the Senate, upon passage, to move on this bill. Again, this is another bill the House did its work on, we did pass last session, and the Senate failed to pass into law.

It is very important for Grand County. It is a commonsense protection of public lands. It was coordinated with local landowners and local officials, supported by the county commissioners and Federal land agencies.

The legislation involves a parcel of 10 lots in Grand County, which we and locals call the ''wedge.'' As indicated by its name, the parcel is wedged between Arapaho National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park, effectively separating the two. Although the wedge is integral for the successful management of the public land, it remains outside of the National Forest Service boundary.

Millions of visitors already enjoy the parcel's beauty as they travel west from the 13,000-foot apex of the Rocky Mountains, along the Trail Ridge scenic byway and into the destination town of Grand Lake, in my district. The area is undeveloped. Seven of the ten parcels are already being managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The owners of the remaining parcels are all in favor of this bill. It is very important to point out that all of the stakeholders are supportive of this effort in statute.

Development of the wedge parcel would significantly affect the health of Rocky Mountain National Park and hurt the adjoining Colorado River headwaters. Not only would the development harm clean water for millions, but it could also harm the economic potential for what is truly a jewel of the National Park System, Rocky Mountain National Park, supporting millions of visitors in the surrounding communities.

In recognition of these potential threats to the quality and character, as well as the economy and jobs in the area, there has been significant support locally for this bill. Supporters include everyone from local officials, like the Grand County Commissioners and the town of Grand Lake, to conservation and outdoor recreation groups, including Headwaters Trails Alliance, Conservation Colorado, and the Rocky Mountain Nature Conservancy.

H.R. 688 simply responds to the wishes of my constituency—including the landholders in these areas, particularly those living in and around the wedge, as well as the visitors every year—by incorporating it into the Arapaho National Forest boundary and adding the lots owned by the Forest Service into the adjacent Bowen Gulch Protection Area, just as we did when the House passed this exact bill last year.

This strong, bipartisan bill has the express support of my Colorado colleagues in both chambers, including the cosponsorship of Mr. TIPTON and Mr. LAMBORN, and introduction by Senator BENNET and Senator GARDNER in the Senate.

It was passed out of the Natural Resources Committee unanimously last Congress and passed here on the House floor. Unfortunately, the clock ran out before the Senate was able to consider it. I am looking forward to, after expeditiously moving it out of this body, allowing the Senate to do their work and pass this bill into law.

I am extremely grateful for the House Natural Resources Committee's support of this bill. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just build on what my colleague was saying about the rest of his bills.

On this one, there is strong collaboration and consensus. I look forward to working with him to pass it. I will make an offer on the rest of his bills. If he lets me help him write them, I bet we could get them to the floor sooner.

In all seriousness, the Rocky Mountain National Park is a crown jewel of the National Park System. I believe it is in the top five of all parks in the entire country in terms of visitorship. It is very popular, and for good reason. It is a spectacular and accessible place near Boulder, Colorado, not far from Denver.

Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

Furthermore, I call upon the United States Senate to bring up these series of bills that are very important to those of us like Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LAMBORN, and me, who represent areas with substantial public land where our constituents in the private sector, our residents, interact every day with issues around public land and land management. These issues will improve the quality of life in our communities. This bill will help improve the quality of the tourism experience, as well as the conservation goals of Rocky Mountain National Park.

I urge a ''yes'' vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 688.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BOLTS DITCH ACCESS AND USE ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 689) to insure adequate use and access to the existing Bolts Ditch headgate and ditch segment within the Holy Cross Wilderness in Eagle County, Colorado, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 689

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 ''Bolts Ditch Access and Use Act''.

SEC. 2. BOLTS DITCH ACCESS.

(a) ACCESS GRANTED.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall permit by special use authorization nonmotorized access and use, in accordance with section 293.6 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, of the Bolts Ditch headgate and the Bolts Ditch within the Holy Cross Wilderness, Colorado, as designated by Public Law 96–560, for the purposes of the diversion of water and use, maintenance, and repair of such ditch and headgate by the Town of Minturn, Colorado, a Colorado Home Rule Municipality.

(b) LOCATION OF FACILITIES.—The Bolts Ditch headgate and ditch segment referenced in subsection (a) are as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Bolts Ditch headgate and Ditch Segment'', dated November 2015.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Since 1882, the town of Minturn, Colorado, has used Bolts Ditch to fill Bolts Lake, a place of recreation for the town and an important source of water for the surrounding community. When Congress passed the Colorado Wilderness Act in 1980, 450 feet of Bolts Ditch was inadvertently included in the Holy Cross Wilderness area, leading to questions and the town's ability to access this important infrastructure. After a discussion amongst stakeholders, the town agreed to seek a legislative solution to address this access issue.

This bipartisan bill, sponsored by Congressman JARED POLIS and cosponsored by Congressman TIPTON and myself, simply allows the Forest Service to issue a special use permit to the town of Minturn to allow nonmotorized access to maintain a headgate and water ditch in the Holy Cross Wilderness. This bill ensures the town will have access to Bolts Ditch for basic maintenance needs.

H.R. 689 was developed in consultation with the community and the Forest Service and enjoys support from a wide range of groups in the region. I urge adoption of the measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 689, the Bolts Ditch Access and Use Act, at the request of our local community in my district, Minturn, Colorado. In Eagle County, Minturn really needs this legislation because it improves

public land and water management in my district.

The bill has bipartisan support. I thank Mr. TIPTON and Mr. LAMBORN for collaborating with me on this bill here in the House. I am thankful that Senator GARDNER and Senator BENNET have partnered to pass this bill as well.

This legislation passed the House last session, but once again was held up in the Senate. I call upon the Senate, after House passage, to act expeditiously to put this matter to rest. I am very hopeful we can get it across the finish line soon.

I am grateful to the town of Minturn, to the conservation community, and to water utilities for working together for a commonsense solution that I am proud to support. This is an example of how we can truly solve any problem when everybody comes together and works together to solve it.

The need for this bill is to solve a vital local problem for the people of Minturn, Colorado, a town of about 1,000 people in Eagle County. The problem it fixes results from a mistake, an error, in the 1980 Wilderness Act, which inadvertently left Bolts Ditch off of the list of existing water facilities, where it should have been included.

This legislation would simply authorize the special use of the Bolts Ditch headgate and the segment of the Bolts Ditch within the Holy Cross Wilderness area, allowing Minturn to use rights that it already has, existing water rights, to fill Bolts Lake.

The residents of Minturn, including the mayor, whom I have met with, who brought this bill to me, as well as Coloradans across the central mountains, have long relied on water infrastructure like Bolts Ditch to access clean and affordable drinking water for our growing communities. This bill will ensure that the town of Minturn is able to utilize a crucial resource, and do so without compromising the sanctity of the surrounding wilderness areas.

I thank the Republican and Democratic staffs on the committee for working with us on this bill.

It is very important for the people of Minturn and for our central mountain region in Colorado to pass this bill into law. I urge its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that this body is moving forward on the Bolts Ditch land boundary adjustment bill. I am hopeful that, after passage, the Senate will bring this bill up and pass it on until it becomes law to remove any encumbrances that Minturn has in accessing its preexisting water rights due to a clerical error from the 1980s. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 689.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

□ 1715

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 337) to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 337

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

The Act may be cited as the ''Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act''.

SEC. 2. WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSFER OF PUBLIC LAND FOR CEMETERY USE.

(a) DUE DILIGENCE.—Prior to the withdrawal and transfer in subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs will complete appropriate environmental, cultural resource and other due diligence activities on the public lands identified in subsection (c), so that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may confirm that the land is suitable for cemetery purposes. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Secretary of the Interior of such due diligence activities prior to initiating and shall coordinate as needed during the performance of such activities.

(b) WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSFER.—After completion of the due diligence activities in subsection (a) and upon receipt by the Secretary of the Interior of written confirmation from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that the land is suitable for cemetery purposes, and subject to valid existing rights, the public lands described in subsection (c) shall be—

(1) withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the mining laws, the mineral leasing laws, and the geothermal leasing laws, for as long as the lands remain under the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

(2) deemed property as defined in section 102(9) of title 40, United States Code, for as long as the lands remain under the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

(3) transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for use as national cemeteries under chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code.

(c) LAND DESCRIPTION.—The public lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under subsection (b) shall be the approximately 200 acres of land adjacent to Black Hills National Cemetery, South Dakota, generally depicted as ''Proposed National Cemetery Expansion'' on the map entitled ''Proposed Expansion of Black Hills National Cemetery—South Dakota'' and dated June 16, 2016, except the land located within 100 feet of the centerline of the Centennial Trail (which runs along the northern boundary of the ''Proposed National Cemetery Expansion'') and that is located south of the Trail.

(d) BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.—Immediately after the public lands are withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under subsection (b), the boundary of the Black Hills National Cemetery shall be modified to include the public lands identified in subsection (c).

(e) MODIFICATION OF PUBLIC LAND ORDER.—Immediately after the public lands under subsection (b) are withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under subsection (b), Public Land Order 2112, dated June 6, 1960 (25 Fed. Reg. 5243), shall be modified to exclude the lands identified in subsection (c).

SEC. 3. LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.

(a) PREPARATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—As soon as practicable following receipt of written confirmation from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that the land is suitable for cemetery purposes, the Secretary of the Interior shall publish in the Federal Register a notice containing the legal descriptions of the public lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under section 2(b).

(b) LEGAL EFFECT.—The legal descriptions prepared under subsection (a) shall have the same force and effect as if the legal descriptions were included in this Act, except that the Secretary of the Interior may correct any clerical and typographical errors in the legal descriptions.

(c) AVAILABILITY.—Copies of the map referred to in section 2(c) and the legal descriptions prepared under subsection (a) shall be available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of—

(1) the Bureau of Land Management; and

(2) the National Cemetery Administration.

(d) COSTS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall reimburse the Secretary of the Interior for reasonable costs incurred by the Secretary of the Interior in implementing this section, including the costs of any surveys.

SEC. 4. RESTORATION TO PUBLIC LANDS FOR NON-CEMETERY USE.

(a) NOTICE AND EFFECT.—Upon a determination by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that all or a portion of the lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under section 2 shall not be used for cemetery purposes, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Secretary of the Interior of such determination. Subject to subsections (b) and (c), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall transfer administrative jurisdiction of the lands subject to such notice to the Secretary of the Interior.

(b) DECONTAMINATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall be responsible for costs of any decontamination of the lands resulting from contamination on the lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under section 2(b) while the Secretary of Veterans Affairs exercised jurisdiction over those lands subject to a notice under subsection (a) determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be necessary for the lands to be restored to the public lands.

(c) RESTORATION TO THE PUBLIC LANDS.—The lands subject to a notice under subsection (a) shall only be restored to the public lands upon acceptance by the Secretary of the Interior and a determination by the Secretary of the Interior that such lands are suitable for restoration to the public lands

and operation of one or more of the public land laws.

(d) OPENING ORDER.—If the Secretary of the Interior accepts the lands subject to such a notice and determines that the lands are suitable for restoration, in whole or in part, the Secretary of the Interior may open the lands to operation of one or more of the public land laws and may issue an order to that effect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 337, the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act, sponsored by Congresswoman KRISTI NOEM of South Dakota.

This bill expands the Black Hills National Cemetery, outside of Sturgis, South Dakota, by permanently transferring the jurisdictional authority of approximately 200 acres of undeveloped Federal land from the Bureau of Land Management to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Originally opened in 1948, the cemetery now houses a memorial carillon, a memorial to Korean war veterans, and is the final resting place of many notable veterans, including Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Charles Windolph. With its existing acreage, the cemetery can only accommodate a finite number of additional burials. Transferring jurisdiction of the land from the BLM to the VA will provide space for hundreds of additional grave sites for future generations of American veterans. Without the transfer, the National Cemetery Administration will be forced to close the cemetery to further burials in the very near future.

This is a commonsense piece of legislation that will ensure that the Black Hills National Cemetery can continue to provide proper burial sites and final resting places for America's fallen heroes.

At this point, I include in the RECORD an exchange of letters with Chairman ROE of the Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding this bill. I thank him for helping to expedite the consideration of this bill today.

I commend Representative NOEM for working closely with both the BLM and the VA on this issue, and I urge the adoption of the measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, February 1, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 337, the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act. There are certain provisions in the legislation which fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important bill, I am willing to waive this committee's right to sequential referral. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the bill, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. I request that you urge the Speaker to name members of this committee to any conference committee which is named to consider such provisions.

Please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 337 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you.

Sincerely,

DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2017.

Hon. DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: H.R. 337. the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act, was introduced on January 5, 2017. The bill was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, with an additional referral to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

I thank you for allowing the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may be scheduled by the Majority Leader. This discharge in no way affects your jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill, and it will not serve as precedent for future referrals. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support having the Committee on Veterans' Affairs represented on the conference committee. Finally, to memorialize our understanding, I would be pleased to include your letter and this response in the Congressional Record when the bill is considered by the House.

Thank you for your response and cooperation. I look forward to further opportunities to work with you this Congress.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

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

This bill provides the Veterans Administration with 200 acres of Federal land, which are currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management, in order to expand the Black Hills National Cemetery.

National cemeteries are reserved for the brave men and women who make the ultimate personal sacrifice while serving in the military in defense of our freedom, and it is important that we have the sufficient space to meet all of those interment requests. These heroes have served our country and deserve to permanently rest in a cemetery that honors their sacrifice and commitment to the ideals that hold us together as a nation.

With respect to the Black Hills National Cemetery specifically, the BLM and the VA determined that only Congress can provide the permanent jurisdiction transfer that is needed for this particular expansion; thus, we are considering this bill and, after passage, are encouraging our friends in the Senate to do the same.

Of course, this bill represents a small fraction of the ways we can support our veterans and need to support our veterans to demonstrate our appreciation for those who have served. We need to improve access to education and job training. We need to increase funding and raise the bar on accountability for the Department of Veterans Affairs. We should work to shorten wait times at VA hospitals by allowing nurses to practice to the full extent of their licensure to ensure quality care in a quicker way at a reasonable cost, and there are many other things we need to do to make sure that those who proudly put their lives on the line—or in this case, who have paid the ultimate price to protect our freedom—and their families and loved ones are cared for by this country in recognition of their sacrifice.

I do believe this simple change in land ownership will have an impact by providing the men and women who have bravely served a final resting place. Expanding the Black Hills National Cemetery is a noble and worthy cause that deserves our support.

I thank my colleague from South Dakota for bringing this issue forward and for her hard work in guiding this bill through Congress. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his gracious remarks.

I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the great State of South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), who is working hard for the people of her State.

Mrs. NOEM. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 337, the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act.

I thank the chairman of the committee and his staff for working so hard to move this bill through Congress. Their support means so much to our veterans and to their families.

Those who have served and those families who have sacrificed beside them deserve our Nation's eternal gratitude. Since 1948, the Black Hills National Cemetery has been one way that we have shown that appreciation to them. The cemetery currently covers about 100 acres of land and is home to the Korean War Veterans Memorial. Its peaceful landscape serves as the final resting place for hundreds of servicemembers and their family members.

Chief David Beautiful Bald Eagle is among the brave men and women buried here. Born in a tepee in 1919, Chief Bald Eagle served our country in World War II as a paratrooper and as one of the legendary Lakota code talkers. We lost him last summer, but his life continues to be an inspiration to the Lakota people and those who knew him.

Brigadier General Richard E. Ellsworth was also laid to rest there. He was a man who flew 400 combat missions during World War II. He earned numerous medals and returned to the U.S., where he eventually became wing commander of the Rapid City Air Force Base. In 1953, that base was renamed in his honor.

The surrounding community also does its part to honor this hallowed ground. On a brisk day this past December, Pennington County 4–H, the Sturgis Boy Scouts, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and community members came together and placed over 1,000 wreaths on the graves of servicemembers who were laid to rest at this cemetery. They upheld the vow that those laid to rest should never be forgotten. Now we must do our part to uphold that very same vow.

So we honor the legacy of these veterans and many others at the Black Hills National Cemetery, but the facility is not going to have the room it needs to continue serving future veterans without expansion. This bill would allow that expansion by transferring around 200 acres of adjacent land near Sturgis, South Dakota, from the Bureau of Land Management's jurisdiction to the Department of Veterans Affairs. My office worked with these agencies and the stakeholders in crafting this legislation, and all agreed that this land transfer is necessary.

The transfer of this land will provide the Black Hills National Cemetery with the additional burial space that is needed to assure that today's veterans and servicemembers, as well as their families, will be able to utilize the space and that we will be able to uphold our commitment and offer this Nation's eternal gratitude for everything that they have done for us.

Again, I thank the committee, my colleagues, and the chairman for supporting this bill. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill that supports our veterans.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 337.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 494) to expand the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 494

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 ''Fort Frederica National Monument Boundary Expansion Act''.

SEC. 2. FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT, GEORGIA.

(a) MAXIMUM ACREAGE.—The first section of the Act of May 26, 1936 (16 U.S.C. 433g), is amended by striking ''two hundred and fifty acres'' and inserting ''305 acres''.

(b) BOUNDARY EXPANSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The boundary of the Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia is modified to include the land generally depicted as ''Proposed Acquisition Areas'' on the map entitled ''Fort Frederica National Monument Proposed Boundary Expansion'', numbered 369/132,469, and dated April 2016.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map described in paragraph (1) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(3) ACQUISITION OF LAND.—The Secretary of the Interior may acquire the land and interests in land described in paragraph (1) by donation or purchase with donated or appropriated funds from willing sellers only.

(4) WRITTEN CONSENT OF OWNER.—No non-Federal property may be included in the Fort Frederica National Monument without the written consent of the owner.

(5) NO USE OF CONDEMNATION OR EMINENT DOMAIN.—The Secretary of the Interior may not acquire by condemnation or eminent domain any land or interests in land under this Act or for the purposes of this Act.

(6) NO BUFFER ZONE CREATED.—Nothing in this Act, the establishment of the Fort Frederica National Monument, or the management plan for the Fort Frederica National Monument shall be construed to create buffer zones outside of the Monument. That activities or uses can be seen, heard, or detected from areas within the Fort Frederica National Monument shall not preclude, limit, control, regulate, or determine the conduct or management of activities or uses outside of the Monument.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 494, introduced by my colleague Congressman BUDDY CARTER of Georgia, expands the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument by authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire approximately 21 acres of land. The St. Simons Land Trust currently owns the additional acreage and will steward the land until the National Park Service can acquire the property.

The Fort Frederica National Monument, located on St. Simons Island, Georgia, preserves the archaeological remnants of a fort established in 1736 by James Oglethorpe. Oglethorpe constructed the fort to protect the Colony of Georgia from attack from the Spanish. The fort successfully fended off a Spanish attack in 1742 and confirmed Georgia as a British territory.

This bipartisan legislation is fully supported by the Georgia delegation, and an identical version of this legislation passed the House by voice vote in the 114th Congress. I urge the passage of the bill.

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

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

This bill expands the Fort Frederica National Monument to include a 20-acre property, known as the North Marsh, currently owned by the St. Simons Land Trust. The National Park Service evaluated the property in a 2014 study and determined that its acquisition would provide additional opportunities to protect and interpret resources that are associated with the site.

Fort Frederica, which is located on St. Simons Island, Georgia, was built by James Oglethorpe in 1736 to protect the Colony of Georgia from Spanish Florida. The National Park Service has managed the fort since 1936 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt used the Antiquities Act to designate the site as a national monument. This bill is an important reminder of how a decision to protect and elevate our shared national heritage resonates generation after generation.

Here we are today, 80 years after President Roosevelt made the decision to establish a national monument, and we are looking at a terrific opportunity to expand it and increase the resources it protects. By using money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a Federal program that wasn't yet around in President FDR's time and of which I fought hard to reauthorize in this body—we can continue this important legacy. It is good to highlight the work of the Land and Water Conservation Fund as we pass this bill with regard to a national monument that has been with us for 80 years.

I thank the majority for advancing this bill, and I look forward to working with them to advance similar legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the First Congressional District of Georgia includes all 100 miles of Georgia's coastline and barrier islands. It was on one of these islands that the founder of Georgia, General James Oglethorpe, built a fort in 1736 to protect the new British Colony from the Spaniards. He named the fort and nearby town ''Frederica'' in honor of the Prince of Wales. In 1742, Fort Frederica's strategic location helped the British win a decisive victory against the Spanish in the Battle of Bloody Marsh. After this battle, the Spanish abandoned their attempts to take over the territory, and Georgia was fully secured as a British Colony. Today, Fort Frederica National Monument is a popular destination in Glynn County, featuring portions of the original fort, a museum, and extensive hiking trails.

H.R. 494 would allow for a small addition of adjacent land that contains artifacts from prehistoric human settlements. With this addition, visitors will be able to see a more complete story of the history of Georgia—from its earliest human residents, to colonial times, to modern day.

I thank the chairman for his consideration of this bill, and I thank the Natural Resources Committee's staff for its efforts. I also thank the entire Georgia delegation for supporting and cosponsoring this legislation.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for advancing this bill. I look forward to working with them to advance similar legislation that expands, protects, and enhances our public lands. It is particularly a privilege for me to work on a bill that uses resources and that highlights for the American people the value of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

I urge a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 494.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1730

EMAIL PRIVACY ACT

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 387) to amend title 18, United States Code, to update the privacy protections for electronic communications information that is stored by third-party service providers in order to protect consumer privacy interests while meeting law enforcement needs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 387

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 ''Email Privacy Act''.

SEC. 2. VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE CORRECTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2702 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''divulge'' and inserting ''disclose''; and

(ii) by striking ''while in electronic storage by that service'' and inserting ''that is in electronic storage with or otherwise stored, held, or maintained by that service'';

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''to the public'';

(ii) by striking ''divulge'' and inserting ''disclose''; and

(iii) by striking ''which is carried or maintained on that service'' and inserting ''that is stored, held, or maintained by that service''; and

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking ''divulge'' and inserting ''disclose''; and

(ii) by striking ''a provider of'' and inserting ''a person or entity providing'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''wire or electronic'' before ''communication'';

(B) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) to an originator, addressee, or intended recipient of such communication, to the subscriber or customer on whose behalf the provider stores, holds, or maintains such communication, or to an agent of such addressee, intended recipient, subscriber, or customer;''; and

(C) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

''(3) with the lawful consent of the originator, addressee, or intended recipient of such communication, or of the subscriber or customer on whose behalf the provider stores, holds, or maintains such communication;'';

(3) in subsection (c) by inserting ''wire or electronic'' before ''communications'';

(4) in each of subsections (b) and (c), by striking ''divulge'' and inserting ''disclose''; and

(5) in subsection (c), by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

''(2) with the lawful consent of the subscriber or customer;''.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO REQUIRED DISCLOSURE SECTION.

Section 2703 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (a) through (c) and inserting the following:

''(a) CONTENTS OF WIRE OR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS IN ELECTRONIC STORAGE.—Except as provided in subsections (i) and (j), a governmental entity may require the disclosure by a provider of electronic communication service of the contents of a wire or electronic communication that is in electronic storage with or otherwise stored, held, or maintained by that service only if the governmental entity obtains a warrant issued using the procedures described in the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure (or, in the case of a State court, issued using State warrant procedures) that—

''(1) is issued by a court of competent jurisdiction; and

''(2) may indicate the date by which the provider must make the disclosure to the governmental entity.

In the absence of a date on the warrant indicating the date by which the provider must make disclosure to the governmental entity, the provider shall promptly respond to the warrant.

''(b) CONTENTS OF WIRE OR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS IN A REMOTE COMPUTING SERVICE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsections (i) and (j), a governmental entity may require the disclosure by a provider of remote computing service of the contents of a wire or electronic communication that is stored, held, or maintained by that service only if the governmental entity obtains a warrant issued using the procedures described in the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure (or, in the case of a State court, issued using State warrant procedures) that—

''(A) is issued by a court of competent jurisdiction; and

''(B) may indicate the date by which the provider must make the disclosure to the governmental entity.

In the absence of a date on the warrant indicating the date by which the provider must make disclosure to the governmental entity, the provider shall promptly respond to the warrant.

''(2) APPLICABILITY.—Paragraph (1) is applicable with respect to any wire or electronic communication that is stored, held, or maintained by the provider—

''(A) on behalf of, and received by means of electronic transmission from (or created by means of computer processing of communication received by means of electronic transmission from), a subscriber or customer of such remote computing service; and

''(B) solely for the purpose of providing storage or computer processing services to such subscriber or customer, if the provider is not authorized to access the contents of any such communications for purposes of providing any services other than storage or computer processing.

''(c) RECORDS CONCERNING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SERVICE OR REMOTE COMPUTING SERVICE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsections (i) and (j), a governmental entity may require the disclosure by a provider of electronic communication service or remote computing service of a record or other information pertaining to a subscriber to or customer of such service (not including the contents of wire or electronic communications), only—

''(A) if a governmental entity obtains a warrant issued using the procedures described in the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure (or, in the case of a State court, issued using State warrant procedures) that—

''(i) is issued by a court of competent jurisdiction directing the disclosure; and

''(ii) may indicate the date by which the provider must make the disclosure to the governmental entity;

''(B) if a governmental entity obtains a court order directing the disclosure under subsection (d);

''(C) with the lawful consent of the subscriber or customer; or

''(D) as otherwise authorized in paragraph (2).

''(2) SUBSCRIBER OR CUSTOMER INFORMATION.—A provider of electronic communication service or remote computing service shall, in response to an administrative subpoena authorized by Federal or State statute, a grand jury, trial, or civil discovery subpoena, or any means available under paragraph (1), disclose to a governmental entity the—

''(A) name;

''(B) address;

''(C) local and long distance telephone connection records, or records of session times and durations;

''(D) length of service (including start date) and types of service used;

''(E) telephone or instrument number or other subscriber or customer number or identity, including any temporarily assigned network address; and

''(F) means and source of payment for such service (including any credit card or bank account number),

of a subscriber or customer of such service.

''(3) NOTICE NOT REQUIRED.—A governmental entity that receives records or information under this subsection is not required to provide notice to a subscriber or customer.'';

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking ''(b) or'';

(B) by striking ''the contents of a wire or electronic communication, or'';

(C) by striking ''sought,'' and inserting ''sought''; and

(D) by striking ''section'' and inserting ''subsection''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(h) NOTICE.—Except as provided in section 2705, a provider of electronic communication service or remote computing service may notify a subscriber or customer of a receipt of a warrant, court order, subpoena, or request under subsection (a), (b), (c), or (d) of this section.

''(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION RELATED TO LEGAL PROCESS.—Nothing in this section or in section 2702 shall limit the authority of a governmental entity to use an administrative subpoena authorized by Federal or State statute, a grand jury, trial, or civil discovery subpoena, or a warrant issued using the procedures described in the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure (or, in the case of a State court, issued using State warrant procedures) by a court of competent jurisdiction to—

''(1) require an originator, addressee, or intended recipient of a wire or electronic communication to disclose a wire or electronic communication (including the contents of that communication) to the governmental entity;

''(2) require a person or entity that provides an electronic communication service to the officers, directors, employees, or agents of the person or entity (for the purpose of carrying out their duties) to disclose a wire or electronic communication (including the contents of that communication) to or from the person or entity itself or to or from an officer, director, employee, or agent of the entity to a governmental entity, if the wire or electronic communication is stored, held, or maintained on an electronic communications system owned, operated, or controlled by the person or entity; or

''(3) require a person or entity that provides a remote computing service or electronic communication service to disclose a wire or electronic communication (including the contents of that communication) that advertises or promotes a product or service and that has been made readily accessible to the general public.

''(j) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION RELATED TO CONGRESSIONAL SUBPOENAS.—Nothing in this section or in section 2702 shall limit the power of inquiry vested in the Congress by article I of the Constitution of the United States, including the authority to compel the production of a wire or electronic communication (including the contents of a wire or electronic communication) that is stored, held, or maintained by a person or entity that provides remote computing service or electronic communication service.''.

SEC. 4. DELAYED NOTICE.

Section 2705 of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 2705. Delayed notice

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A governmental entity acting under section 2703 may apply to a court for an order directing a provider of electronic communication service or remote computing service to which a warrant, order, subpoena, or other directive under section 2703 is directed not to notify any other person of the existence of the warrant, order, subpoena, or other directive.

''(b) DETERMINATION.—A court shall grant a request for an order made under subsection (a) for delayed notification of up to 180 days if the court determines that there is reason to believe that notification of the existence of the warrant, order, subpoena, or other directive will likely result in—

''(1) endangering the life or physical safety of an individual;

''(2) flight from prosecution;

''(3) destruction of or tampering with evidence;

''(4) intimidation of potential witnesses; or

''(5) otherwise seriously jeopardizing an investigation or unduly delaying a trial.

''(c) EXTENSION.—Upon request by a governmental entity, a court may grant one or more extensions, for periods of up to 180 days each, of an order granted in accordance with subsection (b).''.

SEC. 5. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act or an amendment made by this Act shall be construed to preclude the acquisition by the United States Government of—

(1) the contents of a wire or electronic communication pursuant to other lawful authorities, including the authorities under chapter 119 of title 18 (commonly known as the ''Wiretap Act''), the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (50 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), or any other provision of Federal law not specifically amended by this Act; or

(2) records or other information relating to a subscriber or customer of any electronic communication service or remote computing service (not including the content of such communications) pursuant to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (50 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), chapter 119 of title 18 (commonly known as the ''Wiretap Act''), or any other provision of Federal law not specifically amended by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. YODER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on H.R. 387, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Thank you for this opportunity to have this very important debate on a critical piece of legislation that has been a long time in the coming. I thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Representative GOODLATTE, and Ranking Member CONYERS for their work and leadership in shepherding this bill through the process and getting us to this moment on the floor today. I thank my colleague, Mr. POLIS, for cosponsoring this legislation and working so tirelessly over the past few years.

I think we originally introduced this bill back in 2013, and it takes a while sometimes for a good idea to reach this point in Congress, Mr. Speaker, and this is an idea whose time has come. So I rise today to support these long overdue, bipartisan ideas in this legislation that will bring our digital privacy laws into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, the year was 1986. We can all try to think back where we were in 1986. I am sure Kentucky had a good basketball team back then. I know Kansas did. I was 10 years old, hoping to get a new Nintendo game console for Christmas so I could play Super Mario Brothers. You could buy a ticket to see Top Gun for $2.75. In the tech world, 1986 marked the debut of the first laptop computer. It was 12 pounds. A mobile phone was the size of a small pet.

Mr. Speaker, it was also the year in which Congress passed the Electronic Communication Privacy Act. Now, this law, at the time, there were only 10 million email users worldwide. Most of us probably didn't have email at that time. Most Americans didn't for sure. Now, today, 232 million Americans send an email at least once per month. The first text message wouldn't be sent for another 6 years, and now Americans send more than a billion texts each year.

Mr. Speaker, the times and technologies have changed, but the laws have not kept pace. Federal laws regarding how we treat and protect the privacy of digital communications have been unchanged since 1986 and, because of it, our digital content is not afforded the same Fourth Amendment protections as our paper documents on our desks in our home.

Now, the Fourth Amendment protects the ''right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures.'' Yet when it comes to what is on Americans' cell phones, their home computers, what might be in the cloud, or on their business computer, whatever it is, our laws allow Federal agencies like the IRS, the SEC, or law enforcement to kick down their virtual doors and search an innocent American's private communications and data storage without a warrant, without probable cause or any type of due process.

Now, many Americans take great precautions to protect and store their digital communications on services

like Dropbox, for example, or an iCloud. Yet our Federal laws perversely treat that data storage as if somehow that data has been abandoned by its owner and, therefore, that data loses its constitutional protection.

Well, in 1986, Mr. Speaker, lawmakers believed within reason that individuals and families wouldn't store mass amounts of data online. They wouldn't leave their Gmail stored online. They might have their own servers, or they would delete the emails or delete the data.

Therefore, if an individual actually left information on a third-party storage, it was akin to that person leaving their documents in a garbage can at the end of their driveway, therefore, voiding its Fourth Amendment protections. Thus, that individual had no reasonable expectation of privacy in regards to that email under the Fourth Amendment.

As we all know, virtually everyone now stores millions of emails and tons of gigabytes of data and other personal items on third-party servers. Those emails contain pictures and videos of our kids, our business transactions, our most sensitive information that the government shouldn't have access to without a warrant, without due process as required by the Constitution of the United States.

Establishing these privacy protections are critical for both ensuring that American's rights are protected, but also, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that companies that do business in America know that they can ensure their customers that if they store with them, they can protect it; that that information won't be intruded upon or searched and seized without due process of law, without their permission, without the government proving that they have a need for that information and protecting individuals' rights.

We ensure that cloud computer services are covered by the same warranty for content requirements and that all data is treated as if it is paper documents given our law modernization that is desperately needed.

In addition to updating our constitutional rights, these privacy protections do create business certainty, making sure consumers will be happy to continue to use cloud storage services.

Mr. Speaker, fundamentally, these changes in my bill codify the Sixth Circuit's decision in U.S. v. Warshak, which held that email content is protected by the Fourth Amendment. A decision which, while important, needs to be enshrined in law as it only currently applies in the Sixth Circuit. It must be applied nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, today we can cast a unifying vote in these divided times. We so desperately want to find points of bipartisanship and collegiality and to tell the American people that this Congress, this government is doing great things to help protect Americans' rights and to help modernize our laws in a way that is consistent with how we communicate today.

I thank my colleagues on the left side of the aisle for their strong work and strong support. This is a unifying bill. It passed the House last year 419–0. So it is the type of thing that is great policy coming out of the Judiciary Committee. I look forward to seeing it pass again on the floor later today.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can send a unifying vote and a unifying message to the American people today. We can dispel the myth that Congress doesn't work together, and we can send a strong message to the American people that their privacy matters.

I urge passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

In 2014, in a unanimous ruling delivered by Chief Justice Roberts, the Supreme Court concluded that the police may not search a cell phone without first demonstrating probable cause.

Citing an obvious Fourth Amendment interest—namely, the right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure—in the vast amount of data we store on our personal devices, the Court wrote:

''The fact that technology now allows an individual to carry such information in his hand does not make the information any less worthy of the protection for which the Founders fought. Our answer to the question of what police must do before searching a cell phone seized incident to an arrest is accordingly simple—get a warrant.''

With that decision, the Court took a bold step toward reconciling the Fourth Amendment with the advent of modern communications technology.

Today the House takes a similar step to reconcile our interests in privacy and due process with the realities of modern computing. We do so for the second time.

H.R. 387, the Email Privacy Act, recognizes that the content of our communications, although often stored in digital format, remains worthy of Fourth Amendment protection. And to investigators and government agents who seek access to our email, our advice is rather simple: get a warrant.

It is an idea whose time has long since come. So this bill will allow us to move to a clear, uniform standard for law enforcement agencies to access the content of our communications; namely, a warrant based on probable cause.

H.R. 387 also codifies the right of the providers to give notice of this intrusion to their customers, except in certain exigent circumstances that must be also validated by the court.

We should note the absence of a special carve-out from the warrant requirement for the civil agencies, like the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Internal Revenue Service.

Last Congress, in the Judiciary Committee, we reached quick consensus that a civil carve-out of any kind is unworkable, unconstitutional, or maybe both. I would have preferred to keep the notice provisions of the original bill, which are absent from the version we reported from committee.

In the digital world, no amount of due diligence necessarily tells us that the government accessed our electronic information. The government should have an obligation to provide us with some form of notice when intruding on a record of our most private conversations.

I fully understand that not everyone shares this view, and I am willing to compromise, for now, in order to advance the important reforms that we will adopt today.

I am proud of the work we have done. Last Congress, the House passed this legislation that has already been noted by 419–0. I hope that today we can send our colleagues in the Senate a similarly strong signal to pass this bill.

This legislation is several years in the making, and it should not be delayed any further.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 387, the Email Privacy Act.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) will control the time of the majority.

There was no objection.

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

Today, the House of Representatives will again vote to approve legislation that reforms and modernizes the Electronic Communications Privacy Act or ECPA. Last year, identical legislation passed with unanimous bipartisan support by a vote of 419–0.

Reforming ECPA has been a top priority for me as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. I have worked with Members of Congress, advocacy groups, and law enforcement agencies for years on many complicated nuances involved in updating this law.

The resulting bill is a carefully negotiated agreement to update the procedures governing government access to stored communications content and records.

Thirty years ago, when personal computing was still in its infancy and few of us had ever heard of something called the world wide web, Congress enacted ECPA to establish procedures that strike a fair balance between the privacy expectations of American citizens and the legitimate needs of law enforcement agencies.

In 1986, mail was sent through the U.S. Postal Service, a search engine was called a library, and clouds were found only in the sky. In 1986, computer storage was finite and expensive. It was unheard of that a commercial product would allow users to send and receive electronic communications around the globe for free and store those communications for years with a third-party provider.

So much has changed in the last three decades. The technology explosion of the last three decades has

placed a great deal of information on the internet, in our emails, and on the cloud. Today, commercial providers, businesses, schools, and governments of all shapes and sizes provide email and cloud computing services to customers, students, and employees.

□ 1745

The Email Privacy Act establishes for the first time in Federal statute a uniform warrant requirement for stored communication content in criminal investigations, regardless of the type of service provided, the age of an email, or whether the email has been opened.

The bill preserves the authority for law enforcement agents to serve the warrant on the provider because, as with any other third-party custodian, the information sought is stored with them. However, the bill acknowledges that providers may give notice to their customers when in receipt of a warrant, court order, or subpoena, unless the provider is court-ordered to delay such notification.

The bill continues current practice that delineates which remote computing service providers, or cloud providers, are subject to the warrant requirement for content in a criminal investigation.

ECPA has traditionally imposed heightened legal process and procedures to obtain information for which the customer has a reasonable expectation of privacy, namely, emails, texts, photos, videos, and documents stored in the cloud. H.R. 387 preserves this treatment by maintaining in the statute limiting language regarding remote computing services.

Contrary to practice 30 years ago, today, vast amounts of private, sensitive information are transmitted and stored electronically. But this information may also contain evidence of a crime, and law enforcement agencies are increasingly dependent upon stored communications content and records in their investigations.

To facilitate timely disclosure of evidence to law enforcement, the bill authorizes a court to require a date for return of service of the warrant. In the absence of such a requirement, H.R. 387 requires email and cloud providers to promptly respond to warrants for communications content.

Current law makes no distinction between content disclosed to the public, like an advertisement on a website, versus content disclosed only to one or a handful of persons, like an email or text message. The result is that law enforcement could be required to obtain a warrant even for publicly disclosed content. The bill clarifies that commercial public content can be obtained with process other than a warrant.

Lastly, H.R. 387 clarifies that nothing in the law limits Congress' authority to compel a third-party provider to disclose content in furtherance of its investigative and oversight responsibilities.

Thirty years ago, the extent to which people communicated electronically was much more limited. Today, however, the ubiquity of electronic communications requires Congress to ensure that legitimate expectations of privacy are protected, while respecting the needs of law enforcement. I am confident that this bill strikes the necessary balance and does so in a way that continues to promote the development and use of new technologies and services that reflect how people communicate with one another today and in the future.

I would like to thank Congressman YODER and Congressman POLIS for introducing the underlying legislation.

It is my hope that today the House will once again approve this legislation that embodies the principles of the Fourth Amendment and reaffirms our commitment to protecting the privacy interests of the American people without unduly sacrificing public safety. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, when the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) was chairman of the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Subcommittee in 2010, he held three hearings on various aspects of ECPA, including the need for a warrant requirement.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 387, the Email Privacy Act. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation, which will provide a critical update to the privacy laws governing electronic communications.

The Electronic Communications Privacy Act, or ECPA as it is known, was enacted in 1986. It was an attempt to reestablish a balance between privacy and law enforcement needs at a time when personal and business computing was becoming more commonplace. Over the last 30 years, however, we have seen a revolution in communications technology, and what might have made sense in 1986 is vastly out of date today.

New technologies, including cloud computing, social networking, and location-based services, have rendered many of the law's provisions outdated, vague, or inapplicable to emerging innovations. For example, even a single email is potentially subject to multiple different legal standards under current law.

In 2009 and 2010, when I was the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties, we held multiple hearings to consider reforms to our Nation's electronic and privacy laws. This work culminated in the Electronic Communications Privacy Act Modernization Act of 2012, a bill I introduced along with Ranking Member CONYERS requiring law enforcement to obtain a warrant based on probable cause before searching emails. That approach, now embodied in the Yoder-Polis Email Privacy Act, is what we are here today to consider.

In an era in which government access to an individual's private information held by third-party providers has become far too easy, this legislation will finally update our laws to reflect our new understanding of what it means, in the words of the Fourth Amendment, for ''people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures.''

Clarifying the laws will also help industry stakeholders who currently struggle to apply the existing, outdated categories of information to their products and services, and it will provide a clear standard for law enforcement.

This bill is not perfect and, clearly, there is more to be done. In particular, we must keep working to require a probable cause warrant for location information. However, this bill is an important step forward toward ensuring that our laws strike the right balance between the interests and needs of law enforcement and the privacy rights of the American people. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I congratulate all those involved in its development.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER).

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, the American people's Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable search and seizure by our government must always be protected. Unfortunately, our privacy protections from government intrusion have not kept pace with the way we communicate with each other. It is long past time that we update our Nation's electronic communication privacy laws.

The last time we updated these laws was 1986. That was 6 years after the U.S. Olympic Hockey team's Miracle on Ice, 2 years after I graduated from college, and 1 year before the Minnesota Twins won their first World Series. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, that was a long time ago.

Today, more than 200 million Americans have access to a smartphone, and many more use email and cloud technology. However, many Americans may not realize that these antiquated laws allow law enforcement to read every email that is more than 6 months old, without a warrant.

The Email Privacy Act would codify the reasonable expectation of privacy Americans already have in their electronic communications by requiring a search warrant for private digital communications.

I was pleased to support this legislation when it passed unanimously in the House last Congress, and I look forward to its swift consideration in both Chambers in the 115th. I urge all of my

colleagues to support this long overdue modification of the law.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), a former member of the Judiciary Committee and the lead Democratic sponsor of this bill.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, the passage of the Email Privacy Act is long overdue. The fact that the law that governs the government access to emails dates from 1986, before email was really a mass phenomena, is a glaring loophole in our privacy protection laws.

1986 was a time when we used floppy disks to store our information, when, if any internet existed at all, it was just a few people at research universities communicating with another. It was far from a mass phenomena.

Today, this bill catches up with the reasonable expectation that consumers already have that their emails are private. Just as Americans view their phone conversations as private, their physical letters through the mail private, Americans view their emails the same way. Yet, until we close this loophole, the government maintains access, without a warrant, to emails that are older than 6 months in a way that they do not allow access to your old personal letters filed away in a filing cabinet in your office. They don't allow access to old voice mails, and emails are, frankly, no different.

The Email Privacy Act requires that Americans have the same legal protection for our emails as we do for paper letters, faxes, and other types of communication that may remain sitting around. Updating this law simply aligns the law to the digital and physical world. It has taken too long already. Today is a major step forward.

I would like to highlight the House has already passed this bill unanimously last session. How rare it is not just Democrats and Republicans coming together, not just Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member CONYERS, but every single Democrat and Republican coming together, Mr. Speaker. That is rare, and yet this body has spoken overwhelmingly last session and I hope will speak overwhelmingly again today to encourage the Senate to promptly bring up this bill and pass it into law.

This bill is a strong victory for bipartisanship. This bill has been one of the most popular bills in the entire Congress. I am proud to say, as the lead Democrat, this bill had 314 cosponsors last Congress and passed unanimously.

Back when Congress passed the Electronic Communications Privacy Act in 1986, it is fair to say that electronic communications meant something different than it means today. Thirty years ago, modern email simply didn't exist. And today, with 24/7 accessibility, accessibility on our smart devices, in our homes, everywhere else, it has been estimated that there were 205 billion emails sent each day by Americans. Those emails contain private communications for millions of us, and they deserve the same right of privacy as the letters in your file cabinet or your desk.

You often hear Members talk about commonsense bills. Well, this bill really defines common sense. When you read our bill, there is nothing more common sense than the Email Privacy Act, which is why the bill passed 419–0 last Congress. Unfortunately, the bill didn't make it to a Senate Judiciary Committee vote, which is why I am so thrilled that Chairman GOODLATTE and Mr. CONYERS have succeeded in having Mr. MCCARTHY and Speaker RYAN bring this bill forward so early this session, giving the Senate a chance to act.

I want to thank my colleague, Mr. YODER, for his hard work as the lead sponsor on this bill. I remember he and I, in gathering floor sponsors, would have these friendly contests of who could get more, Democrats or Republicans. That is how popular this bill was in terms of gaining 314 cosponsors, more than any other bill in the House of Representatives at that time.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this bill. Send a strong message to the Senate to vote immediately on the Email Privacy Act. Tell the Senate it is time to stand up for the privacy of Americans. This bill must be passed. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this good legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 387, the Email Privacy Act.

As I said last Congress, current law is woefully out of date when it comes to protecting privacy in electronic communications. I support H.R. 387, just as I supported the same legislation previously, because it is long past time we afforded Americans the privacy they are due online.

At the same time, I am disappointed this bill has come straight to the Floor, and not through the Judiciary Committee, a committee on which I sit. Nor are any Members able to offer amendments on the Floor. Going through the committee process and allowing amendments on the Floor would have enabled us to address some of the concerns raised by law enforcement about H.R. 387, such as its view that the bill fails to enable personnel to expediently obtain critical evidence. As a former prosecutor I share its interest in making sure that while we improve privacy protections we do not impede the ability to bring people swiftly to justice. I urge the Senate to work to address the points raised by law enforcement so we can continue to improve H.R. 387.

I encourage all Members to support H.R. 387.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. YODER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 387.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Armed Services:

FEBRUARY 6, 2017.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: I, Pete Aguilar, am submitting my resignation from the House Armed Services Committee effective immediately. It has been a privilege and honor to have served on this committee and I look forward to serving my constituents in a new capacity as a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Sincerely,

PETE AGUILAR,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Armed Services:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 6, 2017.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: I, Scott Peters, am submitting my resignation from the House Armed Services Committee effective immediately. It has been a privilege and honor to have served on this committee.

Sincerely,

SCOTT H. PETERS.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 44, DISAPPROVING RULE SUBMITTED BY DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR RELATING TO BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 57, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF RULE SUBMITTED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE PLANS; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 58, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF RULE SUBMITTED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO TEACHER PREPARATION ISSUES

Mr. BYRNE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–9) on the resolution (H. Res. 91) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976; providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 57) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to accountability and State plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 58) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 689, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 337, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

BOLTS DITCH ACCESS AND USE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 689) to insure adequate use and access to the existing Bolts Ditch headgate and ditch segment within the Holy Cross Wilderness in Eagle County, Colorado, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 409, nays 1, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 79]

YEAS—409

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—1

Amash

NOT VOTING—22

Brady (TX)
Cummings
DelBene
Deutch
Duncan (SC)
Ellison
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Jeffries
Kilmer
Lynch
Meeks
Mulvaney
Poe (TX)
Price, Tom (GA)
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Rush
Sessions
Sires
Smith (WA)
Zinke

□ 1851

Messrs. KRISHNAMOORTHI and LEWIS of Georgia changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 337) to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary

of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 0, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 80]

YEAS—407

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—25

Cárdenas
Cummings
DelBene
Deutch
Duncan (SC)
Ellison
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hunter
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Kilmer
Lynch
Meeks
Messer
Mulvaney
Poe (TX)
Price, Tom (GA)
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Rush
Sessions
Sires
Smith (WA)
Zinke

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1858

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMITTING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR A CEREMONY AS PART OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE OF VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of House Concurrent Resolution 18, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 18

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF ROTUNDA FOR HOLOCAUST DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY.

The rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on April 25, 2017, for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust. Physical preparations for the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUDD) laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Armed Services:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 6, 2017.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: I, Joaquin Castro, am submitting my resignation from the House Armed Services Committee effective immediately. It has been a privilege and honor to have served on this committee. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

JOAQUIN CASTRO,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

ISRAEL BONDS' ''A NIGHT ON THE BEACH''

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday night is Israel Bonds' ''Una Noche en la Playa''—''A Night on the Beach''—in Miami Beach.

Over the years, I have had the honor of participating in many of Israel Bonds' programs. The work that Israel Bonds does is vital in expanding and growing Israel's economy and has helped Israel become a global leader and innovator in so many sectors.

With all of the threats now facing the Jewish state, the work of Israel Bonds is more important now than ever. The

guest speaker will be none other than the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, my good friend and Miami Beach native, Ron Dermer.

The Israel Bonds event will also serve as a commemorative tribute to Isaac and Nieves Olemberg. Isaac and Nieves were dear friends who did so much for the south Florida community, for the American Jewish community, for the Cuban American community, and for Israel, herself. Their memories will forever live on through their kindness and compassion.

CONGRATULATING THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, ''Never stop believing.'' Those words are going to be on the front page of The Providence Journal tomorrow morning.

Like all true tests of faith, last night's Super Bowl wasn't easy going, and there were times, I have to say, when I was tempted to throw up my hands and just go to bed, but I followed the words of our quarterback and—oh, boy—was I rewarded.

What a game.

If there were any doubts, Mr. Speaker, about who the greatest quarterback of all time is, Tom Brady answered them last night; if there were any who questioned whether Bill Belichick was the best coach on the planet, this morning, they are silent; and I am sure they would all admonish me if I didn't say that football is a team sport. So, for those who had not yet been satisfied that the amazing string of successes my New England Patriots put together makes them the NFL's finest team, Super Bowl LI speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker, it was truly a team effort, and I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Bob Kraft and to the entire Patriots franchise.

Congratulations, Patriots and Patriots Nation.

HONORING JIM BOEHEIM'S COACHING CAREER

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Syracuse University basketball coach Jim Boeheim upon the occasion of his 1,000th win this past Saturday over the mighty Virginia Cavaliers.

Coach Boeheim has dedicated over 40 years of his life to Syracuse University, and he and his wife, Juli, are known locally for their outstanding generosity and philanthropy.

While central New York happily celebrated Coach Boeheim's 1,000th win this past weekend, the occasion was not recognized by the NCAA due to arbitrarily harsh sanctions that followed an 8-year investigation that eliminated scholarship opportunities for students and that vacated Coach Boeheim of 108 wins.

While we cannot stand for impropriety in collegiate athletics, we must have transparency, consistency, and fairness from the NCAA—an organization that is charged with promoting higher education opportunities and protecting the welfare of students. That is why I have and will continue to champion bipartisan legislation in the House to reform the NCAA and bring accountability and due process to this organization. There is no denying that Jim Boeheim was the coach for 1,000 basketball wins at Syracuse University, and the NCAA should recognize that fact.

Our community celebrates and congratulates Coach Boeheim for this tremendous achievement, and it is my high honor to recognize him here today.

Congratulations, Coach—and Go Orange.

AMERICA IS A DEFENDER, NOT AN OFFENDER

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I know this Nation's values. Many of us study it in the Constitution, and as a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, we review that document on many occasions. We are a nation that stands for principles of democracy; so I am very disturbed by an interview that was given by the White House this weekend that defended Putin—a man who invades to dominate, to kill, a man who supports a despot in Syria who has killed and gassed his own people—and compared his acts to any that the men and women in the United States military or in the United States may have done. It is not comparable to or even equal or even anywhere near the kind of despotism of Russia under Putin.

I am offended, and I apologize to the American people for any comparison. I believe it to be appropriate for the White House to clarify and to apologize for suggesting that our values and the efforts we take to protect people who may encounter efforts of war in any way can be compared to Putin, who is, in fact, someone who kills—and kills to dominate, not to help.

America is a defender, not an offender. I stand here proudly, supporting the values of the United States of America, a country that believes in the blessings of God and democracy.

SHORE UP FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, I had a chance to go out in the district and look at the conditions of our flood control system in northern California, which, I am sure, is reflective of a lot of the systems across this country. One particular area I was shown has had 10 feet of levee eaten away just since the end of December. This points out, with recent legislation that has been passed—good legislation—that we still aren't, by any means, close to fulfilling our infrastructure needs.

Our flood control systems all over the country and in my own district in northern California need immediate results. We expect a great amount of rain. I know we complain about drought in California—feast or famine—but we need to continue to shore up these systems here because, otherwise, it will place communities in danger from the high flows we could get.

With so much rain forecasted in the near future and with our lakes getting full, there won't be a place to put that water. We need this infrastructure, and we need the Army Corps and everybody to be on board with fully developing and permitting these projects and getting the money going. Urgency is needed.

A BEACON OF DEMOCRACY

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

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, in our country, political enemies do not disappear in the dark of night or become, mysteriously, fatally ill. In our country, the press is separate from the government, and journalists do not find themselves jailed or out of business for writing articles with which the government disagrees. While the journalists are not made to write accolades about leadership or about whether they agree or not, I stand here in light of the President's words that were aired over the weekend that suggested that our country is comparable to Russia.

In our country, laws and the Constitution are supreme, not just one person. The courts rule on our Constitution, not one leader. In our country, lawyers, advocates, and citizens are free to challenge the government and its leadership without fear of reprisals.

Mr. Speaker, our country has been a beacon of democracy and freedom and hope for people all around the globe. I would suggest to the White House that it stop squandering that reputation with idle comments and dangerous actions.

HONORING COLONEL BYRON DEEL

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

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Colonel Byron Deel, Chief of the Joint Staff, Tennessee National Guard, who will be retiring this week after 32 years of dedicated service.

Throughout his career, Byron has held numerous leadership roles with a wide range of responsibilities. Whether it be his command of the Joint Counterdrug Task Force or his current position as Chief of the Joint Staff, Byron has exemplified a work ethic and a regard for others that is second to none.

Colonel Deel's career includes two deployments: in 2001 to Bosnia and in 2005 to Afghanistan. His exemplary service is reflected in the numerous commendations he has received, including the Bronze Star and the Tennessee National Guard Distinguished Service Medal, among a long list of many others. It is also important to mention that his wife, Mary Deel, whom Byron introduces as the ''better deal,'' serves in the National Guard as the Education Services Officer.

On a personal note, Byron has been an invaluable resource for me and my staff on issues that impact our guardsmen. While I am sorry that Tennessee is losing an officer of such high caliber, I extend a heartfelt thanks for his outstanding service and wish him the very best in his retirement.

□ 1915

VIOLATIONS LINGER

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, candidate Donald Trump promised he would drain the swamp. The American people believed him. But instead of draining the swamp, it has become abundantly clear he is driving his own pylons deeply into the swamp.

Already, Trump Incorporated is making significant profits off the President's position. Personal profits aren't what serving the public is about.

My mother used to ask about the superrich: Do they ever fill up?

In fact, The New York Times Editorial Board wrote a scathing indictment of Trump Incorporated. I include that article in the RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 1, 2017]

WHITE HOUSE INC.

(By the Editorial Board)

As a candidate, President Trump spent contributors' money for office space that he owned, stays at his resorts and food at his restaurants. He spent contributors' money on Trump-branded wine and water. He displayed Trump merchandise at campaign events. Now he seems determined to milk the presidency, apparently synonymous with his brand in his eyes, for a fortune.

''The brand is certainly a hotter brand than it was before,'' Mr. Trump observed, with satisfaction, shortly after the election.

Last week, an executive of the Trump Organization, Eric Danziger, said it would open Trump-branded hotels in the 26 largest metropolitan areas in the country, up from five. The business, he said, would focus its expansion domestically for ''the next four or eight years.'' The fee to join the Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Fla., which Mr. Trump calls the ''Winter White House,'' just doubled to $200,000.

This news came less than a week after Mr. Trump and his inauguration committee hosted parties and other events at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, in the government-owned Old Post Office. Even his press secretary, Sean Spicer, has become a pitchman: ''It's an absolutely stunning hotel,'' he said recently. ''I encourage you to go there if you haven't been by.''

Self-dealing is such standard procedure for this White House that a cynic (or satirist) might say it's time to give in and try to put Mr. Trump's conflicts of interest to work for the public. Maybe if he had hotels in every nation, he'd have a financial interest in being less bellicose, and more supportive of the free flow of trade and of people, even if they happen to be Mexican or Muslim.

But we really prefer the old-fashioned approach in which presidents put the public interest ahead of their own finances. Federal ethics officials have told Mr. Trump that he should divest his business interests to avoid allegations of bribery and to assure Americans that their needs are his only concern. Mr. Trump argues that he can put a ''firewall'' between his businesses and himself by having his eldest sons manage them. The president and the Trump Organization last week hired lawyers to keep an eye on the Trumps, a laughable ploy that doesn't meet ethical or anti-corruption standards and constitutional requirements.

Mr. Trump has argued that the law permits the president to keep his business—even though no modern president has done so, and far poorer ones than he have sold off business interests to serve. He and his lawyers have played down the importance of the emoluments clause of the Constitution, which prohibits government officials from accepting gifts or income from foreign governments without the approval of Congress. And he refuses to release his tax returns and divest his assets and put the proceeds in a blind trust, as his cabinet nominees are doing right now.

Consider the Trump Hotel. Mr. Trump has a 60-year lease on the property with the General Services Administration. That contract states that no elected federal official ''shall be admitted to any share or part of this lease, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom.'' That unambiguous clause exists to prevent corruption and self-dealing by government officials.

Since Mr. Trump officially violated the lease when he assumed office, the agency is clearly obligated to cancel the lease or require that it be sold to another hotel operator. Ranking Democrats on the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over the agency have for weeks been asking it to address the lease violation. So far, the agency, which reports to the president, appears to have done nothing. Mr. Trump's lawyers preposterously contend that because he was not an elected official when the lease was signed, he hasn't broken it.

Aside from violating the lease terms, Mr. Trump is very likely violating the emoluments clause by holding on to the hotel. His lawyers have said that he will donate profits from rooms rented to foreign governments to the Treasury, but that's no cure. Experts say it would be next to impossible to account for foreign ''profits''—which, of course, would be based on the hotel's own calculations. Is the hotel prepared to open its books so the public can judge those numbers for itself?

Congress ought to demand that the G.S.A. uphold the terms of the hotel lease and shame Mr. Trump into selling his other businesses, the fortunes of which are now hitched to the presidency. Democrats have been trying to do this, but the Republicans who run the House and Senate have not joined them. So far, they lack the spine to challenge the president. Just imagine how they would have reacted if Hillary Clinton had been elected and the Clinton Foundation were merely leasing a government building, let alone using it to generate revenue.

If the agency doesn't act, a competing hotel could sue to demand that it cancel the lease because the president's control of the hotel represents unfair competition. The Trump Hotel has been drawing business away from other hotels, precisely because its proprietor occupies the White House. Indeed, the hotel has promoted itself on Twitter with an image of a man relaxing in one of its rooms, gazing out upon a building that looks very like the White House (it's actually the Environmental Protection Agency, which Mr. Trump campaigned to abolish). Since the election, embassies from countries that include Bahrain, Kuwait and Azerbaijan have held receptions at the hotel, and diplomats say it's important that they be seen patronizing it.

Mr. Trump has boasted that the presidency boosts his brand. He should focus instead on how his commercial ambition is tarnishing the image of public service. If he continues to reduce the most powerful office in the world to a marketing scheme, ethical public servants, in Congress and across the government, can't stand by and watch.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, it bodes ill for our beloved Republic. Trump Incorporated appears as if it plans to milk the Presidency with his enhanced international profile. The Trump Organization is looking to expand domestic branded hotels in the 26 largest metropolitan areas, up from five.

At his Mar-a-Lago Club, which the President dubbed the Winter White House, the club fees just doubled to $200,000. The Trump inaugural committee hosted parties and other events at the Trump International Hotel, and his official staff in the West Wing sound like salesmen endorsing that hotel. All this is with the backdrop of President Trump refusing to fully divest his company, put his assets in a true blind trust, or release his tax returns. The question of President Trump's Emolument Clause violations linger behind every action he takes. It is time for him to fess up.

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

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the start of National School Counseling Week to recognize the tremendous impact that school counselors have on our students.

School counselors are committed to helping students realize their full potential. They encourage students to explore their ability, strengths, interests, and talents as these traits relate to career awareness and development.

National School Counseling Week is sponsored by the American School Counselor Association and is always observed during the first full week of

February. This week's theme is ''School Counseling: Helping Students Realize Their Potential.''

Mr. Speaker, what we know is that school counselors are integral to student success. Counselors not only help students reach their academic and career goals, but they focus on assisting with social and personal development, too. Many parents also benefit from the assistance of school counselors as they encounter the challenges of raising children in today's world.

Our counselors play a vital role in the total education of children. I salute these professionals in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and throughout the United States for their dedication to preparing our students to achieve success and become productive members of society in this ever-changing world.

Thank you to our school counselors for all you do to help educate students nationwide. Happy National School Counseling Week.

REMEMBERING DR. ARTHUR ROSENFELD

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, the energy world was saddened by the recent passing of Dr. Arthur Rosenfeld on January 27. I rise today to pay tribute to his extraordinary life and countless contributions.

Known as the godfather of energy efficiency, Dr. Rosenfeld's efforts brought awareness to the tremendous benefits of efficiency. As a physicist at UC Berkeley, Dr. Rosenfeld became interested in efficiency during the 1973 oil embargo. He soon began pushing efficiency standards for appliances and buildings for California, and eventually for the entire Nation. He went on to work as an adviser at the Department of Energy and served on the California Energy Commission.

According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, a group that Dr. Rosenfeld helped found, savings from energy efficiency gains have averted the need to build more than 300 large power plants since 1990.

The EPA has estimated that between 1992 and 2014, its ENERGY STAR program, a program built on the shoulders of Dr. Rosenfeld's work, has helped families save over $350 billion on utility bills while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 2.5 billion metric tons.

The cleanest and cheapest kilowatt-hour of electricity that one may take advantage of is the one we do not use.

We salute Dr. Rosenfeld.

THE RIGHT TO TRY

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the millions of Americans who receive the devastating news of a terminal diagnosis each year. Even with the amazing work done in American medical research and development, for too many families, access to these potentially lifesaving treatments will come too late, if at all.

It is time for this body to come together with Federal regulators and industry leaders to clear the path forward to take care of those brave Americans who are fighting simply for a chance to live. A bill introduced today jointly by myself and Congressman BIGGS will offer these brave Americans a chance to extend their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the Right to Try Act would ensure that terminally ill patients, together with their physicians and pharmaceutical manufacturers, will have the right to try investigational treatments where no alternative exists. In fact, this bipartisan idea is already the law of the land in 33 States of our Nation.

For patients and their doctors, the Right to Try Act affords them an opportunity to try therapies where the benefits far outweigh the risks. Whether it is a father courageously battling ALS or a brave child living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, all those fighting for their lives deserve a right to try. They deserve a right to live.

THE DRIVE FOR FIVE

(Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the Drive for Five is complete. I want to join New England in congratulating our New England Patriots on their incredible victory in Super Bowl LI. Fans across the Granite State agree that Super Bowl LI will go down in history as one of the most amazing comebacks of all time, and it cements the legacy of Tom Brady and Bill Belichick as the greatest quarterback-coach duo ever.

The game was remarkable for team effort. After finding themselves down by 25 points, the Patriots did not fall victim to despair. They, instead, showed true resolve and perseverance as the offense executed drive after drive and the defense held the powerful Atlanta offense in check.

Whether it was the record 14 catches by James White, the record 466 passing yards by Tom Brady, the forced fumble by Dont'a Hightower, the mind-boggling catch by Julian Edelman, or the coaching of Bill Belichick, everyone did their part.

So let me take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to say to the New England Patriots: Thanks for doing your job.

Congrats, Pats.

CONGRATULATING THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, a lot of history was made last night. I, too, want to join my New England colleagues to say congratulations to the New England Patriots on an extraordinary victory at Super Bowl LI.

A lot of history was made. This was the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history where our team was down by 25 points in the third quarter to come on to victory. It is the only team to win in Super Bowl history in overtime; and it is an incredible display of the extraordinary talent of Tom Brady, the only quarterback in history to win five Super Bowls. This establishes Tom Brady unequivocally as the greatest quarterback ever.

Also, congratulations to Bill Belichick for his extraordinary coaching, to Jonathan and Robert Kraft, and the whole Patriots organization for all that they have done.

This was a great and wonderful night and an important example and display of determination and persistence. It is really a lesson for all of us to never stop fighting and, for young people, the importance in believing in yourself.

Mr. Speaker, the victory last night by our great team, the New England Patriots, raised the spirits of our entire Nation.

Congratulations to the Pats. Thank you for a great season and thank you for a great victory last night.

OPPOSE THE UNCONSTITUTIONAL BAN

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I joined members of my community to discuss the impact of President Trump's Muslim and refugee ban.

I wanted to read from a statement given by one of my constituents who participated in the discussion today. Her name is Nureed. She wrote:

> I have always been grateful for being an American and for the sacrifice my parents made to afford me my American Dream. Yet, every day, since the Republican nominee for President was announced, I have feared for my safety and the safety of my little children.
>
> I hold my breath every day praying that the day will not come that I need to flee my home for fear of retribution or, worse, because of my faith.

Mr. Speaker, Nureed is an American who realized the American Dream. She is not a threat to this Nation, nor are her young children a threat to this Nation.

President Trump wants to shut the door to the American Dream. He is tearing apart the fabric of this Nation before our eyes. I urge my Republican colleagues to remember Nureed's words and to oppose the President's unconstitutional ban.

EXPRESSING STRONG OPPOSITION TO D.C.'S ASSISTED SUICIDE PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise here tonight to raise a very serious and consequential issue that is taking place in our Nation's capital. Washington, D.C., our Federal city, the second hometown of every American, is just weeks away from implementing a deadly assisted suicide program.

The D.C. City Council recently passed a so-called Death With Dignity Act, which would allow adults who have been diagnosed with a terminal disease and who have been told they have 6 months or less to live to receive a prescription from their doctor to end their life. Six States, including California, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, Montana, and Colorado, have already headed down this dangerous path.

I raise this issue tonight, Mr. Speaker, because our Founders gave Congress the power in the Constitution to ''exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever over such District'' that would become the seat of the Government of the United States.

As a result, this Congress has the opportunity to stop this law. I am grateful that my colleagues are here tonight to join me: Dr. WENSTRUP, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Dr. HARRIS, Dr. HARTZLER, Dr. MARSHALL. They are joining me tonight to speak in defense of patients who deserve protection, especially when dealing with the unimaginable difficulty of a terminal disease.

Like me, they are deeply troubled that in Washington, D.C., an alabaster city that gleams as a beacon for the principles on which we were founded, this policy is about to be put in place, jeopardizing the lives of the most vulnerable among us.

Mr. Speaker, Washington, D.C., is, indeed, a remarkable city. I still remember coming to this special place as a 10-year-old child with my parents, coming down the George Washington Parkway in Virginia, as millions of other tourists have, with excitement to see our national monuments and the Capitol in which I now speak.

We Americans approach this city with awe, as we know how Washington is intertwined with our Nation's history and that this city both guards our Nation's founding documents—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—and hosts the very government that our Constitution envisioned. Those founding documents frame a Republic grounded in the principles of sovereignty in the people, subject to the protection of God-given inalienable rights, among them the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Nowhere, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, is the view of this city more beautiful than from the hills of Arlington Cemetery in Virginia and, specifically, the resting place of our 35th President, John F. Kennedy. One cannot think of President Kennedy without thinking also of his inaugural address, which is a call to action for a new generation of Americans. That call was grounded in the exceptional nature of our land.

□ 1930

''And yet,'' President Kennedy said, ''the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.''

D.C.'s assisted suicide law, Mr. Speaker, threatens the inalienable rights of vulnerable citizens. Not only does the new D.C. statute tear at the tapestry of our Nation's founding, it directly contradicts the Hippocratic oath every physician takes, to do no harm.

I shudder to think of the lives that will be lost because our society tells the weak, the despairing, the suffering, or the hopeless that suicide is the best option for them. Laws similar to the D.C. Death with Dignity Act in the U.S. and Europe have resulted in individuals being pressured to end their lives, and insurance companies covering the reimbursements for suicide treatment but not for other care.

If patients find themselves unable to pay for expensive treatments out-of-pocket, they may find their options severely limited when facing a new diagnosis, facing a disability, or struggling with mental illness. In some cases, death may become the only affordable option.

Proponents of physician-assisted suicide point to real and tragic stories of suffering individuals at the end of their lives. However, according to a report by the National Institutes of Health, pain is not the primary factor motivating patients to seek a lethal dose of medication. More commonly cited motivations include depression, hopelessness, and the loss of control or autonomy. Allowing physicians to prescribe lethal medications to these patients would mean we are abandoning our Nation's most vulnerable citizens and, instead, succumbing to a culture that is worse than the disease.

Instead of death and despair that are the underlying principles of assisted suicide, our laws should reflect a culture that promotes life and hope, even in our suffering, even in our illness, and even in our weakness.

Jeanette Hall of Oregon was diagnosed with cancer in the year 2000. She was a supporter of her State's assisted suicide program, and she even voted for it. She considered taking her own life with the help of her physician when she learned she only had 6 months to live. Thankfully, she had a life-affirming doctor who simply asked her how her son, who was attending the police academy at the time, would feel about it. This made her stop and think.

His question inspired her to opt for radiation and chemotherapy, instead of suicide, and, over a decade later, she is still sharing her testimony. She is extremely happy to still be alive.

I have no doubt that Americans like Jeanette with chronic illnesses, disabilities, or struggling with mental illness will be exploited under this law, and perhaps even encouraged to pursue suicide rather than continue living until natural death. This dangerous trend is already taking shape in the six States that have legalized physician-assisted suicide. Precious lives have already met a premature end.

Mr. Speaker, there is dignity in all human life, and the root meaning of dignity is worth. Nothing—not illness, not weakness, or despair—can decrease the worth of a human life. I cannot stand idly by and watch our laws corrupt our culture.

I am thankful to be joined by several of my colleagues who refuse to let this dark policy move forward unchecked. With that, I would like to yield to my colleague from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP). Dr. WENSTRUP is a physician. He has served our country in the Army Reserves having deployed to Iraq to treat our wounded servicemembers. Dr. WENSTRUP, is the prime sponsor of H.J. Res. 27, which will overturn this misguided legislation.

Mr. WENSTRUP. I appreciate that, and I thank you for yielding and thank you for taking the charge on this this evening to share this message.

Mr. Speaker, first, do no harm. Do no harm. These are three short words, but, to physicians, they represent a sacred charge—three short words that now hang in the balance here in the District of Columbia after the D.C. Council passed the Death with Dignity Act legalizing physician-assisted suicide in the Nation's Capital.

In authorizing doctors to violate the Hippocratic oath of ''do no harm,'' physician-assisted suicide undermines a key safeguard that protects our Nation's most vulnerable citizens: the disabled, the sick, the poor—a key safeguard that helps to ensure our loved ones receive the best medical care when they need it the most.

Instead of simply providing end-of-life comfort and a potential for cure, D.C.'s new law is poised to do more harm than good. This act leaves patients unprotected, doctors unaccountable, and our most vulnerable citizens at risk of having fewer medical options at their disposal rather than having more. It is too broad. This act allows adults diagnosed with a terminal disease having less than 6 months to live to receive a prescription for medication to end their life on their own—alone.

There are concerns that the definition of ''terminal disease'' is too broad since most doctors will admit that accurately predicting life expectancy is almost impossible; and it is. There are many conditions such as diabetes or HIV—they are considered incurable or

irreversible, and they are terminal if left untreated. There are many diseases that are terminal if left untreated, but curable if treated.

This bill fails to accurately protect patients from coercion or abuse. Despite the fact that depression is commonly associated with a patient seeking assisted suicide, D.C.'s legislation does not make screening for mental illness mandatory. It also has no safeguard against pressure that family members or heirs might exert on a patient to choose suicide.

It leaves doctors unaccountable. Compliance with the bill's limited safeguards is difficult to track because the bill directs doctors not to place the actual cause and manner of death on the death certificate. It doesn't say ''suicide.'' The report requirements in the bill are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Perhaps most concerning of all, once the prescription for lethal medication is filled, oversight is nonexistent. There is no requirement to ensure that the prescription was used as intended.

This could limit care. Under the new law, patients may end up with fewer options, not more options. D.C. residents who are not able to pay for health care out of pocket may find their options limited when facing a new diagnosis, suffering from a chronic illness, facing a disability, or struggling with mental illness. For certain medical conditions, assisted suicide could become the cheapest option.

Ultimately, whatever its intentions, D.C.'s new law puts patients at risk and could limit their access to high-quality health care. It could limit their access to cures. It prioritizes cost over compassion, cost over care. We have weighed this legislation. We have looked at it seriously, and we find it very wanting. D.C. residents deserve better.

Twenty-two years ago, my sister was diagnosed with an incurable cancer, and she had very little time to live. She was, at one point, given the option of a bone marrow transparent, and her insurance said: It is experimental. We don't cover it.

We had to fight that, and we were going to do it anyway. It is 22 years later. She survived. She is doing well. She is married and has two children, but somebody was telling her: It is not worth it.

This affects people with disabilities. This affects the poor. This attitude reminds me of a comment from the movie, ''It's a Wonderful Life'' when Mr. Potter says to George Bailey: ''George, you're worth more dead than alive.'' That is not who we are, folks.

In this bill, there is no verification or validation that the prescription was taken as intended, for the person intended, or even taken at all. There is no witness necessary, no provider to address any complications that may occur when taking the medications, no assurance that it is not misused or used on someone else, and no actual cause of death is reported.

In this, they say: ''Actions taken in accordance with this act do not constitute suicide, assisted suicide, mercy killing, or homicide.'' Oh, really? Maybe they should look up the definitions of those words. The definition of homicide is the killing of one person by another whether intended or not. The definition of suicide is the act of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.

This bill is bad for the people of D.C. This is bad for America. This is not who we are. This is not who we are as a compassionate, caring group of Americans—especially caregivers, especially doctors. We can do better, and we all need to stand up against this.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Dr. WENSTRUP, I thank you for introducing this legislation and for having the courage to live the life you have lived in serving our Armed Forces overseas.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE) who co-chairs our Values Action Team.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. I thank my friend and colleague for leading this Special Order and for taking the leadership on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to try to implore our leadership to bring H.J. Res. 27 to the floor and, hopefully, to enable us, the Members of the people's House, to strike down this deeply flawed and deceptively written Death with Dignity Act that has been passed in the District of Columbia.

This is not a bill about the elderly. It is not a bill about the sick and dying, as has been stated here. This is a bill that legalizes suicide. It actually attempts to normalize euthanasia. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this bill applies to individuals with ''a terminal disease.'' We all know that could be applied to almost anyone. We could have someone with diabetes, for example, who is able to live a perfectly normal life, in spite of the fact of having an insulin dependency, but without the insulin, it could be terminal—they would be. So this bill applies to individuals who also may have been misdiagnosed.

I appreciate Mr. ROTHFUS mentioning Jeanette Hall. What a powerful story that is—someone who actually voted for this bill in Oregon, and then a few years later comes to find out that she herself has cancer. She tries to have her doctor help her end her life. The doctor urges her to fight to have treatment. She does so, and now 16 years later, she is alive and healthy.

There is no reason for us to have this bill. If you look at the suicide rate in Oregon since that bill was passed in that State in 1997, they have 42 percent above the national average of suicide in that State.

I appreciate Dr. WENSTRUP, too. Just the flaws that he identified that this bill has are alarming. The fact that it, more than likely, will—certainly, the potential is there—lead to elder abuse. The bill has no requirement that the death certificate lists the real cause of death. It will just be required to say ''natural causes'' when, in fact, there was a lethal drug injected. The drug itself is not required to be disclosed. The bill does not require a medical professional to be present to administer the lethal drug.

Furthermore, as was alluded to a moment ago, the bill bars law enforcement and, arguably, courts from reviewing medical records at the Department of Health, effectively potentially preventing them from doing their jobs in cases where there may have been foul play.

Mr. Speaker, please know that this does not simply apply to D.C. residents but to those who reside in D.C., which would include everyone in this House.

I urge my colleagues to join in cosponsoring H.J. Res. 27. I urge our leadership to bring this to the floor for a vote. I thank the gentleman for giving me the opportunity to speak.

□ 1945

Mr. ROTHFUS. I thank Representative HICE.

Mr. Speaker, this law, the point about what is going to go on the death certificate, we have had a debate lately in our country about alternative facts, and here we have a law that says you can't say on the death certificate what the cause of death was. It's going to be poison. It's going to be some administered drug that is not supposed to be used as it was intended, as it was authorized by the FDA to be used, but for a whole other purpose—to end the life of somebody. I think that is a very serious concern. I think, again, this is at war with truth and at war with logic.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER). VICKY co-chairs our values action team with Mr. HICE.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much, Representative ROTHFUS. I appreciate so much your leadership on this issue, as well as Dr. WENSTRUP, bringing this very, very necessary bill to the floor. Time is of the essence, and literally lives are at stake. Sometimes you hear that discussed here, well, this bill is going to impact life. This one truly does. This is a life-or-death matter with just a time limit.

The way that this works is that the Constitution gives Congress authority over the District of Columbia. While they can have their own council and they can make laws, we have ultimate oversight as elected Representatives of this country over what happens here. When they pass a bill here allowing death to occur by physician-assisted suicide, we have the opportunity and we have the obligation to step in and to say no.

As Representative ROTHFUS said, this is the people's town. This is representative of our entire country here, and this does not represent what we stand for, that if someone has an awful diagnosis that they are encouraged and enabled to be able to take their own life without any—any—oversight in this.

We have got to reject this. That is why we are here tonight.

The statistics are staggering. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death across the spectrum of ages, and the death toll is, sadly, on the rise. Nearly 43,000 individuals took their own life in 2014. Now, that is a heart-wrenching number of people desperate and seemingly without hope and whose solution to traumatic life situations, clinical depression, or mental disorders was to take their own life.

But another, more sinister layer to this suicide crisis in America arises when agents of healing become distributors of lethal dosages. Five States now and the District of Columbia have legalized physician-assisted suicide.

The taking of human life is a criminal act in nearly every State and throughout the Federal Code; yet a few regions of the country, sadly, have embraced the tragic idea that it is better to prescribe death than to provide life-sustaining care, and they are tasking the medical profession, those sworn to provide and take care of people—they have tasked them with carrying out this ghastly deed.

So you go to your doctor on one hand when you have an illness or your child is sick and you are asking and expecting the doctor to be looking out for your best interests and to prescribe medicine to help you get better, and then the next day you are tasking that same physician—you are supposed to go back and ask them to kill your relative and prescribe death medicine? This is wrong.

But here is another sobering fact: legalizing physician-assisted suicide can lead to an increase in overall suicide rates. That was just what was shared by Representative HICE, what has exactly happened in Oregon, with an over 40 percent higher rate of suicide there than in other places. So if you are concerned about suicide prevention, you should be concerned about efforts to normalize doctors prescribing a bottle of pills intended to end a patient's life.

Physician-assisted suicide preys on the sick, the elderly, and the disabled. The frail are the most vulnerable to rising healthcare costs, elder abuse, and physician-assisted suicide. There is no accountability should a family member, friend, or medical provider determine that a particular patient is too sick, too old, or too disabled to continue living. Any doctor can write a prescription, and no witness is required.

Physician-assisted suicide shreds human dignity by legally and subjectively distinguishing between a life worth living and a life better off dead. The focus should be on improving healthcare options, palliative, and end-of-life care for terminally ill patients, not killing those suffering from sickness or disease.

So I call on my fellow Members of Congress to pass the resolution of disapproval sponsored by Dr. BRAD WENSTRUP to reject D.C.'s dangerous policy and to ensure that all Americans, including those here in the District of Columbia, are granted the basic right to life.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative HARTZLER for coming to the floor tonight and speaking on this bill. It is interesting that legalizing assisted suicide can lead to an increase in suicide. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars in our country on suicide prevention. It would seem that laws such as the one that the District of Columbia has passed really go against that fundamental public policy that we have in this country of saying no to suicide.

With that, it is a real privilege for me to yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS). ANDY HARRIS is another physician whom I serve with who has served in our Nation's military.

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding to me.

The gentleman just brought up an interesting point. It is true that in the Netherlands, when they reviewed their experience, they found that just legalizing physician-assisted suicide actually increases the amount of nonphysician-assisted suicide. It sends the wrong message. It absolutely sends the wrong message.

I want to thank the good doctor from Ohio for introducing this bill because certainly the Nation's Capital is one where we should be very careful since the Constitution has entrusted us with approving or disapproving the laws in the Nation's Capital. It behooves Congress to take a good look at a law like this, the so-called Death with Dignity Act. Now, that is striking because most people don't associate suicide with dignity in any way, shape, or form, and for good reason. But I will get to that.

There are a lot of myths associated with the bill. First of all, assisted suicide somehow offers patients more choices. It actually doesn't. What it does is it actually sends a very strong message that regardless of the many types of disease you might have and the many types of treatment that may be available, there is one final, common pathway that the State—in this case, the District—would now say is perfectly acceptable. In fact, it is not only perfectly acceptable, it is legal to actually go to a physician and ask them to participate in your suicide. That doesn't lead to more choice; that ultimately leads to less choice.

But the use of the word ''dignity'' is striking to me because the number one group of individuals, if we would collectively look at how we would describe those individuals to whom this applies, really, are individuals with some kind of disability, perhaps with a disease or disability that, according to the law, two physicians would just have to agree, knowing how imperfect the idea to predict lifespan is, that those could result in death in 6 months. Associating that kind of problem with the ultimate outcome of death by suicide I think removes dignity. It doesn't add dignity to anyone's life.

Worse than that, what we have done now and what we have seen in terms of the functional reduction of choice is that, according to many of the new payment systems for health care in this country, you actually align the incentives of the patient's health care from top to bottom.

What do I mean by that?

Now over half the physicians in the country no longer work for themselves; they are employed by entities. Frequently, these entities share the same financial risk as the physicians in terms of their being driven to save money. That is it. There are numerous incentives to save money within the law. If you don't believe me, go back and read the Medicare rules and regulations.

In fact, it should be noted that in the Netherlands, where assisted suicide has been legal for years, the average age for women is 65 who participate; for men it is 62. That means, Mr. Speaker, almost half the individuals are Medicare patients. There are powerful incentives built into Medicare to save money—powerful incentives—accountable care organizations, for instance, where the physician who is the patient's attending physician happens to work for the same healthcare system that shares in financial incentives if money is saved.

Mr. Speaker, I would proffer—and I think any Member who is against this legislation and for the Death with Dignity Act should stipulate that, clearly, it saves money to give someone a $300 prescription for secobarbital rather than pay for expensive cancer therapy or expensive therapy that might cure a patient. That doesn't give a patient dignity. That doesn't add to their dignity. What that does is it now places the patient in the situation, if they truly understand the financial incentives in the system, to actually question whether their physician is doing the right thing for them.

In fact, the consulting physician under the Death with Dignity Act doesn't have to belong to a different financial entity. A physician working for this healthcare entity who actually saves money through the act of suicide can send the patient right across the hall to a consulting physician to agree, that consulting physician being a part of the same accountable care organization. That is wrong. But that is the situation patients will find themselves in, questioning whether their physician has a financial incentive to write that lethal prescription.

Now, the other straw man that is set up very frequently, and if you look at the Pew Research study that asks people their opinion, ''Do you think we should allow death with dignity?'' they frequently mention only one situation: a patient with terminal disease in extreme pain. But, Mr. Speaker, the data

is that only 20 percent of patients who seek physician-assisted suicide have pain as their primary reason.

Now, we are all compassionate people. Every human being has suffered pain, some human beings more than others, and it is not hard to understand how someone answering that poll question thinking of a patient with terminal illness in severe pain, knowing what pain is about, how difficult it is to treat pain unless it is done with the most modern methods, might say, yeah, maybe dying is better. But, Mr. Speaker, that is a straw man: 80 percent of patients say it is something else; 92 percent saying it is losing autonomy—losing autonomy.

Our solution to losing autonomy in a patient or being less able to engage in activities making life enjoyable, 90 percent of patients saying that, society's solution is to write a lethal prescription?

I will tell you, I am most troubled—and I will close with this. As a physician, I went into medicine to actually help people, to help people get better. That is why people go into health care. That is why my daughters became nurses. They became nurses to help people get better. God knows that is what we want to do. That is true compassion.

But now to say that if a physician, against their Hippocratic oath, shall prescribe a medication that knowingly kills a patient—and let's not mince words. That is what the Death with Dignity Act does. It says a licensed practitioner with a license to heal now has a license to kill—knowingly kill—a patient put under their care. That is a step, Mr. Speaker, I would offer that, as a society, we should take a long and hard look at before we ask our healers to, effectively, become killers.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Dr. HARRIS for taking a long, hard look at what is going to happen here in the District of Columbia if we do not bring H.J. Res. 27 to the floor to block this misguided legislation.

Dr. HARRIS talked about compassion. Certainly, we all have family members, we all have friends who have had very difficult illnesses, and we have been at bedsides when people have passed.

□ 2000

It is good to know that we have palliative care that is available to help people in pain, to make sure that they are getting everything they can without having a doctor violate his or her Hippocratic oath to do no harm.

I really thank Dr. HARRIS for his words and for reminding us how he was called to the healing arts. He has got family members engaged in the healing arts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), another Representative that we are joined by this evening, a newer member from the Big One, I think it is called, also having served in the Army Reserve. He did not do his physician's work in the Army Reserve, because I don't know what the rules are with women servicemembers and giving birth, but certainly we have women servicemembers giving birth. I don't think they are overseas, although they may be in Germany and other places. I don't think they are going to be in a war zone.

Certainly, he has got plenty of experience. He has delivered over 5,000 babies. He certainly has seen his share of difficult cases with patients. It is good to have him here this evening to talk about this legislation.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight with fellow physicians and other colleagues to speak out against the shameful act being allowed in some parts of this country: physician-assisted suicide.

When I became a physician, I took an oath in which I promised to help the sick and to abstain from all intentional wrongdoing and harm. To help intentionally take the life of a patient is morally abhorrent.

It is not only the beginning of a slippery slope that devalues the sanctity of all human life. It is not only based on a subjective set of qualifications lawyers and lobbyists agree to. It is against the very oath that my fellow physicians swear to uphold. I encourage my colleagues to fight for these same beliefs, to treat life as sacred, and, first of all, to do no harm.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, it is simple: this Congress has a responsibility. The Founders made us, this Congress—the House and the Senate—the stewards of this city, this beautiful Federal alabaster city. The Founders vested in us the exclusive legislative power over the District of Columbia.

H.J. Res. 27, which will block the so-called D.C. Death With Dignity Act, is a bill that goes to the character of this Congress, to the character of the District, to the character of this country.

Will this Congress allow this law to go into effect?

For the vulnerable, I hope not. For the physicians who are supposed to heal, I hope not.

Earlier in my remarks, I talked about how beautiful it is to look at this city from Arlington and to recollect our 35th President and the inspiring words he spoke on January 20, 1961. He ended that address with these words: ''With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.''

Mr. Speaker, let's lead the land we love. Let this House move ahead with H.J. Res. 27 and prevent this legislation, the D.C. Death With Dignity Act, from staining our Nation's capital.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, our country and the community that I have the honor of representing, El Paso, Texas, lost one of our best: Dr. Joseph E. Torres, who was 93 years old at the time of his death, still practicing dentistry in the community of El Paso, and somebody who left a terrific legacy for his family, for our community, for this country, and for all posterity.

Dr. Torres served in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1945. He first served as an infantryman, and then later as a bombardier and a navigator for the B–17 aircraft.

Dr. Torres flew 13 bombing missions over Germany, one of the most difficult missions to be assigned to anybody, over the course of World War II. He later joined and served as a lieutenant in the Army Air Corps Reserve from 1945 to 1947. He later joined the Air Force Dental Reserve, where he reached the rank of colonel.

As I said, he was a practicing dentist in El Paso, Texas. After his time in unform, he continued to serve his community and he continued to serve his El Pasoans, his fellow Texans, and his fellow Americans. He never stopped being an advocate for servicemembers, veterans, and this country.

So here today we mourn his loss.

Preceding him in death from that Greatest Generation, not too long ago, in August 2016, was Maynard L. Beamesderfer, known as ''Beamy'' to his friends and his fans. He was one of the original 350 Pathfinders, who were the first combat paratroopers to jump into Normandy, France, before the D-day invasion in 1944. He was a member of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment and 101st Airborne Division. Mr. Beamesderfer died at the age of 92.

The third gentleman that I want to introduce to you and who I would like to talk about today and whose story I would like to share is someone I greatly admire and who I have had the privilege of meeting several times and being able to introduce my oldest son Ulysses to. That is Retired Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Chisolm, ''Bob,'' who is a founding member of the 82nd Airborne Division Association in El Paso. He is someone who is very much still with us, full of vigor, strength, energy, and an inspiration at a time that we so badly need him.

He is also the rarest of Americans. He is a combat veteran of World War II, he is a combat veteran of Korea, and he is a combat veteran of Vietnam. In fact, he is one of only 325 combat veterans in the history of the United States military authorized to wear the Triple Combat Infantryman Badge for combat service in three separate wars.

During World War II, he earned the Legion of Merit Award, which can only be obtained after receiving direct approval from the President of the United

States. He was also recognized by the French Government more recently in 2012, at which time a French general awarded him the French Legion of Honor Award and the status of Knighthood.

We are grateful for the service of these three amazing Americans, these three outstanding El Pasoans, these three great examples to each and every one of us of who are we when we are at our best and what we are willing to do to serve this country and the cause of freedom and the best interests of humanity.

It is these three men and others who join them in the Greatest Generation, the men and women throughout this country who endured and suffered, survived, and began to thrive through the Great Depression. Following that, they proudly and gladly served their country in World War II in a world away, whether it was in North Africa, Italy, Europe, or the Asia Pacific.

These were men and women who fought for not just this country, but who fought for and won a world order that has more or less sustained us for the last 75 years; a world order that was won, fought for, and sustained through enormous treasure, blood, and sacrifice of this country, sustained, fought for, and won by men like Bob Chisolm, ''Beamy'' Beamesderfer, and Dr. Torres.

I bring them up today so, one, we can pay honor and tribute to them; and, two, so that we can remember what is at stake today, in 2017, seemingly a world away from when Dr. Torres first served in the Army Air Corps in 1942. It is a world where the United States is the sole superpower, where we guarantee the lanes of trade, the connections between countries, the viability of an entire continent in Europe. The benefits from the treasure and the blood and the sacrifice and our sustainment of these policies over the last 70 to 75 years has accrued primarily to the United States, but also to our allies and also, I would argue, to the rest of the world.

We have largely seen in that time a time of peace, a time where we avoided major world wars, where we peacefully sustained and outlasted the Soviet Union and ushered in a new era of peace in Eastern Europe.

When we think about the challenges that we face today, those countries who do not see a place in this world order that we won and have sustained—countries like Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, each of whom, in their own way, pose a threat not just to the United States, not just to their neighbors in their respective regions, but to the world and the order that we have bought at such a dear cost.

When we think about what is going on today, it is critically important that we move forward very carefully and mindful of what it took to bring this world order about and what could happen if this world order collapses.

As General David Petraeus told us last week in a House Armed Services Committee meeting, this world order did not will itself into existence. It did not sustain itself. It did not win itself. All of that was done by Americans, for Americans, for our allies, for our interests, and our values around the world. It is important that we be mindful of that when all of that is at stake and when it is under threat unlike any time since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As we begin a new Congress with a new administration, we have several choices before us. We can shore up that world order and the alliances and relationships that underpin them. An example is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, our partnership with 28 European countries that has effectively kept the peace on that continent for more than 70 years. Or we can refer to that arrangement and that treaty as obsolete and we can ask the Europeans to take care of their own business without assistance or alliance from the United States.

Perhaps that is in the best interest of this country. Perhaps that reduces the burden on the United States taxpayer. Perhaps that reduces the burden on the servicemembers now deployed in Europe, reassuring that continent.

Perhaps it is also better for Russia as they continue to probe the weaknesses in the Western alliance; as they move into Ukraine and seize Crimea or are active in the eastern part of that country; as they interfere in elections throughout the Western world, most notably our own in 2016, but not limited solely to the United States, and where we fear they may be active again in interfering in other elections in the free world.

□ 2015

Perhaps this is good for Russia to think of NATO as obsolete or to withdraw our commitment because our allies are not ponying up their fair share of the burden, and I think that is a real concern. Maybe that is good for us. Maybe that is good for Europe. It is certainly going to be good for Russia. The consequence for that, my colleagues, may very well be that, while we might save some in what we are spending in treasure and sacrifice and service in Europe today, we may be called back again, as we were in the World War I and afterwards in World War II to defend that continent from tyranny at extraordinary costs to our treasury, to the lives of those who serve, to the lives that are lost, to the lives that are changed forever.

When we look at another part of the world in the South China Sea and to our allies there like Japan, the Philippines, increasingly, Vietnam, perhaps it is better that we allow China to decide what is best for that region and for those countries at the expense of those who, today, are our allies. Certainly, it would save the taxpayer the resources that we expend today to prop up and support our allies, to ensure their defense, and to ensure our interests. Perhaps it would be good for those countries in that region, including Taiwan. It would certainly be good for China, a growing competitor not just in the South China Sea, not just in Asia, but, increasingly, around the world.

So we have a choice there to make as well: Do we retrench, withdraw, close ourselves off from the rest of the world and our commitments and our obligations? Again, the benefit of which has largely accrued to us, as it has to our allies and much of the rest of the world. Or do we fix what is not working now; sustain, perhaps even grow, that commitment; meet the threats; and address the fears that that part of the world has? It comes at some cost, and it is not a trivial one.

But I would argue that we cannot foresee the future where the United States is not involved in the South China Sea, in east Asia, with our allies in that region. We don't know for sure what will happen, but we know that power abhors a vacuum. We know that where the United States is not, other world powers will be; and they certainly don't have the interests of our citizens, our values, and our way of life at heart.

When it comes to the Middle East and the series of serious challenges that we face there from Iraq and Syria to north Africa in Libya, to our difficult relationship with Saudi Arabia, who is an ally and at the same time the source of so much that threatens that region and, ultimately, the United States, certainly, in the short term, it would be cheaper to withdraw our commitments and our support, our resources and our servicemembers, who are there at such great cost, again, to this country and to themselves and to their families, who bear the burden of the fight and sustain those injuries when they are incurred and mourn the losses of those servicemembers who never make it back.

It is easy to argue, in the short term, that that could be good for the United States. But it is hard to argue, in the long term, that, without our leadership, without some level of involvement, including military involvement, but especially diplomatic and political engagement with the governments and the people and the interests in the Middle East, it is hard to argue that, without that, our interests, our goals, our values will be respected, accepted, honored, and seen through. What is much more likely is that we will find ourselves there again, responding to a great crisis at greater expense of life and treasure to this country.

And that story repeats throughout the world. Whatever country, whatever region, whatever hemisphere, whatever continent, when the United States is not there, neither are our interests, neither are we able to benefit, and neither is the world able to depend on some level of peace, security, and stability.

I urge this House, our new President, those whom we represent to think

about what is at stake right now around the world, to understand how this international order was brought about, how it was fought for and won and sustained, and how tragic it would be, after 75 years, after the noble sacrifice of so many of the Greatest Generation and of the generations that followed who served in Korea, who served in Vietnam, who served in the first Gulf War, who are serving today in our wars that followed the attacks of 9/11, how terrible would it be for us to lose what we have fought so hard to gain in the span of one administration?

It does not have to be that way. I think working together, across party lines, with this administration, with Congress, both Houses, with the American people, certainly supporting our servicemembers and honoring the sacrifices of our veterans, I think together we can meet this challenge, just as we have met serious challenges in the past. But we are going to need to correct our course, and we will need to do so immediately.

No longer can we mock allies, try to humiliate our neighbor to the south, the country of Mexico.

No longer can we call into question an alliance that has withstood the test of time and has ensured the peace of this country and the continent of Europe: the NATO alliance.

No longer can we threaten to withdraw from international obligations, whether they are at the U.N., whether they are bilateral trade negotiations or multilateral trade agreements.

No longer can we think that the United States can serve as a bunker against the rest of the world. It is too late for that. It was too late for that in World War II when the three brave gentlemen that I began my speech with decided to serve this country and to purchase the freedom and the world order that so many take for granted today.

I think it is incumbent upon us to try to offer an alternative to the course that we are currently on, an alternative that I would say starts here at home and with those countries that border ours. It starts with acknowledging that Mexico, for example, is far more an opportunity than it is a threat to the United States, that today we do hundreds of billions of dollars of trade with Mexico, trade that is unique in its character such that, when we export to Mexico, certainly we win. Those are U.S. jobs, U.S. products being exported to the country of Mexico, bought by Mexican consumers. The proceeds flow back to the U.S. worker and to the owners of those businesses and companies.

But when we import from Mexico, it is important to remember, 40 percent of the value of our imports from that country were generated here in the United States. Those same factory floor jobs in Michigan, in Indiana, in Ohio, in Tennessee, in Texas produce products that are exported to Mexico for final assembly and then brought back into the United States.

Forty percent of the value of our imports from Mexico are U.S. content. When we look at China, it is 4 percent. When we export to Mexico, we win. When we import from Mexico, we win. We win jobs, 6 million American jobs that, today, are dependent on U.S.-Mexico trade.

Nearly half a million of those are in the State of Texas alone, each one of them jeopardized by the course that this country has taken under this new administration, each one of those potentially lost if we cannot redevelop a positive relationship with the country of Mexico, certainly one in which our interests are most important to the United States, where the U.S. worker is preeminent, but where, nonetheless, we understand the larger picture and the longer game, that our future—the United States and Mexico—is a shared future, that the way we manufacture today is done together, both countries producing products that are made in North America along with Canada. That is what is going on here today, that we are linked in a way that cannot be unlinked without causing serious trauma, job loss, economic downturns, and insecurity for the United States.

In the last 30 years, as we have grown closer to Mexico and had a stronger economic relationship with that country that results in the hundreds of billions of dollars of trade that cross our ports of entry every year, at the same time, we have grown a stronger, closer security relationship such that the most notorious criminal mastermind in the history of Mexico, Joaquin Guzman, El Chapo, was recently extradited to the United States despite considerations of Mexican sovereignty. Despite, perhaps, the loss of pride that is entailed in sending that country's criminal who is responsible for countless deaths, for drug production, drug transit, and the drugs that cross into the United States and are consumed in Mexico and other parts of the world, Mexico did that precisely because of the strong security relationship that has grown between these two countries.

So should we pursue a path of humiliation for our southern neighbor? Should we build a 2,000-mile wall in a hopeless effort to seal that country off from ours? Should we propose imposing a 20 percent tax on all goods coming in from Mexico which, again, remember, will not just hurt the Mexican worker, but will hurt the U.S. worker as well?

Should we do all that, not only will we hurt ourselves economically, we will deeply damage the security bonds that exist today between those two countries, security bonds that keep us safe, that keep us secure, that help explain why today, despite the headlines, despite the campaign rhetoric, the facts show that the U.S.-Mexico border has never been more secure. It has never been more safe. It has never posed less of an immediate risk or hazard to Americans.

It has a lot to do with the brave men and women in the United States Border Patrol, those who also serve in police departments like ours in El Paso, in sheriff's departments like those under the command of Sheriff Richard Wiles in El Paso County. It has a lot to do with the immigrant populations who live in the communities along the U.S.-Mexico border who are such a part of our safety because they are striving to get ahead, to keep out of trouble, to learn, to study, to do better, to contribute to, participate in, and reap the benefits of the American Dream.

But we are also safe because the country of Mexico has made a commitment to help keep us safe. When we are concerned about transnational criminal organizations coming from the three most dangerous countries in the world today—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras—we have a partner in Mexico, who checks their advance at Mexico's southern border, who ensures, when we have the greatest humanitarian crisis this hemisphere has ever seen because of the brutality and violence that we see in those northern triangle countries in Central America, that Mexico is our partner in helping to provide shelter, sustenance, and aid to those frightened young children leaving the northern triangle.

Some still make their way to the United States and present themselves, not trying to evade detection, but present themselves to Border Patrol agents and Customs officers at our ports of entry. No wall could ever keep them out.

But as many as are coming from Central America today, we have record low levels of northbound migration and asylum-seeking attempts crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The number last year was somewhere around 400,000 northbound apprehensions. The number 16 years ago was 1.6 million northbound apprehensions.

For all the reasons that I gave, and one of them an important one—and we must keep that in mind—is Mexico: our relationship, our partnership, part of that world order that we have fought for, worked so hard for, sustained at such great cost. These are the dividends that world order is producing for the United States today in jobs, in economic growth, in the security and safety of our communities and the people we represent.

□ 2030

El Paso, Texas, in fact, is the safest city in the United States today. It was the safest city last year, it was the safest city the year before that, and it has been among the safest cities in America for the last 15 years. It is not an outlier, and it is not an anomaly. The second safest city is San Diego, California, another large U.S. border city, conjoined with its sister city of Tijuana.

So when we upend this world order, when we upend our relationships, when we bully, humiliate, and threaten the

countries with whom we have been allied and partnered for so many years now, not only will they suffer, which I can only assume is the intent of the President, but so will we. We also do deep disservice and dishonor to those who have fought so hard, worked so long, and done so much to build up something today that we are the lucky heirs to.

Furthermore, our leadership position in the world is not sustained on blood and treasure and diplomacy alone. It is the values that we live out each and every day in our homes, in our communities, and, yes, here in our government, in the United States Congress. Values that include taking in the world's refugees.

After screening, ensuring the security and safety of the communities into which they will come, which we have always done—and no one is vetted or screened more thoroughly than a refugee from another country trying to enter the United States—most will not be able to make it, even under previous administrations. But after that screening has taken place, when they come to this country, those refugees, those asylum seekers, and those immigrants are the ones who have helped to build this success story, this exceptional country, this indispensable Nation, the United States.

And when we turn off the lamp of liberty, when we no longer shine as a beacon to the refugees, the aspirational people around the world who are looking for a better life, who were called to our shores by our values and what we represent around the world, and what we have always fought for and proved in actions beyond our words, when that lamp goes out, when we begin religious tests for the kinds of immigrants who we will bring into this country, when we do things that are immediately politically popular but are not in the best traditions of this country, we lose that place of prominence around the world, not just to the countries and the decisionmakers within those countries—the kings and queens and presidents and prime ministers—we lose that place of prominence with the people around the world who have always looked to the United States for example and for leadership.

And so I ask my colleagues to join me in ensuring that, as troubling as this course has been in the first few weeks of this administration, we remember that we still have time to correct it and that we have an obligation to offer an alternative, one that has served this country so well for so long and is a source of so much of our strength, our exceptionalism, and our greatness. I call on my colleagues to move beyond Presidential fiat, beyond executive order, beyond the whims of a new administration, and to set in law our values and our priorities.

Ultimately, we must be able to reform our system of immigration laws. But short of that, we must at least be able to honor the ones who are already on the books. We have to do more to ensure that those who need us most in the world can find a home in this country, not solely for their benefit. That is the moral imperative. That is the argument that can persuade us in our hearts, but also because the value and the benefit will accrue to this country economically in our security, in our vibrancy, and in ensuring that the next generation is going to be the leaders, whether it comes to the businesses that are created, the books and the art that are created, the leadership that is needed, and the service that we demand in uniform throughout the world.

Certainly that comes from native born U.S. citizens, but it also, as we know when we think about the history of this country, that comes from those who came to our shores. Or, like most of the Western Hemisphere, whether your family came from Mexico or El Salvador or Argentina, there is a good chance that your Ellis Island was El Paso, Texas, that your family first set foot on U.S. soil in the community that I have the honor to represent today. Whether it was in Segundo Barria, or the Chihuahuita neighborhood, or the Chamizal district, El Paso has been that first welcoming community to millions who have answered the promise, the potential, the opportunity, and the beacon of hope that we have provided for the world.

It is no accident, and it is totally connected, that El Paso's safety is directly proportional to our connection to the rest of the world, to Mexico, to these people who so many of our political leaders want to sow fear and anxiety and misapprehension about. They want to vilify these people, call them rapists and thugs and criminals, when the facts bear out that they are the very reason that we are so secure and so safe.

So imagine in the Ellis Island of the Western Hemisphere—El Paso, Texas—building a wall that would forever separate and divide us from the rest of the hemisphere, from the place where we meet the rest of the world. That, too, will compromise our leadership position in the world. That, too, will dishonor the noble sacrifice that we have seen from countless servicemembers from those who pursue U.S. policy around the world, and to those who are now serving in more than 140 countries around the globe.

I think about another country and another wall at another time that proved American exceptionalism when the Soviets constructed the Berlin Wall to keep East Germans from being able to flee to the West, those East Germans who, in some way, were responding to the hope that I am talking about that we have so long represented around the world. It was the United States that overcame that wall. It was people like General James H. Polk who ensured that the people of East Berlin had hope, that the people of West Berlin had hope, that we made every effort to fulfill our commitments, not just to Americans on American soil, but to American values wherever they may be represented around the world. While other governments were building walls, the United States was doing the right thing.

And it was a President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, who challenged the Soviet empire to tear down this wall. How far have we come that today, in 2017, in the living lifetime of those who served with President Reagan, who voted for President Reagan, who lived in the America that President Reagan was a President of, that we are contemplating building a wall that would keep people out, that would separate people who have a common future, a common history? And in places like El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, 3 million people who form the largest binational community in the world, two people who have a common identity, nothing to be afraid of, nothing to be anxious about, nothing to be scared of. We, the United States, are at our best when we are strong, when we are confident, when we are bold. We are at our worst when we are anxious, when we are afraid, when we are scared.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we not make policy out of fear, that we not stoke anxiety, that we not lose the best, strongest traditions of who we are as Americans, but, instead, follow those traditions. And when we do, we will be able to change the course that this country is now on. We will be able to help this President to do the right thing, the right thing for this country, in this country more importantly, but to do the right thing for this country when it means standing up for our values, our interests, our allies around the world.

Mr. Speaker, for many in this country and for many around the world, these are some of the darkest days in recent memory. But I have hope because we have had far darker days in this country before. And the institutions, such as the one that we are in today, and the American people whose work we do at whose pleasure we serve, who we represent in this Chamber, are a remarkable, resilient people. And they will help to bring this body, this administration, this government, and this country to its senses. And when we get there, I am confident that we are going to do the right thing, I am confident that we are going to honor the best traditions of this country, we are going to honor the brave men and women who have served, who helped to build what we have today, which so many people take for granted. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that working together, Republican and Democrat, we are going to do what is best for the world and what is best for America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

SECURITY AND GENEROSITY: ON BEING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. COMSTOCK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the

Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) would mind lingering in the Chamber for just a moment, I want to make a couple of comments on what he said. Because he began his talk with a commemoration of some extraordinary Americans, World War II veterans. And as I was waiting my turn to speak, I couldn't help but reflect upon perhaps one of the most extraordinary opportunities that I have been given as a Member of the House of Representatives.

A bipartisan delegation went to the 70th anniversary of the D-day invasion. President Obama, of course, spoke, and dignitaries from around the world, including the Queen of England, also made an appearance.

When we got to the cemetery area at Omaha Beach, we were meeting veterans who had fought there or in the vicinity. One of the first gentlemen I met, he had only a thumb, and he was sitting in a wheelchair. And I just asked him, because it was such a celebratory atmosphere and everyone was so engaged by the heroism of these men and the opportunity to be back so many years later—I just asked him: Did that happen here?

He said: Yeah, right over there on the beach.

Well, his daughter was with him, and she told me a moment later: Actually, what happened was we think that he was shot on the hip and one of his grenades began to go off and he was throwing it away from himself.

I looked at him and I said: How are you here?

And he said: I don't know.

Another man had been a part of the paratroopers who dropped in behind enemy lines the night before near the town of Sainte-Mere-Eglise, and I will come to that town in a moment. And I asked him: What was your assignment?

He said: Hill 60, or some number.

And I said: Where is that?

He said: Right over there. He said: Guard the bridge at La Fiere.

I said: That is the bridge at La Fiere.

An old Norman-style, arched stone bridge, maybe a car-length wide, obviously just one lane to get a horse and cart over.

He said: Do not let the Germans cross that bridge, that was our assignment, and we held them.

Another man looked at me and said: I haven't been here in 70 years. A much better reception this time.

This great humor, this depth of character that these extraordinary men showed was so evident that day.

□ 2045

To continue the story a little bit more, Captain Luther Sextan Fortenberry, my grandfather, left his family in August of 1944. He was a medical doctor and was initially at a hospital in England. The records are a little bit unclear; but, in November of '44, he was killed, and he left his 8-year-old son—my father—behind. He was initially buried at Sainte-Mere-Eglise, at the cemetery there. He was reinterred in Arlington National Cemetery.

One of the guides that we had during that trip was a former British military officer, and he had a complete command of the details of the battle. In fact, I was so impressed by him that I invited him to come to Nebraska to speak to my veterans, and he accepted. So, later that summer, we hosted him in Nebraska. One of my little towns is called Columbus, Nebraska. Columbus is actually the place where Andrew Jackson Higgins was born—the Higgins boat inventor, which was the troop carrier that landed there on Omaha and Utah Beaches that day. President Eisenhower said of Andrew Jackson Higgins that he won the war for us.

He is very much associated with Louisiana because that is where he spent his adulthood, in shipbuilding, and he would not let go of the idea that we needed this innovative type of troop carrier. He is from Columbus, Nebraska. In the front of Columbus, Nebraska—which is a small, agricultural town, a wonderful community of 25,000 people—they have built an extraordinary World War II memorial that is a replica of the Higgins boat, with beautiful bronze sculptures of the troops in their charging off that boat.

When my friend, the former British military officer who now does—again—tours and commentary on the battle, saw this, he looked at me and said: JEFF, this belongs on Utah Beach because there is nothing like that there anymore.

I will make a long story short.

Some of the members of the community who had worked on that project heard this. They said: Well, we can build another one.

I was trying to tamp down expectations because I knew how difficult that would be; but the day before the 71st anniversary, that new World War II memorial was put in the breach where our troops first came through, where General Roosevelt led our troops through on Utah Beach. Right in the breach, a memorial that was constructed by the good people of Columbus, Nebraska, now sits as a permanent display—a replica—of the Higgins boat, right next to the World War II museum right there on Utah Beach. I understand it is extraordinarily popular as one is able to enter onto the boat and experience the life-like reality of what it must have been like to be in that moment. The French even moved one of their own monuments, by the way. This is the cooperation we had with the French Government. They moved their own monument to General Le Clerc—their general who had followed the pathway or fought, as well, into Germany.

I apologize for holding the gentleman up, but he talked about a number of things. Obviously, we are going to have big, important debates about a number of the sensitive points he talked about; but where there is no debate is in the character of the men and women who served in World War II. I thank the gentleman so much.

Madam Speaker, I want to give this commentary tonight, as well, on some of the dynamics of the moment. Before I begin, I would like to share with you that, outside of my office, there hangs a framed copy of a piece of legislation. In fact, it was one of the earliest pieces of legislation that I worked on here, and I am quite proud of it. The bill increased the number of Iraqi translators who could come to the United States. These persons served alongside our troops and put themselves and their families at great personal risk in service to our country. Among those who benefited from this expanded policy were members of the Yazidi faith tradition—a peaceful, ancient faith—that, very sadly, ISIS has targeted as a part of its extermination campaign against Christians and other religious minorities, including innocent Muslim communities.

Madam Speaker, as we all know, America has long opened her arms to persons who flee persecution, who wish to rebuild their lives and become good citizens here. My hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska, is a diverse, welcoming community with a number of first-generation Americans, and we are the better for it. However, when there is chaos and disorder at our border or if there is uncertainty in immigration policy and procedures, this problem undermines the ability of our country to be generous; or, worse, it affects our safety. There are two principles being held in the balance here: keeping America safe and keeping America generous.

President Trump's executive order to protect the Nation from foreign terrorist entry into the United States has suspended all new refugee admissions into the U.S. for 120 days. In addition, it blocks all travelers for 90 days from seven countries of concern—Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen—which was a list, by the way, created by the Obama administration in 2015. Refugees from Syria are banned indefinitely, and travelers from these countries with a green card will be allowed since they are permanent United States residents.

Madam Speaker, from my perspective, I believe it is reasonable to pause and review our refugee policy from dangerous parts of the world; but, clearly, the implementation of the policy has caused some confusion, difficulty, and concern, some of which has been clarified.

As an example, there is a Yazidi man named Nawaf, who was one of those military translators—again, putting himself at great risk to serve alongside our troops. Nawaf visited my office last Monday. It was in the evening. He requested help for his wife, Laila. Two of his brothers live where I live—in Lincoln, Nebraska. Although I didn't recognize him at first, I remembered that

a president of a university in Iraq, whom I know, once told me about a Yazidi student who had become class valedictorian of that university; so I began to piece this story together.

Nawaf arrived in America just last year. Following 18 months of vetting, his wife was awarded a special visa about a week and a half ago; but as Nawaf was explaining to me both with great composure and, frankly, a certain sensitivity to our security concerns, he told me that his wife, Laila, was barred from entry.

Madam Speaker, immigration and refugee policy always involves a difficult choice. A country has to consider first its absorption capacity, the possibilities of assimilation, as well as the necessity of those coming to accept the values of the host country's. I think a review of this policy or of these principles—a review of what has happened in Europe—actually sheds some light.

For example, Germany recklessly threw open its borders recently, and a wave of persons—many young, single men—entered the country, sparking an uptick in crime and violence and, possibly, the conditions for more terrorist attacks. Confusion continues as to who is where, and the German Government's rapidly considered and naive refugee policy has unwittingly created an anti-immigration backlash and political turmoil.

Madam Speaker, the immigration and refugee movement should always be a means of last resort. Everyone can't come to the West. Rather, it is the responsibility of governments around the world to create the conditions in which people can live securely. If that breaks down, as a first order response, robust humanitarian assistance and repositioning persons in nearby safe zones creates the possibility of a right of return and avoids the trauma of uprooting persons from their homes and their cultures.

Madam Speaker, with all of the complex considerations surrounding immigration, though, it is important to remember that we are not dealing with statistics, that we are not dealing with some remote geopolitical policy, but that we are dealing with the lives of real persons. So, happily, last Friday morning, after my office successfully worked on the case, Laila arrived, and with open arms and flowers, Nawaf, her husband, welcomed her to America.

Madam Speaker, given now that the executive order has been put on a temporary halt as the administration goes through the appeals process, I also think it is appropriate to pause and speak about the broader issues at stake here—what it means to be a nation and what it means to have a binding narrative as a people.

Madam Speaker, I am quite sure our soldiers know this feeling all too well—I have experienced it. Perhaps you have experienced it, too—when you are in a far-off place, with no one familiar around you, and then you, all of a sudden, have that feeling of connection because you see it—you see an American flag. At that moment, the flag is more than a piece of cloth with stars and stripes. It is an enduring symbol that expresses a deep, unspoken narrative about who we are as a people and about the ideals that unite us as a nation.

If you ask most people what America means, I would suggest that they would probably use one word: freedom. Yet I am afraid, Madam Speaker, that this word ''freedom'' is so overused that we have forgotten its essential meaning. Most properly understood, freedom is the ability to do what one ought—to take responsibility for oneself, one's family, one's community, and, by extension, one's nation. Freedom is not a detachment from responsibility to do whatever you want. That is a self-destructive idea that erodes freedom, resulting not only in the loss of oneself, but in the degradation of the entire community.

Of course, we often reflect on what it means to be an American when discussing immigration. America has long offered the hope of freedom for immigrants who are yearning to work for a better future for themselves, for their families. To those tempest-tossed, to those tired, poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free, America has lifted its lamp beside the golden door. Implicit in this worldwide welcome was a basic compact that those who came here, however arduous their journey, must undertake the responsibility of citizenship. Of course, many people gleefully do.

In fact, America's very survival as a beacon-handed land requires those who immigrate to assimilate and adopt the values proposition that makes our country unique in the history of the world. Those values include respect for others, the acceptance of law and order as a prerequisite for the orderly functioning of society, and the desire to participate constructively as a citizen. Those who refuse to assimilate or reject these time-honored values take advantage of the sacrifices and hard-fought gains of generations of Americans who have built and often died for what we cherish and what we so eagerly share with people from around the world. That is fundamentally unfair and is an abuse of the idea of freedom itself.

Madam Speaker, individual freedom is achieved most fully in the context of community. When the government or interest groups see freedom merely as a functional meeting of material needs alone, it undermines the social dimensions of freedom, which are rooted in authentic human relationships.

□ 2100

Conversely, the proper amount of government, a government well-ordered, provides protection and creates the guardrails for individuals to flourish together, generating meaning for persons and community. The right political approach in America can restore that golden mean.

Madam Speaker, there is a story I would like to tell. There is a man, and he is talking to his young son. He said: Son, you see that beautiful, lovely home there on the hill? One day, if it is your heart's desire, if you are willing to work hard and be patient, and if you do what is right, then maybe you could earn that home one day.

Another man in another country took a very different approach talking to his young son. He said: See that big mansion on the hill there? If you work hard enough, if you stay focused, and if you position yourself right, one day you can get that guy.

You see, Madam Speaker, our country is not based on the principle of envy. It is based on respect and responsibility. To make America flourish again, politically, economically, and culturally, a restoration of this ideal is necessary to create the conditions for a true and lasting freedom.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. POE of Texas (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. JEFFRIES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE RULES

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 1, 2017.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Enclosed herewith are the Rules and Procedures for the 115th Congress that were adopted by the Committee on Small Business at its organizational meeting on February 1, 2017.

Sincerely,

STEVE CHABOT,
Chairman.

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(A) Rules of the Committee. The Rules of the House of Representatives, in total (but especially with respect to the operations of committee., Rule X, cl. 1(q), cl. 2, cl. 3(1) and Rule XI), are the rules of the Committee on Small Business (''Committee'') to the extent applicable and are incorporated by reference.

(B) Appointments by the Chair. Pursuant to the Rules of the House, the Chair shall designate a Member of the Committee Majority to serve as Vice Chair of the Committee. The Vice Chair shall preside at any meeting or hearing during the temporary absence of the Chair. The Chair also reserves the right to designate a Member of the Committee Majority to serve as the Chair at a hearing or meeting.

2. REFERRAL OF BILLS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair will retain consideration of all legislation referred to the Committee by the Speaker. No action will be required of a Subcommittee before legislation is considered for report by the Committee. Subcommittee chairs, pursuant to the rules set out herein,

may hold hearings on any bill referred to the Committee.

3. SUBCOMMITTEES

(A) Generally. Each Subcommittee of the Committee is part of the Committee and is subject to the authority and direction of the Committee, and to the Rules of the House and the rules adopted herein, to the extent applicable. The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee are *ex officio* Members of all Subcommittees for the purpose of any meeting conducted by a Subcommittee.

(B) The Committee shall be organized into the following five subcommittees:

(1) Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy, and Trade.

This Subcommittee (which will consist of six (6) Republican Members and four (4) Democratic Members) will address policies that enhance rural economic growth, increasing America's energy independence and ensuring that America's small businesses can compete effectively in a global marketplace.

Oversight of agricultural policies.

Oversight of environmental issues and regulations (including agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers).

Oversight of energy issues, including expansion of domestic resources, whether they are renewable or non-renewable.

Oversight of international trade policy with particular emphasis on agencies that provide direct assistance to small businesses, such as: the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of International Trade, the Department of Commerce's United States Export Assistance Centers, the Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Export-Import Bank.

Oversight of infringement of intellectual property rights by foreign competition.

(2) Subcommittee on Health and Technology.

This Subcommittee (which will consist of six (6) Republican Members and four (4) Democratic Members) will address how health care policies may inhibit or promote economic growth and job creation by small businesses. In addition, the Subcommittee will examine small business job growth through the creation and adoption of advanced technologies.

Oversight of the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Oversight of availability and affordability of health care coverage for small businesses.

Oversight of general technology issues, including intellectual property policy in the United States.

Oversight of United States telecommunications policies including, but not limited to, the National Broadband Plan and allocation of electromagnetic spectrum.

Oversight of the Small Business Innovation Research Program.

Oversight of the Small Business Technology Transfer Program.

(3) Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax, and Capital Access.

This Subcommittee (which will consist of six (6) Republican Members and four (4) Democratic Members) will evaluate the operation of the financial markets in the United States and their ability to provide needed capital to small businesses. In addition, the Subcommittee will review federal programs, especially those overseen by the SBA, aimed at assisting entrepreneurs in obtaining needed capital. Since the tax policy plays an integral role in access to capital, this Committee also will examine the impact of federal tax policies on small businesses.

Oversight of capital access and financial markets.

Implementation of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

SBA financial assistance programs, including guaranteed loans, microloans, certified development company loans, and small business investment companies.

Oversight of the Department of Agriculture business and industry guaranteed loan program.

Oversight of general tax policy affecting small businesses.

The management of the SBA disaster loan program.

(4) Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations.

This Subcommittee (which will consist of six (6) Republican Members and four (4) Democratic Members) will probe the efficient operation of government programs that affect small businesses, including the SBA, and develop proposals to make them operate in a more cost-effective manner. This Subcommittee also will review the regulatory burdens imposed on small businesses and how those burdens may be alleviated.

Oversight of general issues affecting small businesses and federal agencies.

Oversight of the management of the SBA.

Oversight of the SBA Inspector General.

Implementation of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Oversight of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget.

Use of the Congressional Review Act.

Transparency of the federal rulemaking process as required by the Administrative Procedure and Data Quality Acts.

Implementation of the Paperwork Reduction Act.

(5) Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce.

This Subcommittee (which will consist of six (6) Republican Members and four (4) Democratic Members) will assess the federal procurement system, including those programs designed specifically to enhance participation by small businesses in providing goods and services to the federal government. The Subcommittee will examine various programs designed to provide technical assistance to small businesses, whether specifically aimed at federal contractors or small businesses in general. Finally, the Subcommittee will review the broad scope of workforce issues that affect the ability of small businesses to obtain and maintain qualified employees.

Oversight of government-wide procurement practices and programs affecting small businesses.

Oversight of federal procurement policies that inhibit or expand participation by small businesses in the federal contracting marketplace.

All contracting programs established by the Small Business Act, including HUBZone, 8(a), Women-, and Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Programs.

Technical assistance provided to federal contractors and perspective contractors through SBA personnel, Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, and Procurement Technical Assistance Centers.

The SBA Surety Bond guarantee program.

Oversight of all federal policies that affect the workforce including, but not limited to, the roles of the Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board.

SBA entrepreneurial development and technical assistance programs unrelated to participation in the federal government contracting.

(C) Powers and Duties of Subcommittees. Each Subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the Committee on any matters referred to it. Prior to the scheduling of any meeting or hearing of a Subcommittee, the Chair of the Subcommittee shall obtain the approval of the Chair of the Committee.

(D) Hearing Time and Date. No hearing or meeting of a Subcommittee shall take place at the same time as the meeting or hearing of the full Committee or another Subcommitte, *provided however*, that the Subcommittee Chairs may hold field hearings that conflict with those held by other Subcommittees of the Committee.

4. COMMITTEE STAFF

(A) Majority Staff. The employees of the Committee, except those assigned to the Minority as provided below, shall be appointed and assigned, and may be removed by the Chair of the Committee. The Chair shall fix their remuneration and they shall be under the general supervision and direction of the Chair.

(B) Minority Staff. The employees of the Committee assigned to the Minority shall be appointed and assigned, and their remuneration determined, as the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee shall decide.

(C) Subcommittee Staff. There shall be no separate staff assigned to Subcommittees. The Chair and Ranking Minority Member shall endeavor to ensure that sufficient Committee staff is made available in order that each Subcommittee may carry out the responsibilities set forth in Rule 3, *supra*.

5. MEETINGS

(A) Regular Meeting Day. The regular meeting day of the Committee shall be the second Wednesday of every month when the House is in session. The Chair may dispense with the meeting of the Committee, if in the sole discretion of the Chair, there is no need for such meeting.

(B) Additional Meetings. Additional meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Chair or at the request of the majority Members of the Committee pursuant to Rule XI, cl. 2(c) of the rules of the House. At least 3 days' notice of such an additional meeting shall be given unless the Chair, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, determines that there is good cause to call the meeting on less notice or upon a vote by a majority of the Committee (a quorum being present). To the extent possible, the three days shall be counted from the 72 hours before the time of the meeting. Announcements of the meeting shall be published promptly in the Daily Digest and made publicly available in electronic form.

(C) Business to be Considered. The determination of the business to be considered at each meeting shall be made by the Chair subject to limitations set forth in House Rule XI, cl. 2(c).

(D) Meeting Materials. The Chair shall provide to each Member of the Committee, to the extent practicable, at least 48 hours in advance of a meeting, a copy of the bill, resolution, report or other item to be considered at the meeting, but no later than 24 hours before the meeting. Such material also shall be made available to the public at least 24 hours in advance in electronic form.

(E) Special and Emergency Meetings. The rules for notice and meetings as set forth in Rule 5 of these Rules shall not apply to special and emergency meetings. Clause 2(c)(2) of Rule XI and clause 2(g)(3)(A) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, as applicable, shall apply to such meetings.

6. NOTICE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF HEARINGS

(A) Announcement of Hearings. Public announcement of the date, place and subject matter of any hearing to be conducted by the Committee shall be made no later than 7 calendar days before the commencement of the hearing. To the extent possible, the seven days shall be counted from 168 hours before the time of the Committee's hearing.

(B) Exception. The Chair, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, or

upon a vote by the majority of the Committee (a quorum being present), may authorize a hearing to commence on less than 7 days' notice.

(C) Witness Lists. Unless the Chair determines it is impracticable to do so, the Committee shall make a tentative witness list available at the time it makes the public announcement of the hearing. If a tentative witness list is not made available at the time of the announcement of the hearing, such witness list shall be made available as soon as practicable after such announcement is made. A final witness list shall be issued by the Committee no later than 48 hours prior to the commencement of the hearing.

(D) Hearing Material. The Chair shall provide to all Members of the Committee, as soon as practicable after the announcement of the hearing, a memorandum explaining the subject matter of the hearing and any official reports from departments and agencies on the subject matter of the hearing. Such material shall be made available to all Members of the Committee no later than 48 hours before the commencement of the hearing, unless the Chair, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, determines that certain reports from departments or agencies should not be made available prior to the commencement of the hearing. Material provided by the Chair to all Members, whether provided prior to or at the hearing, shall be placed on the Committee website no later than 48 hours after the commencement of the hearing, unless such material contains sensitive or classified information, in which case such material shall be handled pursuant to Rule 16 of the Committee's Rules.

7. MEETINGS AND HEARINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

(A) Meetings. Each meeting of the Committee or its Subcommittees for the transaction of business, including the markup of legislation, shall be open to the public, including to radio, television, and still photography coverage, except as provided by House Rule XI, cl. 4. If the majority of Members of the Committee or Subcommittee present at the meeting determine by a recorded vote in open session that all or part of the remainder of the meeting on that day shall be closed to the public because the disclosure of matters to be considered would endanger national security, would compromise sensitive law enforcement information, or would tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person or otherwise would violate any law or rule of the House; *provided however*, that no person other than Members of the Committee, and such congressional staff and such executive branch representatives they may authorize, shall be present in any meeting which has been closed to the public.

(B) Hearings. Each hearing conducted by the Committee or its Subcommittees shall be open to the public, including radio, television and still photography coverage. If the majority of Members of the Committee or Subcommittee present at the hearing determine by a recorded vote in open session that all or part of the remainder of the hearing on that day shall be closed to the public because the disclosure of matters to be considered would endanger national security, would compromise sensitive law enforcement information, or would tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person or otherwise would violate any law or rule of the House; *provided however*, that the Committee or Subcommittee may by the same procedure also vote to close one subsequent day of hearings. Notwithstanding the requirements of the preceding sentence, a majority of those present (if the requisite number of Members are present under Committee rules for the purpose of taking testimony) may vote: (i) to close the hearing for the sole purpose of discussing whether the testimony or evidence to be received would endanger the national security, would compromise sensitive law enforcement information, or violate Rule XI, cl. 2(k)(5) of the House or (ii) to close the hearing, as provided clause 2(k)(5) of Rule XI of the House.

(C) Participation in Subcommittee Hearings. The Chair and Ranking Minority Member are *ex officio* Members of all Subcommittees for any hearing conducted by a Subcommittee. Members of the Committee who wish to participate in a hearing of the Subcommittee to which they are not Members shall make such request to the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee at the commencement of the hearing. The Chair, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee, shall grant such request.

(D) Non-Participatory Attendance by Other Members of the House. No Member of the House may be excluded from non-participatory attendance at any hearing of the Committee or any Subcommittee, unless the House of Representatives shall by majority vote authorize the Committee or Subcommittees, for purposes of a particular subject of investigation, to close its hearing to Members by the same procedures designated to close hearings to the public.

(E) Procedure to Participate. Members of Congress who are not Members of the Committee but would like to participate in a hearing shall notify the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member and submit a formal request no later than 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting or hearing.

(F) Audio and Video Coverage. To the maximum extent practicable, the Committee shall provide audio and video coverage of each hearing or meeting for the transaction of business in a manner that allows the public to easily listen and view the proceedings and shall maintain the recordings of such coverage in a manner easily accessible to the public.

8. WITNESSES

(A) Number of Witnesses. For any hearing conducted by the Committee or Subcommittee there shall be no more than four non-governmental witnesses of which the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee (as appropriate) is entitled to select one witness for the hearing.

(B) Witnesses Selected by the Minority. Witnesses selected by the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee shall be invited to testify by the Chair of the Committee or Subcommittee (as appropriate). Rule 8(D) shall apply with equal force to witnesses selected by the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee.

(C) Small Business Week Exception. The limitations set forth in the preceding paragraph shall not apply if the Committee holds a hearing to honor the work of the small business community in conjunction with the annual celebration of Small Business Week. Witness limitations for such a hearing shall be determined by the Chair in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member.

(D) Statement of Witnesses.

(1) Each witness who is to appear before the Committee or Subcommittee shall file an electronic copy of the testimony with the Committee and the Ranking Minority Member no later than 48 hours before the commencement of the hearing. In addition, the witness shall provide 25 copies of the testimony by the commencement of the hearing. The Chair may waive the requirement by the witness providing 25 copies in which case the Committee or Subcommittee shall provide the 25 copies.

(2) Each non-governmental witness shall provide to the Committee and the Ranking Minority Member, no later than 48 hours before the commencement of the hearing, a curriculum vitae or other statement describing their education, employment, professional affiliation or other background information pertinent to their testimony.

(E) Witness Disclosure. As required by Rule XI, cl. 2(g) of the Rules of the House, each nongovernmental witness before the commencement of the hearing shall file with the Chair a disclosure form detailing any contracts or grants that the witness has with the federal government, as well as the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject of the hearing originating with a foreign government. In addition, each non-governmental witness shall file with the Committee Chair a disclosure form detailing any payments or contracts received from a foreign government if such payments or contracts are related in any manner to the subject matter of a hearing. Such information shall be posted on the Committee website within 24 hours after the witness appeared at the hearing.

(F) Failure to Comply. The failure to provide the materials set forth by the deadlines set forth in these rules may be grounds for excluding both the oral and written testimony of the witness unless waived by the Chair of the Committee or Subcommittee.

(G) Public Access to Witness Materials. The Committee will provide public access to printed materials, including the testimony of witnesses in electronic form on the Committee's website no later than 24 hours after the hearing is adjourned. Supplemental material provided after the hearing adjourns shall be placed on the Committee website no later than 24 hours after receipt of such material.

(H) Questioning of Witnesses. Except when the Committee adopts a motion pursuant to subdivisions (B) and (C) of clause 2(i)(2) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, Committee Members may question witnesses only when they have been recognized by the Chair for that purpose. Members shall have the opportunity, as set forth in Rule XI, cl. 2 (j) of the Rules of the House, to question each witness on the panel for a period not to exceed five minutes. For any hearing, the Chair of the Committee or Subcommittee may offer a motion to extend the questioning of a witness or witnesses by the Member identified in the motion for more than five minutes as set forth in Rule XI, cl. 2(j)(B).

(I) Order of Questioning. The Chair of the Committee or Subcommittee shall commence questioning followed by the Ranking Minority Member. Thereafter, questioning shall alternate between the majority and minority Members. Before the gavel has been struck, or in the case of Members arriving simultaneously, the order of questioning shall be based on seniority among Members of his or her own party. After the gavel has been struck, Members first to arrive shall have priority over Members of his or her own party.

(J) Consideration of Ratio. In recognizing Members to question witnesses, the Chair may take into consideration the ratio of majority and minority Members present in such a manner as to not disadvantage the Members of either party.

9. QUORUM

(A) Determining a Quorum. A quorum, for purposes of reporting a measure or recommendation, shall be a majority of the Committee Members.

(B) Quorum for a Hearing. For purposes of taking testimony or receiving evidence, a

quorum shall be one Member from the Majority and one Member from the Minority. The Chair of the Committee or Subcommittee shall exercise reasonable comity by waiting for the Ranking Minority Member even if a quorum is present before striking the gavel to commence the hearing. For hearings held by the Committee or a Subcommittee in a location other than the Committee's hearing room in Washington, DC, a quorum shall be deemed to be present if the Chair of the Committee or Subcommittee is present.

10. RECORD VOTES

(A) When Provided. A record vote of the Committee shall be provided on any question before the Committee upon the request of any Member of the Committee. A record of the vote of each Member of the Committee on a matter before the Committee shall be available in electronic form within 48 hours of such record vote, and, with respect to any roll call vote on any motion to amend or report, shall be included in the report of the Committee showing the total number of votes cast for and against and the names of those Members voting for and against.

(B) Public Access to Record Votes. The Chair of the Committee shall, not later than 24 hours after consideration of a bill, resolution, report or other item, cause the text of the reported item and any amendment adopted thereto to be made publicly available in electronic form.

11. SUBPOENAS

(A) Authorization and Issuance. A subpoena may be authorized and issued by the Committee in the conduct of any investigation or series of investigations or activities to require the attendance and testimony of such witness and the production of such books, records, correspondence, memoranda, papers and documents, as deemed necessary. Such subpoena shall be authorized by a majority of the full Committee. The requirement that the authorization of a subpoena requires a majority vote may be waived by the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee.

(B) Issuance During Congressional Recess. The Chair may issue a subpoena, in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, when the House is out for session for more than three legislative days.

12. AMENDMENTS DURING MARKUP

(A) Availability of Amendments. Any amendment offered to any pending legislation before the Committee must be made available in written form by any Member of the Committee. If such amendment is not available in written form when requested, the Chair shall allow an appropriate period for the provision thereof and may adjourn the markup to provide sufficient time for the provision of such written amendment. Such period or adjournment shall not prejudice the offering of such amendment.

(B) Drafting and Filing of Amendments. For amendments to be accepted during markup, there is no requirement that the amendments be filed prior to commencement of the markup or prepared with the assistance of the Office of Legislative Counsel. Even though it is not necessary, Members seeking to amend legislation during markup should draft amendments with the assistance of the Office of Legislative Counsel and consult with the Chair or Ranking Minority Member's staff (as appropriate) in the preparation of such amendments.

13. POSTPONEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS

(A) When Postponement is Permissible. The Chair, in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, may postpone further proceedings when a record vote is ordered on the question of approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment. The Chair may resume postponed proceedings, but no later than 24 hours after such postponement, unless the House is not in session or there are conflicts with Member schedules that make it unlikely a quorum will be present to conduct business on the postponed proceeding. In such cases, the Chair will consult with Members to set a time as early as possible to resume proceedings but in no event later than the next meeting date as set forth in Rule 5 of these Rules.

(B) Resumption of Proceedings. When proceedings resume on a postponed question, notwithstanding any intervening order for the previous question, an underlying proposition shall remain subject to further debate or amendment to the same extent as when the question was postponed.

14. COMMITTEE RECORDS

(A) The Committee shall keep a complete record of all actions, which shall include a record of the votes on any question on which a recorded vote is demanded. The result of any vote by the Committee, or if applicable by a Subcommittee, including a voice vote shall be posted on the Committee's website within 24 hours after the vote has been taken. Such record shall include a description of the amendment, motion, order, or other proposition, the name of the Member voting for and against such amendment, motion, order, or other proposition, and the names of Members present but not voting. For any amendment, motion, order, or other proposition decided by voice vote, the record shall include a description and whether the voice vote was in favor or against.

(B) Transcripts. The Committee shall keep a complete record of all Committee and Subcommittee activity which, in the case of a meeting or hearing transcript, shall include a substantially verbatim account of the remarks actually made during the proceedings subject only to technical, grammatical, and typographical corrections authorized by the person making the remarks.

(C) Availability of Records. The records of the Committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available in accordance with Rule VII of the Rules of the House. The Chair of the Committee shall notify the Ranking Member of the Committee of any decision, pursuant to Rule VII, cl. 3(b)(3) or cl. 4(b), to withhold a record otherwise available, and the matter shall be presented to the Committee for a determination of the written request of any Member of the Committee.

(D) Publishing and Posting of Records. The Committee Rules shall be made publicly available in electronic form and published in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the Chair of the Committee is elected in each odd-numbered year.

15. COMMITTEE WEBSITE

The Chair shall maintain an official Committee website for the purpose of furthering the Committee's legislative and oversight responsibilities, including communicating information about Committee's activities to Committee Members and other Members of the House. The Ranking Minority Member may maintain a similar website for the same purpose, including communicating information about the activities of the Minority to Committee Members and other Members of the House.

16. ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION

(A) Access to classified or sensitive information supplied to the Committee or Subcommittees and attendance at closed sessions of the Committee or a Subcommittee shall be limited to Members and necessary Committee staff and stenographic reporters who have appropriate security clearance when the Chair determines that such access or attendance is essential to the functioning of the Committee or one of its Subcommittees.

(B) Procedures Governing Availability. The procedures to be followed in granting access to those hearings, records, data, charts, and files of the Committee which involve classified information or information deemed to be sensitive shall be as follows:

(I) Only Members of the House of Representatives and specifically designated Committee staff of the Committee on Small Business may have access to such information.

(II) Members who desire to read materials that are in possession of the Committee shall notify the Clerk of the Committee in writing.

(III) The Clerk of the Committee will maintain an accurate access log, which identifies the circumstances surrounding access to the information, without revealing the material examined.

(IV) If the material desired to be reviewed is material which the Committee or Subcommittee deems to be sensitive enough to require special handling, before receiving access to such information, individuals will be required to sign an access information sheet acknowledging such access and that the individual has read and understands the procedures under which access is being granted.

(V) Material provided for review under this rule shall not be removed from a specified room within the Committee offices.

(VI) Individuals reviewing materials under this rule shall make certain that the materials are returned to the proper custodian.

(VII) No reproductions or recordings may be made of any portion of such materials.

(VIII) The contents of such information shall not be divulged to any person in any way, form, shape, or manner and shall not be discussed with any person who has not received the information in the manner authorized by the rules of the Committee.

(IX) When not being examined in the manner described herein, such information will be kept in secure safes or locked file cabinets within the Committee offices.

(X) These procedures only address access to information the Committee or Subcommittee deems to be sensitive enough to require special treatment.

(XI) If a Member of the House of Representatives believes that certain sensitive information should not be restricted as to dissemination or use, the Member may petition the Committee or Subcommittee to so rule. With respect to information and materials provided to the Committee by the Executive Branch or an independent agency as that term is defined in 44 U.S.C. 3502, the classification of information and materials as determined by the Executive Branch or independent agency shall prevail unless affirmatively changed by the Committee or Subcommittee involved, after consultation with the Executive Branch or independent agency.

(XII) Other materials in the possession of the Committee are to be handled in accordance with normal practices and traditions of the Committee.

17. OTHER PROCEDURES

The Chair of the Committee may establish such other procedures and take such actions as may be necessary to carry out the foregoing rules or to facilitate the effective operation of the Committee.

18. AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE RULES

The rules of the Committee may be modified, amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Members, at a meeting specifically called for such purpose, but only if written notice of the proposed change or changes has

been provided to each Member of the Committee at least 72 hours prior to the time of the meeting of the Committee to consider such change or changes.

19. BUDGET AND TRAVEL

(A) Allocation of Budget. From the amount provided to the Committee in the primary expense resolution adopted by the House of Representatives in the 115th Congress, the Chair, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, shall designate one-third of the budget under the direction of the Ranking Minority Member for the purposes of minority staff, travel expenses of minority staff and Members, and minority office expenses.

(B) Authorization of Travel. The Chair may authorize travel in connection with activities or subject matters under the legislative or oversight jurisdiction of the Committee as set forth in Rule X of the Rules of the House. The Ranking Minority Member may authorize travel for any Minority Member or staff of the minority in connection with activities or subject matters under the Committee's jurisdiction as set forth in Rule X of the Rules of the House. Before such travel, there shall be submitted to the Chair of the Committee in writing the following at least seven (7) calendar days prior specifying: a) the purpose of the travel; b) the dates during which the travel is to occur; c) the names of the states or countries to be visited and the length of time spent in each; and d) the names of Members and staff of the Committee participating in such travel.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows;

S. 305. An act to amend title 4, United States Code, to encourage the display of the flag of the United States on National Vietnam War Veterans Day; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 7, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

495. A letter from the Acting Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final regulations — Open Licensing Requirement for Competitive Grant Programs [Docket ID: ED-2015-OS-0105] (RIN: 1894-AA07) received February 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

496. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits received February 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

497. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedures for Central Air Conditioners and Heat Pumps [Docket No.: EERE-2016-BT-TP-0029] (RIN: 1904-AD71) received February 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

498. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedures for Compressors [Docket No.: EERE-2014-BT-TP-0054] (RIN: 1904-AD43) received February 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

499. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Hexythiazox; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0795] [EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0796] [EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0797; FRL-9957-22] received February 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

500. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Propamocarb; Pesticide Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0083; FRL-9957-68] received February 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

501. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting the FY 2016 annual report of Military Assistance and Military Exports, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2415(a); Public Law 87-195, Sec. 655 (as amended by Public Law 104-164, Sec. 148); (110 Stat. 1435); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

502. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting the Navy's proposed Letter of Offer and Acceptance to the Republic of Korea, Transmittal No. 16-85, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

503. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting the Air Force's proposed Letter of Offer and Acceptance to the Republic of Korea, Transmittal No. 16-83, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

504. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting the Agency's reports containing the September 30, 2016, status of loans and guarantees, issued under Section 25(a)(11) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

505. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's 2016 Data Mining Report to Congress pursuant to Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2000ee-3(c)(1); Public Law 110-53, Sec. 804(c)(1); (121 Stat. 363); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

506. A letter from the Chief Financial Officer, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, transmitting the report of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service under the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act for Fiscal Year 2016; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

507. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule To List Two Guitarfishes as Threatened Under the Endangered Species Act [Docket No.: 150211138-7024-02] (RIN: 0648-XD771) received February 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

508. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery; 2017-2018 Fishing Quotas [Docket No.: 160816746-6999-02] (RIN: 0648-XE819) received January 26, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

509. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Blueline Tilefish Fishery; Secretarial Interim Action [Docket No.: 160609505-6505-01] (RIN: 0648-BG07) received February 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

510. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries Off West Coast States; Coastal Pelagic Species Fisheries; Annual Specifications [Docket No.: 160411325-6535-02] (RIN: 0648-XE568) received February 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

511. A letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Annual Report to Congress on the implementation, enforcement, and prosecution of registration requirements of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 16991; Public Law 109-248, Sec. 635; (120 Stat. 644); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

512. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, ASFR/OGAPA/Division of Grants, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Annual Civil Monetary Penalties Inflation Adjustment (RIN: 0991-AC0) received February 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

513. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Standards Branch, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Civil Penalty Inflation Adjustment [Docket ID: BSEE-2017-0001; 17XE1700DX EX1SF0000.DAQ000 EEEE50000] (RIN: 1014-AA34) received February 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

514. A letter from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Department's final

rule — Rules of Practice and Procedure; Adjusting Civil Money Penalties for Inflation (RIN: 3052-AD21) received February 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

515. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Uniform National Discharge Standards for Vessels of the Armed Forces — Phase II Batch One: Delay of Effective Date [EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0469; FRL-9959-30-OW] received February 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

516. A letter from the Acting Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, transmitting a copy of a memorandum, entitled ''Construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline''; jointly to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Resources, and Energy and Commerce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. BYRNE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 91. Resolution providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976; providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 57) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to accountability and State plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 58) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues (Rept. 115–9).

Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri (for himself, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Mr. ROYCE of California):

H.R. 871. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt premiums paid on non-cash-value property and casualty insurance from the taxes to enforce reporting on certain foreign accounts; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MOORE, and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H.R. 872. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to enhance medical device communications and ensure device cleanliness; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GALLAGHER (for himself and Mr. MOULTON):

H.R. 873. A bill to authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. LOEBSACK (for himself, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. HIMES, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. BARLETTA, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. OLSON, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. JONES, Mr. COOPER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. PAULSEN, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. VELA, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SOTO, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. EMMER, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. SWALWELL of California, and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 874. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that certain veterans receive in-patient psychiatric care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:

H.R. 875. A bill to facilitate and streamline the Bureau of Reclamation process for creating or expanding water storage, rural water supply, and water recycling projects under Reclamation law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KATKO (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. VELA, Mr. KEATING, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN):

H.R. 876. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reform programs of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. AMODEI (for himself, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. KILMER, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. JONES, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. HECK, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HILL, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. MARINO, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. STEWART, Mr. POCAN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. KIND, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. ROSS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. WITTMAN, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. WENSTRUP):

H.R. 877. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Army to place in Arlington National Cemetery a monument honoring the helicopter pilots and crewmembers who were killed while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BIGGS (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. MESSER, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. STEWART, Mr. LANCE, Mr. OLSON, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. YOHO, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Mr. BARR, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. BRAT, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. MARINO, Mr. ROKITA, and Mr. ISSA):

H.R. 878. A bill to authorize the use of unapproved medical products by patients diagnosed with a terminal illness in accordance with State law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself and Ms. ESTY):

H.R. 879. A bill to require the Government Accountability Office to conduct periodic reviews of the flood insurance rates and flood insurance rate maps under the national flood insurance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. HUDSON, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida):

H.R. 880. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to facilitate assignment of military trauma care providers to civilian trauma centers in order to maintain military trauma readiness and to support such centers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CROWLEY (for himself, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. COHEN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. NADLER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. TIPTON, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. ISSA, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MARINO, and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia):

H.R. 881. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to provide for direct payment of statutory sound recording performance royalties to record producers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CUELLAR (for himself, Mr. HURD, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Mr. VELA):

H.R. 882. A bill to provide for a general capital increase for the North American Development Bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. DESANTIS:

H.R. 883. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a certification process for the issuance of nondisclosure requirements accompanying certain administrative subpoenas, to provide for judicial review of such nondisclosure requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 884. A bill to clarify that volunteers at a children's consignment event are not employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 885. A bill to extend the waiver of limitations with respect to excluding from gross income amounts received by wrongfully incarcerated individuals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 886. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Defense to permit dependents of retired members of the Armed Forces who reside in military housing to attend Department of Defense elementary and secondary schools; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 887. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to extend honorary citizenship to otherwise qualified noncitizens who enlisted in the Philippines and died while serving on active duty with the United States Armed Forces during certain periods of hostilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 888. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain totally disabled veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself and Mr. POE of Texas):

H.R. 889. A bill to provide for the establishment of an office within the Internal Revenue Service to focus on violations of the internal revenue laws by persons who are under investigation for conduct relating to the promotion of commercial sex acts and trafficking in persons crimes, and to increase the criminal monetary penalty limitations for the underpayment or overpayment of tax due to fraud; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MARINO (for himself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Mrs. COMSTOCK):

H.R. 890. A bill to establish the United States Copyright Office as an agency in the legislative branch, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MEADOWS (for himself and Mr. FARENTHOLD):

H.R. 891. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to employee protective arrangements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 892. A bill to adjust the amount of monthly old-age, survivors, and disability insurance payments under title II of the Social Security Act based on locality-based comparability payment rates; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 893. A bill to protect, improve, and modernize the act of voting; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 894. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income certain interest and money market fund dividend income payments to charity and to modify the requirements relating to the reporting of such payments; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ROKITA (for himself, Mr. MESSER, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona):

H.R. 895. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for qualified elementary and secondary education tuition; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TIBERI (for himself, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. STIVERS, and Mr. WENSTRUP):

H.R. 896. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt amounts paid for aircraft management services from the excise taxes imposed on transportation by air; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ZELDIN (for himself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. SUOZZI, and Miss RICE of New York):

H.R. 897. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to State and local entities to carry out peer-to-peer mental health programs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SCHRADER:

H.J. Res. 64. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States giving Congress power to regulate campaign contributions for Federal elections; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ZELDIN (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. ENGEL, and Ms. MENG):

H. Con. Res. 20. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the execution-style murders of United States citizens Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi in the Republic of Serbia in July 1999; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. ISSA, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. KEATING, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. BERA, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. MEEKS, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. SIRES, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. EVANS, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HIMES, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. TITUS, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H. Con. Res. 21. Concurrent resolution reaffirming a strong commitment to the United States-Australia alliance relationship; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. YOHO, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H. Res. 92. A resolution condemning North Korea's development of multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah (for himself and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H. Res. 93. A resolution providing amounts for the expenses of the Committee on Natural Resources in the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. SOTO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Ms. BASS):

H. Res. 94. A resolution commending Sally Quillian Yates for refusing to enforce Donald Trump's discriminatory Executive Order 13769 (82 Fed. Reg. 8977; relating to ''Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States''); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri:

H.R. 871.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1 provides Congress with the power to ''lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises.''

By Mr. TED LIEU of California:

H.R. 872.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. GALLAGHER:

H.R. 873.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. LOEBSACK:

H.R. 874.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation provided by Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:

H.R. 875.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. KATKO:

H.R. 876.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. AMODEI:

H.R. 877.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States) and clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress), and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Mr. BIGGS:

H.R. 878.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 879.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution of the

United States and Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 880.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One, Section Eight, Clause One ''To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States''

Article One, Section Eight, Clause Three ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes''

By Mr. CROWLEY:

H.R. 881.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3: ''The Congress shall have Power [. . .] To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States . . .''

By Mr. CUELLAR:

H.R. 882.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. DESANTIS:

H.R. 883.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution. Specifically, Clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States) and Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 884.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 885.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 886.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, section 8 of the United States Constitution (clauses 12, 13, 14, 16 and 18), which grants Congress the power to raise and support an Army; to provide and maintain a Navy; to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces; to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia; and to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers.

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 887.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution gives Congress the authority to ''establish an uniform rule of naturalization'' and to ''make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces''.

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 888.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, section 8 of the United States Constitution (clauses 12, 13, 14, 16 and 18), which grants Congress the power to raise and support an Army; to provide and maintain a Navy; to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces; to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia; and to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 889.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution which provides Congress with the power to lay and collect taxes and regulate commerce among the several states.

By Mr. MARINO:

H.R. 890.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 8: To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by security for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 891.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 ''The Congress shall have the power To . . . regulate Commerce . . . among the several States . . .''

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 892.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 893.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 894.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROKITA:

H.R. 895.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII, Clause I: The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

By Mr. TIBERI:

H.R. 896.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 or Article I

By Mr. ZELDIN:

H.R. 897.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SCHRADER:

H.J. Res. 64.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This joint resolution is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article V of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 60: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana and Mr. BACON.

H.R. 112: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 140: Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 176: Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 233: Mr. LOBIONDO and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 275: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania and Mr. SHUSTER.

H.R. 299: Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. KILMER, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mrs. LOVE.

H.R. 332: Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. CAPUANO, and Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 334: Mr. POCAN, Mr. PALLONE, and Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 350: Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 358: Mr. LAMALFA.

H.R. 367: Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. MAST, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. COMER, Mr. JORDAN, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.

H.R. 369: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 387: Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. BABIN, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Ms. GRANGER, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. LANCE, Mr. MEADOWS, Mrs. ROBY, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. HILL, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. GUTHRIE, Ms. LEE, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. WOODALL.

H.R. 392: Mr. VEASEY, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Miss RICE of New York, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 394: Mr. ROE of Tennessee and Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.R. 400: Mr. LOUDERMILK and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 406: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 421: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 422: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 428: Mr. RATCLIFFE.

H.R. 439: Mr. AGUILAR.

H.R. 468: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 476: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 490: Mr. BRIDENSTINE and Mr. MARSHALL.

H.R. 512: Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 525: Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 539: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 553: Mr. BABIN.

H.R. 559: Mr. GAETZ, Mr. COFFMAN, and Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 592: Mr. KILMER, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. DENHAM, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.

H.R. 630: Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 632: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BERGMAN.

H.R. 637: Mr. NEWHOUSE and Mr. HARPER.

H.R. 662: Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

H.R. 692: Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. GAETZ, and Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.

H.R. 694: Mr. NEWHOUSE.

H.R. 696: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SIRES, Mr. RASKIN, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 712: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 713: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 724: Mr. LAWSON of Florida.

H.R. 732: Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. DUFFY.

H.R. 747: Mr. MEEHAN, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 757: Ms. NORTON, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BEYER, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MCEACHIN, and Mr. SARBANES.

H.R. 769: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee, and Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H.R. 771: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 772: Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. HOLDING, and Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 777: Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 781: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. PALMER, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. BYRNE, and Mr. GAETZ.

H.R. 782: Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 785: Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. BARR, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 787: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 789: Mr. DUNN, Ms. CHENEY, and Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 793: Mr. GALLEGO and Mrs. BUSTOS.

H.R. 804: Mr. ENGEL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. HECK, and Mr. ESPAILLAT.

H.R. 816: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 820: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. WENSTRUP, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. LANCE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HURD, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

H.R. 821: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. BASS, Mr. BEYER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 831: Mr. HURD.

H.R. 841: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 842: Mr. AMASH.

H.R. 850: Mr. BANKS of Indiana and Mr. FERGUSON.

H.R. 852: Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. PANETTA, and Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 860: Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H.R. 866: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 868: Mr. SABLAN and Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 869: Mr. SABLAN and Mr. TAKANO.

H.J. Res. 6: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida and Mr. DAVIDSON.

H.J. Res. 27: Mr. MARINO, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. OLSON, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. LAUDERMILK, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. GOHMERT, and Mr. BYRNE.

H.J. Res. 42: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. YOHO, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. DUFFY.

H.J. Res. 43: Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. HARPER, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. GUTHRIE.

H.J. Res. 44: Mr. LABRADOR.

H.J. Res. 48: Mr. HUFFMAN and Ms. NORTON.

H.J. Res. 53: Mr. RASKIN.

H.J. Res. 57: Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. YOHO, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. FERGUSON, and Mr. BUDD.

H.J. Res. 58: Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. YOHO, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. STEFANIK, and Mr. FERGUSON.

H.J. Res. 59: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida.

H.J. Res. 62: Mr. ROSS.

H.J. Res. 63: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.

H. Con. Res. 8: Mr. FASO.

H. Con. Res. 13: Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. NEWHOUSE.

H. Res. 15: Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. COSTA, Mr. RUSH, Mr. REED, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H. Res. 28: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H. Res. 30: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H. Res. 31: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. GRIFFITH, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. TITUS, Mr. PETERS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. GOODLATTE, and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H. Res. 38: Mr. BYRNE.

H. Res. 60: Mr. KING of Iowa and Mr. ISSA.

H. Res. 78: Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. LANGEVIN.

H. Res. 85: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H. Res. 90: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

The provisions in H.R. 428 that warranted a referral to the Committee on Natural Resources do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

The provisions in H.J. Res. 44 that warranted a referral to the Committee on Natural Resources do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

OFFERED BY MS. FOXX

The provisions warranting a referral to the Committee on Education and the Workforce in H.J. Res. 57 do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MS. FOXX

The provisions warranting a referral to the Committee on Education and the Workforce in H.J. Res. 58 do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2017 No. 20

Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon 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.

Gracious God of infinite goodness, confirm Your past mercies to us by empowering us to be faithful to Your commands. Help our lawmakers this day to use their understanding, affections, health, time, and talents to do what You desire. May they desire to please You with faithful service as You rule their hearts without a rival, guiding their thoughts, words, and works.

Lord, enable them to fulfill their duty to love You with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. Take possession of their hearts, and order their steps by the power of Your loving providence. Pour down Your blessings upon our Senators that they may ever promote liberty and justice for all.

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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with leaders permitted to speak therein for up to 15 minutes.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the nomination of Elisabeth Prince DeVos to be Secretary of Education, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elisabeth Prince DeVos, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Education.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE CABINET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise this morning to speak directly to my friends on the other side of the aisle.

Now is the time to put country before party. I understand the pull of party loyalty. I understand deference to a new President. But from what we have seen in the first 2 weeks of this administration, party loyalty is demanding too much of my Republican colleagues on several issues. On the matter of the Cabinet, on the matter of the President's Executive order on immigration, and on the matter of dealing with Russia, we need Republicans to set aside partisan considerations in favor of doing what is best for the country; otherwise, our institutions of government, our Constitution, and our core American ideals may be eroded.

My friends on the other side of the aisle are going along with the President and treating many of these things as if they are normal, but America knows they are not. We need Republicans to start recognizing it, saying it, and stepping up to the plate to do something about it.

I understand my Republican colleagues will go along with the President 90 percent of the time, but there are certain issues that are too important that demand putting country above party. Now is the time to put country above party.

First, on the Cabinet, our norms of good government and above all ethics are being tested by a Cabinet unlike any other I have seen in my time in public office. There are so many billionaires with so many conflicts of interest and so little expertise in the issues they would oversee.

Take the nomination we are now considering: Betsy DeVos for Education Secretary. In my mind she is the least qualified nominee in a historically unqualified Cabinet. On conflicts of interest, she ranks among the worst. In her ethics agreement, which was delivered to the committee after the first hearing, it was revealed that she keeps interests in three family-owned trusts that have holdings in companies that could be affected by matters related to the Department of Education. Independent ethics watchdogs have criticized her ethics agreement for failing to deal with these conflicts of interest.

On philosophy of education, her views are extreme. She seems to constantly demean the main purpose of her job—public education. Nine out of 10 American kids attend public schools. Her views on public education are a major concern, particularly for Senators from rural areas. There is not a lot of choice of schools outside major metropolitan areas. If you don't have a good public school in your neighborhood or in your community, you have nothing. Any Senator from a rural State should be worried about her commitment to public education.

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

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We in New York have the third largest rural population in America. I am worried for those schools where, if the school is no good, you don't have much choice; you don't have any choice.

Above all, and on basic competence, Mrs. DeVos has failed to make the grade. She didn't seem to know about the Federal education law that guarantees education to students with disabilities. She could not unequivocally say that guns shouldn't be in the schools, and she didn't seem to know about a long simmering debate in education policy about measuring growth versus proficiency. Frankly, Mrs. DeVos's answers at the hearings were embarrassing, not only for her but for my Republican colleagues on the committee who rushed her nomination through with 5 minutes of questions, only one round, and at 5 p.m.

Cabinet Secretaries can't be expected to know everything, but this is different. The nominee for Secretary of Education doesn't know some of the most basic facts about education policy. She has failed to show proficiency, and there is no longer any time for growth.

The American people are speaking in one loud voice against this nominee. I have had many people come up to me in New York and say: I voted for Donald Trump, but I am making calls about this nominee. Americans across the country in red and blue States have been flooding our offices with phone calls and emails, asking the Senate to vote no on Betsy DeVos. Local newspaper editorial boards, many of whom have endorsed Trump, are saying the same thing.

My friends, the Senators from Maine and Alaska, were profiles in courage last week when they announced their opposition to her nomination, but, unfortunately, so far they are the exception. We need just one more vote, and we can get a Secretary of Education who is a lot better than the one who was nominated. I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to follow the courageous example of the Senators from Maine and Alaska. We have an obligation as Senators—not as Republicans and not as Democrats, but as Senators—to evaluate these nominees and their fitness for office because these nominees are going to wield immense power over the lives of Americans for the next 4 years. I ask my Republican colleagues to look into their conscience and cast their votes tomorrow, not based on party loyalty but based on whether or not Mrs. DeVos is qualified to be our Nation's leader on education policy. If one doesn't measure up, the Senate has a responsibility to reject the nomination.

I realize it rarely occurs, but this should be an exception because she is so uniquely unqualified, whether it comes to competence, whether it comes to philosophy against the public schools, or whether it comes to conflicts of interest, which still exist in far too many instances with Mrs. DeVos.

TRAVEL BAN

Madam President, second, the President's Executive order on immigration and refugees is so poorly constructed, so haphazardly implemented, so constitutionally dubious, so wrong in terms of what America is all about, and so contrary to our basic values as Americans that my Republican friends should feel a duty to country to help us rescind it. Several Members on the other side—I think it is over a dozen—have expressed concerns about it. Several spoke out strongly and unequivocally about imposing any type of ban during the campaign, but now that we have such a ban, they are unfortunately silent. It is time for that silence to end and for Republicans to step up to the plate and start backing up their words with actions.

On Friday, the order was temporarily blocked by a Federal judge, Judge Robart. On Saturday, the President questioned his court credibility via tweet and then asked the country to blame any potential attacks on the country on the judge and the courts. He is not a ''so-called'' judge as the President tweeted but rather a Senate-confirmed Bush appointee. That is not how we do things here in America.

There is a separation of powers for a reason. An independent judiciary is absolutely necessary to ensure Presidents and Congresses do not break the law or impinge on the Constitution, but this President has shown a certain callousness when it comes to judges who rule against his whim—Judge Curiel during the campaign and Judge Robart now. Instead of attacking the judge, the President should be working with Congress to tighten up security where it is actually needed.

The President has said that if there are attacks, the judge will be to blame. I will remind him that not one attack on U.S. soil has been perpetrated by a refugee from one of the seven countries in the Executive order. This order doesn't make us any safer; if anything, the Executive order increases the risk of lone wolf attacks, our greatest threat. That is what happened in San Bernardino, it is what happened in Orlando, and no authority less than Senator JOHN MCCAIN has said exactly that—that it will increase the likelihood of attacks by lone wolves, those disaffected people who are egged on by the evil ISIS.

So I make this offer to my friends on the other side of the aisle: Join Democrats in rescinding the Executive order, and we will work with you in a bipartisan way in good faith to actually make our country safer. Close up that visa waiver program where people from countries—just because they are generally friendly to us—are not checked. We know places such as France and Belgium have homegrown terrorists lured by ISIS. They can get on a plane and come here far more easily than a refugee from those seven countries. Let's tighten that up. Instead, the President gives us this Executive order. Lord knows how he came to it. Every expert on terrorism will say there are a lot more important and better things that we need to do.

So let me repeat: The stakes are too high for party loyalty to stand in the way of doing what is right to protect this country. We ought to scrap the order and start over. The order not only does not protect us from terrorism but makes it worse. It stands in the face of what America is all about. Our country has welcomed immigrants, and the beautiful lady with the torch in the harbor of the city in which I live has beckoned us for generations.

RUSSIA

Finally, Madam President, I ask my Republican colleagues to put country over party when it comes to Russia. This administration has shown a disquieting reluctance to criticize Russia when it flouts international norms and laws. The administration seems hesitant to enforce new sanctions and has even hinted at relaxing existing sanctions at what has always been our most formidable enemy along with ISIS: Russia and Putin.

Unbelievably, just yesterday the President insinuated that the Russian and American Governments were somehow morally equivalent. When asked about Putin's authoritarian regime, President Trump responded: ''There are a lot of killers. You think our country is so innocent?'' Can you imagine if a Democrat had said that? Every one of these seats would be filled with people decrying that kind of moral equivalence.

Russia, a dictatorship where Putin kills his enemies, imprisons the press, and causes trouble anywhere he can in the world is morally equivalent to this great land? Come on. Where are you? You know if the Democrats had said that you would be howling at the moon, and rightfully so. But here, I don't hear much.

Vladimir Putin has little or no respect for the diversity of his people, for freedom of religion and expression, for a free press, for free and fair elections in Russia—and America, it seems—and he has demonstrated on more than one occasion that he will go to any length to silence political dissidents, including murdering them. I would ask President Trump: Does that sound like America? Maybe in President Trump's mind it does, but it sure doesn't to most of America—just about every American. It is not the America that this body represents.

As I said, my Republican colleagues ought to be aghast. I don't think anyone from the other side would associate himself or herself with those comments. I am encouraged that the Republican leader and other Senate Republicans have criticized the President for those dangerous remarks, but what worries me most is the policy. Russia is a persistent and strategic threat to this Nation. Will this administration cozy up to Putin and his oligarchs and relax sanctions? Will they look the

other way when Russia supports separatists in Ukraine, commits human rights violations alongside Iran, Hezbollah, and the Assad regime? Putin is the kind of person who, if you give him an inch, he takes 10 miles. We all have come across people like that.

President Trump's rhetoric is ceding more of the battlespace to our enemies each day. So what we must do in this body is ensure that current sanctions stay in place and are robustly enforced. We also need to increase sanctions on Russia for its interference with our election. We ask our colleagues to step up to the plate, do what they know is right, and join us in making sure that the President cannot unilaterally reduce sanctions and that we strengthen sanctions for what he has tried to do in our election. The stakes are too high to let loyalty to this President—any President—stop this body from doing the right thing for the American people.

On the Cabinet and particularly Mrs. DeVos, on the Executive order, the lack of respect for an independent judiciary, and on Russia, I ask my Republican colleagues once again to consider principle over party and their duty to country before deference to the President.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, over the last few weeks, people across the country have continued to make their voices heard in opposition to the nomination of Betsy DeVos—moms and dads, grandmothers and grandfathers, students young and old, and cities, towns, urban, suburban, and rural communities. People are standing up and they will not be silenced. Thousands upon thousands have joined protests in their communities. Hundreds of thousands have emailed or called their Senators, jamming our phone lines, swamping the voicemail system, and shattering records. Millions have engaged on social media, sharing information with their friends, signing petitions, and pressuring their elected officials.

It has made a difference. Every single Democrat will be standing with their constituents and opposing Betsy DeVos. Just last week, two Republicans announced their opposition as well. I can tell you I know for a fact there are other Republicans who are feeling the heat and could come around.

This nomination is dead even right now, on the razor's edge. Fifty Senators, Democrats and Republicans will vote to reject Betsy DeVos. We need just one more Republican to join us, to stand on the side of students, parents, and public education in America and say no to Betsy DeVos.

I come to the floor to kick off the final day of debate on this nomination. On Friday, I spoke at length, making my case for why the Senate should oppose Betsy DeVos. Democrats will hold the floor for the next 24 hours, until the final vote, to do everything we can to persuade just one more Republican to join us.

I strongly encourage people across the country to join us. Double down on your advocacy, keep making your voices heard for these last 24 hours.

Over the past 3 weeks, I have heard a number of Republicans wonder why Democrats and so many parents and teachers across the country were so focused on this nomination in this moment. President Trump has done so much in these first few weeks, and so many of his people he has nominated to run critical agencies have not been people I can support, but what is it about Betsy DeVos that has inspired so much grassroots energy and opposition across this country?

I think I understand. It is very clear to me. For the vast majority of people across the country, public education isn't just another issue, it is different. For those of us who owe everything we have to the strong public education we received, for those who saw our children and grandchildren move through our public schools, for those of us who walked into a public classroom ourselves to teach or have friends or family who have dedicated their lives to teaching, for those of us who see the role strong public schools play in our communities, especially our rural communities, often offering an educational and a community resource where it simply wouldn't otherwise be offered, we believe that a commitment to strong public schools is part of America's core, the idea that every student in every community should have the opportunities that strong public schools offer. This is a notion that is embedded in our values. It is who we are. It is in our blood.

For those people across the country who feel that way, who believe those things, the nomination of Betsy DeVos truly hits close to home. It was a slap in the face because she doesn't approach this the way most of us do. She doesn't cherish public education. She doesn't value it. She is someone who has dedicated her career and her inherited fortune to privatizing public schools, to tearing down public education, to defunding it in order to push more taxpayer dollars into private schools and for-profit charters. She has called public education ''a dead end.'' Where she sits from a distance, she has called it ''an embarrassment.'' She has disparaged those who work in our public schools, saying our best and our brightest ''steer clear.'' She has said education is ''an industry.''

An industry? Well, for someone such as she, a billionaire, rightwing activist who spent her career and inherited fortune buying and selling companies, she just doesn't understand an ''industry'' that isn't focused on profits and that doesn't exist in the free market. When people across the country hear someone such as Betsy DeVos say these things about public education, when they hear a rightwing conservative billionaire more focused on her antigovernment ideology than helping our students, when they see that someone who spent her career trying to destroy public schools has been nominated to lead the Federal Agency dedicated to public education, they start to pay some attention.

In a Senate hearing, when they see that person so clearly lack any of the issues, when they see her unable to explain basic concepts in education policy, unwilling to make basic commitments to not privatizing or defunding our public schools, confused about the need for Federal protections for students with disabilities and so committed to a rightwing agenda that she pointed to the need for guns in our schools to protect against ''potential grizzly bears'' in response to a question from a Senator representing the Newtown families, people across the country pay even more attention, and they start to make their voices heard.

I am not surprised that opposition to Betsy DeVos has caught fire across the country. I am not surprised people are talking about it to their friends, writing letters to the Senators, and showing up to protest when they have never done anything like that before because this is about their kids, their schools, and their communities. It is about the core idea that we are a nation that invests in strong public education and one that strives to guarantee the promise and opportunity it affords to every student in our country—not that public education is perfect, of course not. We have a lot of work to do, but that work should be directed toward strengthening public schools, not tearing them down. Public education is something that should be valued as an important piece of the fabric of this Nation and the expansion of our middle class, not scorned and ridiculed by billionaires who never had any use for it themselves.

Friday I spent a lot of time on the floor laying out my case in detail opposing Betsy DeVos. I talked about the open questions that are remaining regarding her tangled finances and potential conflicts of interest. I ran through the strong concerns with her record, her lack of experience, and her lack of clear understanding of basic education issues. I discussed my strong belief that her vision for education in America is deeply at odds with where parents, students, and families across our country want to go. I went through the process of how Republicans jammed this nominee through our committee, cutting corners and doing everything possible to protect her from scrutiny. I will not go through all of that again now, but I do want to make one more point, one I hope will be compelling to my Republican friends who are still resisting pressure from their constituents and sticking with Betsy DeVos; that is, no matter what you think about Betsy DeVos's policy ideas, no matter what you think of her qualifications to run this agency, no matter

what you think about her personal understanding of the issues or her financial entanglements, one thing is very clear; if she is confirmed, she would enter this job as the most controversial and embattled Secretary in the history of this Department. She would start this job with no credibility inside the agency she is supposed to lead, with no influence in Congress, as the punch line in late-night comedy shows, and without the confidence of the American people.

A vote for Betsy DeVos is a vote for a Secretary of Education who is likely to succeed only in further dividing us on education issues and who may try to take steps to try to implement her anti-student agenda but would do so with people across the country. So many of us in the Senate are on guard and ready to fight back.

I urge my Republican friends—and we just need one more—let's cut this off right now. Let's ask President Trump to send us someone who is qualified, who understands the issues, and who truly cares about public education. Together, let's stand with our constituents and say no to Betsy DeVos.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I wish to start by thanking Senator MURRAY and the Members of the HELP Committee for the work they have done to cast light on the record and the lack of record of Mrs. Betsy DeVos, President Trump's nominee to be Secretary of Education.

As the Senator from Washington has told us, the more the American people learn about the record of Betsy DeVos, the more concerned they become. The American people are making their voices heard in every Senate office. The switchboard has been essentially shut down, and I can tell you that I have received over 14,000 calls from Maryland on this nominee alone.

People are calling because the more they look at the record, the more they realize this nominee's lack of commitment to the essential mission of the Department of Education. That mission is to provide every child in America with access to a quality public education. This concern about the nominee is shared across political parties.

As Senator SUSAN COLLINS of Maine said on this floor, Mrs. DeVos's concentration on vouchers ''raises the question about whether she fully appreciates that the Secretary Of Education's primary focus must be on helping States and communities, parents, teachers, school board members, and administrators strengthen our public schools.''

Regardless of ZIP Code, our mission must be to provide every child with access to a high-quality neighborhood public school. It is absolutely true that in too many places around in country we are failing to meet the goal, but the response to a troubled school should not be to walk away from it in favor of sketchy voucher schemes. Instead we must work together to provide the necessary resources and interventions to help those schools and those students achieve success. Over the last 2 years, I have spent a lot of time traveling over the great State of Maryland. I visited schools, talked to college students, and heard from parents. No matter where I went, in every part of our State, everybody wanted the same thing: a good school, affordable college, either community college or 4-year colleges, and a fair shot at reaching their dreams.

The U.S. Department of Education is supposed to help them get that opportunity. Let me take a moment to talk about what the Department of Education means to some neighborhoods in my State of Maryland. Not long ago, I visited a pair of community schools in Baltimore City, the Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School in Upton/Druid Heights in West Baltimore and the Benjamin Franklin High School in Brooklyn, South Baltimore. Upton/Druid Heights is a historic African-American community in Baltimore. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, jazz great Cab Calloway, and civil rights pioneer Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson all walked its streets, but today it is a community in distress. Most of its children live in poverty; 95 percent of the students at Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary are on free or reduced lunch. Despite its challenges, it has a strong faith-based institution and community groups. Mrs. DeVos's approach to schools such as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor has been to give up on them, to abandon them, and to divert resources to voucher programs.

Fortunately, the Department of Education did not abandon this school. In 2012, it designated Upton/Druid Heights as a Promise Neighborhood. The Department provided resources to support comprehensive services for families. These include B'more for Healthy Babies, which has dramatically reduced infant mortality rates in the city; Parent University, to help educate parents of young children; and financial literacy and education, to help with filling out income tax forms and to help families manage their budgets.

In 2012, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor became a community school. It has a community school coordinator, a position that can be filled using funds under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which provides financial assistance to schools with high numbers of children from low-income families. The community school coordinator works with parents, students, educators, and community residents to learn the needs of the neighborhood and form partnerships to meet them. The University of Maryland School of Social Work, which is located just down the road, joined them to provide trauma training so that teachers could recognize and respond to trauma among the children and go on home visits to work with families. They received a grant to build a first-ever playground on campus—something that most schools take for granted. Local churches provided safe spaces for kids. The Weinberg Foundation donated a beautiful library. There is a jobs center, where parents can look for employment, and a food bank, to send kids home with something to eat over the weekend. The school was transformed into a place where kids want to be, receiving the mayor's award for the greatest drop in students at risk for chronic absenteeism. It has been a success story.

In a little different part of town, Ben Franklin High School exists, and it is isolated geographically in the Brooklyn neighborhood. It is on a peninsula at the southern part of the city. Brooklyn is a historic waterfront neighborhood with strong ties to manufacturing. The Brooklyn community built ships for the United States in World War II. Many families in Brooklyn have been there for generations. As manufacturing left and Bethlehem Steel closed—Bethlehem Steel provided about 12,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs—times got tougher for those working families.

In the year 2011, Benjamin Franklin was one of the bottom 5 percent of schools in the State of Maryland—again, one of those schools that this nominee would have walked away from in favor of vouchers. Again, the good news is the Department of Education did not walk away. It provided extra funding to help turn things around. Using the community schools model, they assessed and responded to the needs of the students.

Interns from the University of Maryland School of Social Work provided mental health services. The United Way offers a workforce development program and an onsite early childhood development center that helps teen parents graduate, knowing their children have quality care. A family stability program helps families avoid homelessness. CSX is working with the school to build a football field.

Students worked together with their neighbors to take ownership of their communities and protest the placement of an incinerator near them. Some figured that this low-income neighborhood was a good target to put an incinerator, but the community fought back and won. They have put thousands of hours into community service, including the Chesapeake Bay cleanup. The school's office of student service learning helps connect students to internships and job-training programs.

In Brooklyn, the crime rate and the teen pregnancy rates have dropped, and attendance at Ben Franklin is up. When I asked the students what they liked about the school, they said: ''We feel like someone cares now,'' and ''everyone is positive.''

At both of these schools, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Ben Franklin, the

principals told me that the community schools model allowed them to form partnerships to meet the needs of their students' lives so that they could focus on delivering a high-quality education. Because the students' needs are being met more comprehensively, the students can focus on learning, and because we have a team outside of the teachers who are helping provide some services to these kids, the teachers can focus on teaching.

It is important for us to understand that every child who walks through the doors of a school has a unique family circumstance and their own individual needs.

The community school approach emphasizes the fact that no school is an island onto itself. Every school is part of a neighborhood, and we need to understand the special circumstances of the children and families in those neighborhoods. It is not just for urban schools like Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Ben Franklin. Community schools have shown success in rural areas of Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Montana, and all across the country.

This idea that every child should receive a good public education is as old as our Republic itself. Our Nation's Founders knew the contribution of education to the success of our democracy. They knew that an educated population would be a strong safeguard against tyranny. In a letter in 1786, Thomas Jefferson wrote:

> I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness.

As early as 1779, Jefferson was putting forward legislation to create a public school system that would give children a fair start. Jefferson later wrote to John Adams:

> It was a bill for the more general diffusion of learning. This proposed to divide every county into wards of five or six miles square, like your townships; to establish in each ward a free school for reading, writing and common arithmetic; to provide for the annual selection of the best subjects from these schools, who might receive, at the public expense, a higher degree of public education at a district school.

He went on to say:

> Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition and birth for public trusts.

Though America did not start the public education system at that moment in time, those ideas and that philosophy of education as the great equalizer and tool to develop the talents of Americans, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, were the foundation of the public school system that we have today.

President Trump gave remarkably little attention to education during his campaign. He pretty much ignored the public school education system in favor of his $20 billion voucher scheme that would drain huge amounts of resources from neighborhood schools like the two in Baltimore that I just discussed. With the President offering only vague promises and pricey schemes, it is even more important that we have an Education Secretary with a steady hand and a deep understanding of the critical mission of the Department. It is clear that Mrs. Betsy DeVos is not the right person for the job.

Mrs. DeVos advocates a concept of industrialized, privatized, and for-profit schools. This thinking is too small and too cramped for our kids. Our goal should not be vouchers for children to try to shop for a school with no accountability for quality. Our goal should be a neighborhood school for every child that meets their needs.

We cannot abandon the families who cannot afford to make up the difference between the value of the voucher and the tuition at the private school. What do we say to them? We cannot abandon the students who cannot get accepted into private schools because many of these private schools say yes to some and no to others. What do we say to those who have the doors closed on them? We cannot abandon the schools that a voucher program would drain the resources from, and $20 billion is a huge amount of the resources that we currently provide for schools like the two I mentioned in Baltimore City and schools in neighborhoods throughout the country. So instead of a risky voucher program, we need to make our schools better by giving them the flexibility to meet student needs and the support to make sure that our children are all ready to learn.

In her hearing and in the responses to the questions for the record, Mrs. DeVos displayed an astonishing ignorance about the agency that she intends to run and, indeed, about the role of public schools in our country. All of us who have been part of this debate know that one of the most fundamental discussions in K–12 policy has been over accountability and how best to measure student knowledge and school performance. There has been an intense discussion over whether to measure school and student performance by student proficiency or by student improvement and student growth. Mrs. DeVos seemed totally confused about this discussion that is going to the heart of many of the debates here in Congress.

Perhaps we should not be so surprised that she has such little understanding of the public education system, as she has spent much of her career attempting to dismantle it in favor of private, charter, and for-profit schools. She has been referred to as the ''four-star general of the voucher movement.'' She has forcefully worked to expand vouchers, including spending millions on a failed ballot initiative to bring vouchers to the State of Michigan. When that didn't work, she created the Great Lakes Education Project to fund nonprofits and donate to State legislators who would advance vouchers and charters. With respect to the millions of dollars she and her family have spent trying to influence lawmakers, she stated: ''We expect a return on our investment.''

She received a return in Michigan, where she played a role in a 1993 law that created incentives for charters to come to Michigan. The for-profit industry, in particular, responded, and they operate nearly 80 percent of the charters in the State of Michigan. In 2011, she pushed successfully for a law that allowed even low-performing charters to expand and repealed the requirement that the State publish annual reports on charter performance. I think we all believe that transparency is important, and it is shocking that there would be an effort to put the facts under the rug. After years of criticism, modest accountability measures were introduced in 2015, although Mrs. DeVos opposed and successfully stripped a provision from the bill that would have established a commission to explore ways to improve Detroit public schools.

Seventy percent of Detroit charter schools ranked in the bottom quarter of Michigan schools. The nonprofit Education Trust calls their poor performance a ''civil rights issue.'' In a report just last June, the New York Times called the situation in Detroit ''a public education fiasco that is perhaps unparalleled in the United States.'' It would be a big mistake to impose that fiasco on the rest of the country.

Mrs. DeVos has also advocated for online charter schools, and she was formerly an investor in the largest for-profit online school operator, K–12, Inc. In her response to questions about this model, she cited questionable statistics for the accomplishments of several virtual academies. Those statistics were disproved in an article in Education Week which compared them to the publicly reported figures used for State accountability.

For example, Ms. DeVos wrote that Utah Virtual Academy has a 92-percent graduation rate. In fact, the most recently publicly reported figure is 42 percent. The last thing we need is a Secretary of Education coming up with alternative facts.

While I believe that nonprofit public charter schools are important incubators for innovation, they have to play by the same rules as the rest of our schools. But Mrs. DeVos has rejected that equal playing field.

In an exchange with Senator KAINE from Virginia where he repeatedly asked her whether or not the charter schools would have the same standards applied to them as public schools that received Federal funding, she refused to agree.

It is pretty extraordinary when we have a nominee saying that she supports a taxpayer-funded blank check for some schools. Our Secretary of Education must be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars and ensure that funds

are delivering quality and results for students.

Another area where Mrs. DeVos raises serious concerns is that of enforcement of equal rights, especially the rights of children with disabilities. All of us know the Department of Education has the very important job of enforcing civil rights laws and making sure we have equal access to education throughout the Nation. Congress prohibited discrimination in education on the basis of race, color, and national origin in title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibited sex discrimination. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

But all of us know that as late of the mid-1970s, public schools still accommodated only one of five children with disabilities, and many States had laws that explicitly excluded children with certain disabilities. When Congress addressed this with the passage of the IDEA legislation, it was a big breakthrough for our country and for our children. The IDEA was very straightforward and very simple: Every child deserves a ''free appropriate public education'' in the ''least restrictive environment.'' The law requires schools to design an ''individualized education program'' for each child with a disability.

IDEA has been a lifesaver for children with disabilities and their families. It has empowered them to get the quality education they could not earlier receive, and the law gives them tools with which they can fight to ensure that schools address their needs. This is why it was so alarming at the hearing to hear Mrs. DeVos say that the application of IDEA and the rights behind IDEA really was a State function—the same States that historically discriminated against these very children. That is not what the IDEA legislation is all about. It is a national standard to make sure we do not have discrimination based on disability. Yet, Mrs. DeVos in exchange concluded with: ''I think that's an issue that's best left to the States.''

So whether it is her position with respect to vouchers and poaching resources that otherwise would go to improve our public schools or lack of support for the very idea behind IDEA, we have a nominee who the overwhelming majority of the American people recognize is the wrong choice to be the custodian of the Department that is responsible at the Federal level for providing support and educational opportunities to our children.

In closing, with respect to the issue of guns in schools—and Senator MURRAY, the ranking member, has addressed this as well—it was pretty shocking to hear Mrs. DeVos trivialize the issue of gun violence in schools when she was asked about this by the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. MURPHY, quipping that guns might be necessary to kill grizzly bears. We have had lots of debates in this Chamber, and obviously there are strong feelings. But I think we would all agree that the safety of our kids and our schools is not something that should be trivialized.

In conclusion, let us heed the words of the editorial board of the Detroit Free Press. They have witnessed firsthand the experiments that Mrs. DeVos has made about education and have written in an editorial: ''Make no mistake: A vote to confirm Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education is a vote to end public education in this country as we know it.''

In a speech in 2015, Betsy DeVos said bluntly: ''Government really sucks.'' I suggest that she should not be leading the agency entrusted at the Federal level with the education of our children, which, as our Founder said, is really the root of equal opportunity and the opportunity for every child to achieve their dreams.

I join with the distinguished Senator from Washington State in urging my colleagues to vote no on Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education. We can do better. We can do a lot better for our kids.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, constituents from every State who care about our public schools and our students in public schools have broken records calling us, their Senators, in opposition to Betsy DeVos as Education Secretary.

In the past few weeks, I have heard from thousands of Hawaii residents concerned about voting for an Education Secretary who clearly does not believe in our Nation's public schools. I wish to share two of their messages today.

One constituent wrote to me:

Dear Senator Hirono,

As a proud Hawaii educator for 30 plus years, I'm deeply troubled by the possible appointment of Betsy DeVos to the position of US Secretary of Education.

Although I would personally never consider applying for a job I am not qualified to serve in, it's baffling to me that our new Commander in Chief thinks someone who has NO experience as a teacher or administrator could be remotely prepared to lead our nation in this role.

I don't have to explain to you what a selfless calling being a teacher is, nor do I believe our Hawaii delegation takes educating Hawaii's keiki lightly, so I implore you to work with other leaders in DC to make sure we have a suitable nominee for this essential position.

Mahalo,

Sandy from Honolulu

Sandy and teachers like her devote more time and effort than is mandated to ensure that our public school students have a solid foundation in education and for life. Teaching is a calling, and I have met with many teachers who are totally committed to doing the very best they can for their students, and they want nothing less from the next Secretary of Education. They deserve a better qualified, better experienced, better prepared, and more committed Secretary of Education than Betsy DeVos.

Next, I wish to share a message from Lorelei, a middle school principal on Oahu. Her letter begins:

Dear Senator Hirono,

As a strong supporter of public education, I ask that you oppose the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

Educators and students deserve a secretary who can commit to supporting every student in all public schools, and a leader that will work tirelessly to promote a public education system that provides each child with the optimum conditions for teaching and learning.

Betsy DeVos' past work in education and her performance at the recent confirmation hearing demonstrated neither a depth of experience nor knowledge base in education policy and on critical issues facing the community.

She ends her letter by saying:

As a principal, I have spoken with teachers, parents, students, and community members across the political spectrum and there is widespread agreement that Betsy DeVos is not the right person for the job.

As Lorelei said, it shouldn't be asking too much to have an Education Secretary who will stand up for public schools and the millions of our children who attend our public schools. That person is certainly not Betsy DeVos.

In his opening remarks at Betsy DeVos's confirmation hearing, the chairman of the HELP Committee said that Mrs. DeVos was in the ''mainstream'' for supporting vouchers to send students to private schools, instead of investing in our public schools. This is not mainstream thinking. Being told otherwise is again dealing in ''alternative facts.''

The chairman went on to repeat a so-called argument that Betsy DeVos and other school choice advocates make—that vouchers are simply Pell grants for primary and secondary education. Now, this is a real head scratcher, and I say: What? Here we go again down the rabbit hole, where up is down and down is up.

Pell grants and vouchers are fundamentally different. Pell grants help offset the ever-rising cost of a voluntary college education. All colleges charge students tuition, and Pell grants provide opportunity to low-income students to be able to go to college.

In contrast, every American child has a right to a free primary and secondary public education. Vouchers actually take resources away from public schools and make it that much harder to provide a good education for all of our students.

Vouchers take money away from public schools; Pell grants don't. When a student uses a Pell grant at a private college or university, it has no impact on the funding a State college or university receives. But when a student uses a voucher to attend a private school, it takes away money from local public schools. How is taking money away from local public schools mainstream thinking? The Secretary of

Education should be focused on improving our public schools, not taking money away from them.

Furthermore, saying that Pell grants are similar to vouchers reveals a fundamental lack of understanding of the Pell grant program. Among her many duties as Secretary, Betsy DeVos would be in charge of managing $30 billion per year of Pell grants, which help more than 8 million students afford a college education in this country.

During the 2014–2015 school year, more than 21,000 students in Hawaii were able to finance their college education with nearly $81 million in Pell grants. Last Congress, I led legislation to protect and strengthen the Pell grant program. But under Republican majorities, Pell grants are under the constant threat of irresponsible cuts and dismantlement, even though college today is more expensive than ever.

Can we really trust Betsy DeVos to fight to protect Pell grants? Somebody who equates Pell grants with vouchers is not someone who understands her responsibilities under the Pell Grant Program. So can we really trust Betsy DeVos to support the Pell Grant Program? I don't think so.

I have spoken out against Betsy DeVos's nomination a number of times, but some questions need repeating. What are we telling our students if we have an Education Secretary who is not committed to improving the public education system so that our students can succeed in school and in life? Nine out of every 10 students in the United States attend public school. What are we saying to them? Is it the best we can do to give them an Education Secretary who does not believe in the public schools they attend? Who doesn't believe that their education is worth fighting for?

If this is the message you want to send to our students and their families, then vote for Betsy DeVos. On behalf of the nearly 200,000 public school students in Hawaii and their teachers and other educators in Hawaii, my answer is a strong, strong no.

I urge my colleagues to question Betsy DeVos's commitment to our public schools and to the millions of students who go to public schools and vote against her nomination.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak this afternoon about the nomination of Betsy DeVos to be Secretary of Education. I know we will have had some time later today and even tonight, but I wanted to review some of the concerns I have about her nomination in the allotted time that I will have—I guess about 15 minutes.

The first concern I have is a broad concern that I think is shared by a number of Senators on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. The ranking member, Senator MURRAY, is here with us on the floor, and I am grateful for her leadership on this nomination debate, as well as many other issues.

I guess the broad concern I have is Betsy DeVos's commitment to public education. I come from a State where we have had a tradition of public education since about the 1830s. I am fairly certain—I will stand corrected—but Pennsylvania might have been the first State to have public education as far back as the 1830s. It is part of the bedrock of the foundation of our State.

Still, today, 92 percent of Pennsylvania students attend a traditional public school. We have charter schools. We have roughly 175 or so, but all of those charter schools in Pennsylvania have to be, by statute, public nonprofit entities. Public charter schools are what we have in Pennsylvania. We don't have for-profit private sector charter schools. It is not allowed by law.

There are some limited circumstances when one entity could affiliate with a for-profit entity, but we have nothing like what Mrs. DeVos has supported in Michigan and across the country. For a Senator from Pennsylvania to be questioning a nominee for Secretary of Education about for-profit charter schools is unusual because we don't have that entity in Pennsylvania.

My concern is substantial—and I will develop this later—about her commitment to public education. In fact, in my meeting with Mrs. DeVos, because of my concerns, I said something very simple, but I said it for a reason, to remind her about her obligation if she were to be confirmed. I said: You will not be the Secretary of private education; you are going to be the Secretary of Education, and for most of the country, that means traditional public schools, and I hope you understand that.

That is a broad concern that I have, and I will talk more about it. My line of questioning the day of our hearing—I should say the evening of our hearing—focused on campus sexual assault; and that, of course, is an area of urgent concern for a lot of people here, a lot of members of the United States. It is also of greater concern now because of her nomination. What do I mean by that?

Let me walk through how I got to my questions with her. We know the Department of Justice tells us that college women are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted than robbed in the time they are in college. This is a number that comes from the Centers for Disease Control. We also know that one in five college students experience attempted or completed sexual assault while they are in college.

This is a direct threat to young women all across the country, and I think we have only begun as a country—as a nation, I should say—to begin to take steps to combat sexual assault, to insist that colleges and universities do more to insist that everyone in the education field, every person on a college campus assumes some level of responsibility.

One of the reasons we can start down that path and begin to be certain that we are at least beginning to wrestle with this problem and give young women on our campuses more protection is because of recent legislation. We are not done. We have a lot more to do, but I will highlight one bill that I led the fight on—the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, known as Campus SaVE. That became law in 2013, when we were reauthorizing—a fancy Washington word for doing it again or improving the law—the Violence Against Women Act. I was glad we were able to take a substantial step to tackle this horrific problem of sexual assault on campus.

That legislation was followed by regulations. If I could summarize them, that law and the regulations that followed made sure that colleges and universities have clear guidelines, that victims know what their rights are, that victims know where to turn in the event of an assault, that we do a lot more on prevention, that bystanders can no longer be inactive, that they have to be trained and prepared to help, and that the entire college campus is focused on preventing sexual assault and then making sure, in the aftermath of an assault, it is dealt with appropriately.

This legislation has helped campus communities respond to not only sexual assault but domestic assault, dating violence, as well as stalking. It does give students and employees the opportunity to do more than has been done on college campuses.

When I was questioning Mrs. DeVos, I asked her if she would commit to upholding title IX, the nondiscrimination statute that includes important protections against sexual assault. I asked her very specifically about the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, which had issued guidance in 2011 that advises institutions of higher education to use the so-called preponderance of the evidence standard for campus conduct proceedings. Some may be familiar with that standard. It is a standard that we have used in our jurisprudence for civil cases across the country. You don't have to prove, nor should a victim of sexual assault on campus have to prove by the higher standard; say clear and convincing is a higher standard or beyond a reasonable doubt is a criminal standard. What the Department of Education said to the university campuses across the country is, the standard you should use is preponderance of the evidence. They based that determination after consulting with experts and advocates

across the country. That is the state of law currently, the guidance from the Department of Education about that evidentiary standard, my legislation Campus SaVE, and that is where we are now.

I simply asked Mrs. DeVos whether or not she would commit to enforcing current law and abiding by the 2011 Department of Education guidance. Her response was that it would be premature—I am using her word ''premature''—to make that kind of commitment. I was stunned by that answer. Why would it be premature to say you are going to enforce current law? Why would it be premature to say that you can't make a commitment to insisting upon an evidentiary standard that is in place right now? That made no sense to me, and I don't think it made any sense to people across the country who have been working on this problem and trying to get the attention of the Senate and the House and any administration for years, if not for decades.

We finally arrived at a place where we are at long last dealing with sexual assault in a very aggressive and appropriate and fair manner. Now we have a nominee who says she is not sure whether she can commit to that. That gave me great pause and is one of the reasons I don't support her nomination. I have several reasons. I know I am running low on time, but I will wrap up this portion in a moment.

Another area of concern is the answers to questions she gave with regard to specific questions about students with disabilities. This was a set of questions asked by a number of Senators, but I will try to summarize it this way. She seemed to have a lack of knowledge, an apparent and I think obvious lack of knowledge, about basic Federal law, a law that was passed decades ago, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. She didn't seem to know that was a Federal statute. She seemed to assert that somehow States could decide whether to enforce the policy that undergirded that Federal law. That, of course, is not the case. It is Federal law, and we have to make sure individuals—in this case, students with disabilities—get the rights they are accorded by virtue of that law. Her lack of knowledge in this area was of concern, but maybe even greater concern was a lack of—or seeming lack of, in my judgment—determination to once again enforce this law, to make sure that on her watch the law that would protect students with disabilities would be enforced to the full extent of the law and nothing less. She didn't seem to be willing to commit to that or didn't seem to have the kind of commitment I would expect from a Secretary of Education.

What we would all expect, Democrats and Republicans, I would hope, is a Secretary of Education who is a champion for public schools, is a champion for those children in public schools, will fight battles and urge States to make the investments in public education, would urge the Congress to make investments in public education, in early learning, and all of the concerns we have about lack of funding in public education.

I would hope both parties would want a Secretary of Education who is a champion for students with disabilities, who would be a champion for those who are victims of sexual assault on our college campuses. Unfortunately, because of a series of questions posed both at the hearing and in written questions that were submitted for the record—to which Mrs. DeVos gave written answers—I see that basic commitment lacking. For that and many reasons which we will develop a little later tonight, I will be voting no on her confirmation vote.

I appreciate this opportunity to share some of my thoughts and hope to be back later this evening.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to speak in opposition to the nomination of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education. My mom was a public schoolteacher, and she taught second grade until she was 70 years old. She loved teaching. Her favorite unit was actually the Monarch Butterfly Unit, where she would dress up as the monarch butterfly, and she would teach the kids about metamorphosis. The costume she wore, she would also wear to the supermarket afterward. She was dressed as this big monarch butterfly, with little antennae on her head and a sign that said: ''To Mexico or bust'' because that is where the monarch would fly on its way from Canada through Minnesota and down. It was the night before my mom's funeral at the visitation where I met a family who came up to me, and the mom was sobbing. I didn't know what was going on. I had never met them. They had their older son with them who had pretty severe disabilities. She said: You know, your mom had my kid here in school when he was in second grade. Now he was grown up. She said: He always loved that Monarch Butterfly Unit. After he graduated, your mom would continue to go to the grocery store, and that was why she would go to the store every year. He had gotten a job bagging groceries. She would stand in the line in her monarch butterfly outfit for years and give him a big hug when she got to the end of the line. That was my mom. She loved her kids and she was a devoted teacher.

I went to public school through elementary to high school. My daughter went to public school. I learned that basic right we have in this country; that every child should have the right to an education. That led me to the conclusion—after reviewing the record of the hearing and talking to my colleagues on the committee—that this nominee and I do not share the same value when it comes to that public education. I note that two of my Republican colleagues, Senators COLLINS and MURKOWSKI, have come to the same conclusion. One of the most troubling examples of Mrs. DeVos's views came when she was questioned by two of my colleagues. I note Senator MURRAY is here. We thank her for her leadership on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Two of my colleagues, Senators MAGGIE HASSAN and TIM KAINE, asked the nominee about whether schools should meet the standards outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or, as it is known, IDEA. Mrs. DeVos said she would leave the decision of whether to offer equal educational opportunities to the States. This is simply unacceptable. It is not the kind of leadership we need. This is not why we have IDEA. I think most education professionals and people who are experts in this area would know that is not the answer.

I occupy the Senate seat that was once held by Minnesota's own Hubert Humphrey. He was someone who was never at a loss for words. He delivered a speech to the Minnesota AFL–CIO 40 years ago. One line of that speech is just as appropriate and meaningful today as it was back then. He said:

> The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the needy, the sick and the disabled.

I submit that Mrs. DeVos's opposition toward providing equal education opportunities to students with disabilities does not meet that moral test. Her views are at odds with decades of bipartisan support for IDEA.

In 1975, when Congress passed the original version of IDEA, half of all children with disabilities were not receiving appropriate educational services, and 1 million children with disabilities were excluded entirely from the public school system. In an impassioned floor speech, then-Senator and later Vice President Walter Mondale of Minnesota talked about the need for IDEA. Before the 1975 law, disabled children were placed in segregated schools and classes with little emphasis on an education, training, or development. Many parents also gave up on the poor services offered by the public schools. As a result, disabled students remained at home. To tackle this problem, Republicans and Democrats came together to pass legislation ensuring that students with disabilities would have equal access to public education, just like all other kids. The law guaranteed and continues to guarantee today—the Federal law—that students

with disabilities get a free and appropriate public education. It is not a State-by-State requirement. It is a Federal requirement.

In 1975, both Minnesota Senators played a significant leadership role in enacting this groundbreaking civil rights legislation. Senator Humphrey called IDEA one of the most significant pieces of legislation and a major commitment in this Nation's commitment to its children. Then-Senator Mondale argued that this landmark legislation holds a promise of new opportunity for 7 million children in this country. When Congress first enacted this law in 1975, this was not a partisan issue. The law passed both Houses with overwhelming majorities. The Senate voted in favor of the landmark legislation by a margin of 87 to 7; the House, by a vote of 404 to 7. Bipartisan support for IDEA grew stronger over time.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush signed into law a bill that reauthorized the Disabilities Act. That bill was introduced by former Democratic Senator Tom Harkin and former Minnesota Republican Senator Dave Durenberger. The reauthorization was so uncontroversial that it passed by a voice vote in both the House and the Senate. Members from both parties supported IDEA when it was reauthorized again in 2003. Every single member of the Minnesota delegation, all 10—Democrats and Republicans alike—supported IDEA's reauthorization that year. For four decades, IDEA has garnered support from both sides of the aisle because we all understand the need to support the most vulnerable among us.

Every Member of Congress knows a family member or a person who has been affected by disability. For a lot of lawmakers, this is personal. When my daughter was born, she couldn't swallow for nearly 2 years. She had a feeding tube, and the doctors didn't know what was wrong with her. It ended up being a temporary problem and not a permanent disability, but those 2 years I still look back at as a gift. They were a gift that brought our family closer together, but they were a gift because they made me understand what parents of kids with disabilities face every single day. This wasn't just a temporary thing for the parents I met. This was something they face every single day.

Since the passage of IDEA, our Nation has moved to fulfill the promise of providing a high-quality education to kids with disabilities. Today, more than 4.7 million children with disabilities rely on IDEA to protect their access to high-quality education. Over the last 40 years, the Democratic and Republican Members who have come before me have all fought to preserve those critical rights and opportunities.

These are American values. But they are especially near and dear to our State, where we have this long and proud tradition of working to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the same basic resources and opportunities as everyone else. This is not just the original work by Senators Humphrey and Mondale, carried on, of course, by Senator Durenberger and others, but it happened in our State as well.

To cite a few examples, it was the Minnesota Ramp Project that introduced a new American model for building statewide standardized wheelchair ramps. Minnesota was the State that sent Paul Wellstone to the Senate, where he fought long and hard for mental health parity. My State is also home to some of the most innovative centers for the disabled in the country, including PACER, the Courage Center, and ARC.

When it comes to educating children with disabilities, Minnesota has also been one of the Nation's leaders. In 1957, our State became one of the first States in the Nation to pass a law requiring that special education services be provided to children and youth with disabilities. In our State, from birth to adulthood, kids with disabilities have access to the quality of life they deserve.

Through IDEA, our State is able to receive Federal funding for early intervention services that help diagnose disabilities or developmental delays among infants and toddlers. Minnesota also provides each child with a disability and their family a personalized K–12 education plan and the support needed to transition from high school to postsecondary education.

These civil rights protections and funding under IDEA have also been an area of bipartisan cooperation among members of the Minnesota delegation. We would like to see even more funding. We don't see us move backwards. At least one Minnesota Republican has cosponsored every version of IDEA and its reauthorization over the last 40 years. We have never had a Secretary of Education who has put these commonsense bipartisan benefits at risk.

Today, over 124,000 Minnesota children rely on the protections in IDEA. I have heard from families in my State, and so many of them tell me how that Federal law has made a real difference in their lives. A mom from Watertown, MN, told me all about her son who was born with Down syndrome. She is so thankful for the Federal law because this protection ensures that he can have everyday experiences like other kids.

It allows her son to be fully integrated with the rest of the students in his high school. As a result, he has developed many friendships and a strong social network. When she asks her son whether he likes school, he always says a resounding ''yes.''

A mother of two autistic kids who are deafblind, reached out to me from Farmington, MN. She tells me that she depends on IDEA because the law gives her an opportunity to participate in designing individualized education programs for her children. These programs allow her to tailor the best possible educational plans.

A woman from Lakeville, MN, told me that when her son was born with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the late 1980s, and she was so worried about what his future would look like. But because of IDEA, he received specialized services at school while still being included in activities with the rest of his peers. Today, she tells me that he is a successful young adult who happily lives, learns, and works in his community.

During my time in the Senate, I have worked to share those Minnesota values that you hear resonating in those letters across the country. That is why I helped lead the push in Congress to successfully pass bipartisan legislation with Senators Burr and Casey called the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act, or ABLE Act, a law that will help people with disabilities and their families better plan for their futures. It is a law that President Obama signed.

We have made progress in removing barriers and empowering people with disabilities. Of course, we know that the ABLE Act alone is not enough. We still need to ensure that the Federal Government lives up to its promise to support education for those with disabilities by enforcing and protecting the IDEA and fully funding special education. Providing equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities is an issue that cuts across partisan lines.

It is an issue of decency and an issue of dignity, and I believe it is an issue that we must all stand behind as Americans. I cannot support a nominee that would jeopardize the education of millions of disabled children across our country or someone that is not fully informed at her own hearing about such an important law. We have continuously maintained and strengthened educational laws for children with disabilities because every child deserves a chance to succeed.

I think about my mom and all those years of teaching—teaching 30 second graders at age 70. I think about that boy, who is now a man, who in the second grade had her as a teacher. He had severe disabilities, but she did everything to make his learning experience as good as all the other kids that were in that class.

I think of how he loved that butterfly unit and felt the passion that my mom brought to teaching it. In her own free time, she would go visit him at his job at that checkout line in the grocery store in her butterfly outfit. That was integrating kids with disabilities into our school systems. That is what special teachers and special education experts who see all children as special are all about.

Thank you. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing Mrs. DeVos's nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished senior Senator from

Minnesota for her comments. She speaks from experience and knowledge, as has the senior Senator from Washington State, on this issue.

In my years here, I have seen thousands of confirmation votes, literally at all levels, up to and including Cabinet members and Supreme Court justices. I have voted for a large majority of a President's nominations—both Republican and Democratic Presidents. Some may not have been those I would have chosen, but I felt that, at least, the President should be given the prerogative, if the person is qualified.

Now, ideology is one thing, and qualification is another. Out of those thousands of confirmation votes, I have a hard time remembering any that were like this one. This one had a whirlwind confirmation hearing and committee vote. It was almost as though they were afraid to have the nominee actually have to appear and answer questions. And now the Senate is going to vote on the nomination of Betsy DeVos to lead the Department of Education.

I will be very blunt. On the very little time that she was allowed to be shown to the public, she showed—and I certainly believe this—that she does not have the qualifications to uphold the Department of Education's primary goal—that of ensuring that all students—all students, not just the wealthy, but all students—have access to a quality, public education that allows them to succeed.

I am both a father and a grandfather, and I am proud of it. I watched my children go to school. And now I see my grandchildren going to school. I understand well the impact of education on our children. When students have access to strong public education from the very beginning, they are more apt to succeed in the long run.

Our Nation's public schools—as is the case in my home State of Vermont—hold the promise of student success through strong State accountability measures and legal protections regardless of one's race, income, or learning ability. They offer nutritious meals for underserved students, many of whom receive their only meals of the day at school. Any teacher will tell you that if you have a hungry child, you have a child who cannot learn. If a child is fed, you have a child who can learn.

Public education means strong teachers and school leaders, technology in the classroom, an assessment to test not just how well a student can memorize material for an exam on a particular day of the year, but how much they have grown over the course of many months.

Many of the schools have counselors and nurses. They operate under a modern infrastructure to support those with disabilities and children in foster care. But public education also means that both the States and the Federal Government are held accountable for everyone having access to the same excellent resources.

In fact, just over 1 year ago, this body agreed to these protections. We passed the Every Student Succeeds Act here in the Senate by a vote of 85 to 12—an amazing, overwhelming, bipartisan vote. It was the firm agreement among the majority of the Senate—Republicans and Democrats alike—that all students deserve access to critical public school resources in order to succeed. We made a promise that we would do better by our students; that public schools would be the premier standard for outstanding education for all.

Unfortunately, the nominee before us—in the very little time that she was allowed to testify and be questioned in the confirmation hearing—showed that she does not share these same goals. Instead, she has referred to public schools as a ''dead end.''

Well, if you are a billionaire, you have a choice to go wherever you want to school. Maybe these people in a public school are not good enough for you? Well, then, go buy a school if you want. Most people don't have that option. Most people are hard working. My wife and I were when our kids were in school. Our children are today.

What does Betsy DeVos advocate for? She advocates for the privatization of education. She has funneled millions of dollars into organizations and initiatives to promote private school vouchers and school choice.

These efforts have diverted public funds toward private schools, schools that are not held to any antidiscrimination or accountability standards. These schools can discriminate all they want.

At her confirmation hearing—in the very little time that she did speak—she did not understand the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is a landmark law. It is a Federal law that public schools in all 50 States must follow.

Lastly, Mrs. DeVos and her family have contributed to anti-LGBT causes and anti-women's health efforts, which are in direct conflict to the one who is supposed to lead the Department of Education. How can a nominee disagree with the mission of the Department of Education and be fit to oversee that agency and promote the civil rights of schools and college campuses?

She also appears to oppose efforts to expand college access, in an era when college is so important. Again, in the little bit of time she was allowed to testify before the Senate HELP Committee in January, Mrs. DeVos, when asked, would not agree to work with States to offer free community college to eligible students, instead saying that ''nothing in life is truly free.'' This is an easy thing to say if you are a billionaire.

She also admitted to knowing little about the Pell Grant Program and Federal student loans, as neither she nor her children have ever had to use such resources. As most of us know our children will have to use them, this is simply out of touch with the real life expectations of millions of students and families who rely on these funds to make college attainable.

It is what I hear from hard-working families in Vermont. Parents tell me that their child is going to be the first one in their family to go to college, and the only reason they can do it is because they can get Pell grants or Federal student loans. Mrs. Devos's answer is: What are those?

College tuition rates have climbed more than 300 percent in the last decade. It is unacceptable to deny students Federal financial resources. To say, well, if you are rich, you can have them, but otherwise, tough.

As it is, students are increasingly saddled by insurmountable student loan debt. Many forgo starting a family, or buying a house or a car. Many of these students have also fallen prey to for-profit institutions, many of which continue to offer the false promise of gainful employment upon graduation. In reality, many of these institutions offer nontransferable credits or unaccredited degrees, and are increasingly shuttering their doors, leaving students with egregious debt and nowhere to turn to finish their degrees.

The Department of Education has an extremely important role to ensure that all students—of every race, income level, or whether that student has disabilities or not—have access to the critical tools provided by public schools and by student financial aid programs.

Thousands—thousands—of Vermonters have called or written to me worried that Mrs. DeVos does not agree with these principles. When I say thousands, to put that in context, we are the second smallest State in the Union. Thousands have contacted me. I share these concerns of my fellow Vermonters.

They know my children went to public school. They want to be able to send their children to public school too. They want the best education.

I am telling these Vermonters I will not support this confirmation. It is dangerous and shortsighted to confirm someone who has so much to learn about our Nation's public schools and the challenges they face.

Universal free public schools were a revolutionary American invention. It has helped make America the great Nation it is today. So in the United States, we should strengthen public schools, not snub them.

Mrs. DeVos is the wrong choice for our children but also for our Nation's future. Our public schools need strong leadership, not someone who has made it her life's work to undermine their success. So I oppose this nomination. I hope my fellow Senators will too.

TRAVEL BAN

Mr. President, while I have the floor, I will just take another minute or two to mention something else, as I have mentioned Vermont.

On February 1 of this year, Vermont welcomed 31 new U.S. citizens from 14 countries through a naturalization ceremony in Rutland, VT. Later that night, more than 1,000 people from our

small city in Vermont gathered on our statehouse lawn—just a few feet from where I was born and raised—in support of refugees and immigrants.

We Vermonters understand what community means. It is a helping hand in a time of need. It is a kind word in a moment of distress. It is a welcoming embrace to calm a fear. We may be small, but in Vermont there is no limit to our compassion.

As with each of our 50 great American States, immigration is a rich part of Vermont's past. For decades, we have opened our communities to immigrants and refugees. They have all become part of the fabric of our State. They have enriched us with their diverse cultures.

Since the President signed his disgraceful Executive order that stymied our immigrant resettlement program and sent a shameful message to Muslims that they are not welcome in our country, I have heard from hundreds of Vermonters. Compassionate Vermonters, pleading that we continue our Refugee Resettlement Program and welcome refugees of all religions, concerned Vermonters, anxious about the threats to our Constitution's protected freedoms and rights, nervous Vermonters wondering what next steps this administration will take in the name of security, but are just rooted in politically charged scare tactics.

Vermonters have already proven that we will not back down. Marching in Montpelier and in Washington on January 21, Vermonters' voices were heard. In candlelit vigils across the State, their empathy has been seen. At the naturalization ceremony on February 1, Vermont's welcoming spirit could be felt.

A man I admire greatly, Federal District Court Judge Geoffrey Crawford, gave stirring remarks at that naturalization ceremony, and the impact of those remarks are summarized by this one line, which he directed particularly to our new Muslim citizens: ''You are equal in the eyes of the law.'' Judge Crawford's message was simple: You are welcome. You are equal. You are protected.

My fellow Vermonters inspire me every day. We should all take note from their example of what it means to be patriotic Americans.

So I ask unanimous consent that Judge Crawford's remarks from the February 1, 2017, naturalization ceremony in Rutland, VT, be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

I look at Judge Crawford. Frankly, I have no idea what either he or the other Federal district judge's politics are. I just know they uphold the law. We are fortunate in this country to have a Federal court system made up of men and women of integrity, competence, and independence.

I was shocked this weekend when the President of the United States tried to demean the Federal judiciary, tried to downgrade an individual Federal judge because he disagreed with him. And it was almost within hours that he praised President Putin and tried to excuse the assassinations—the assassinations—carried out in Russia against journalists or those who disagreed with Putin—by saying: Well, that is no different than our country.

Well, Mr. President, I am proud to be a citizen of the United States of America, and we are different than Russia. You may have some ''friendship'' with Vladimir Putin, but let me tell you right now, show some more respect to our country and to our Constitution.

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

REMARKS OF JUDGE GEOFFREY CRAWFORD AT 2/1/17 U.S. NATURALIZATION CEREMONY, RUTLAND, VT

Welcome—all of you—to your naturalization ceremony. You will all leave here as American citizens. We are very happy to include you among us. Let me take a moment to talk about a few things.

First, although our theme today is one of welcome and new beginnings, we should all start by considering both the difficulties of the journeys you have made and the richness of the backgrounds which you bring. First the journey. The Latin poet Catullus said it best:

''Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus''

In English,

''Carried through many nations and over many seas''

Your journeys have not been easy. Some of you have left family—all of you have left friends and the comfort of familiar surroundings for this new place. Some of you are refugees from lands which are broken by war. Today we honor the commitment of our nation to welcoming and caring for refugees. Some of you experienced hunger, illness and hardship. All of you come in search of a better life. But it would not be right to forget the value of the lives and communities from which you come.

As we welcome you, we honor your heritage—your parents, your culture, and the lands of your birth. You bring variety and energy and new ideas to us. You know a lot that we do not know. You have had experiences that we want to hear about. We are lucky that you have chosen to make your lives here. We need each of you because of what you will contribute to us—your work, your ideas, your sense of humor, your food, your children.

Let me speak directly about our new citizens who are Muslims. What I have to say is simple: you are equal in the eyes of the law. You are just as welcome here as citizens as anyone else. Your faith and your right to worship are honored and protected by our laws. We recognize that the Muslim faith is ancient and learned and that it has contributed greatly over more than a thousand years to our shared civilization. Muslim citizens and residents have served America for more than two centuries in military service, in scientific research, in literature and the arts, in the professions, in commerce, in labor—in all the ways that we all contribute to the daily life of our nation. As Muslims, you have the same right as any other citizen. These include protection from discrimination on the basis of your relations and your national origin and protection of your right to worship freely. These protections are not empty promises. They form part of our constitutional law. These protections are enforced every day by our courts. But let me turn towards a happier subject. This is a day of celebration. Today we welcome you as our brothers and sisters, common citizens of the county we all love and which you have chosen as your own.

What can you expect in the years ahead as American citizens? Two things stand out: opportunity and individual freedom. These are the values which have brought people like your family and mine to America for more than two centuries. Let's talk about both.

Opportunity means the chance to work, to go to school, to find a way to support yourself which has meaning for you, to have money for your family, to rent or buy a home, to educate your children and some day to retire with dignity. Because our economy is strong, there is room for you to find a place which suits you. It is never easy, and there are many disappointments along the way, but it is possible and millions have succeeded before you.

This is a very open society for workers. One job leads to another. Your first job is not going to be your last. You are already in a select group—people who have chosen to come here and have the drive and enthusiasm to join us as citizens. The same energy which carried you through the naturalization process will help you in your search for a good job.

Now, let's talk about freedom. Freedom means the chance to speak, assemble in groups, worship, and engage in politics without fear of interference from the government.

If I can make one respectful suggestion, it is that you use this freedom by getting involved in a cause or a committee or a campaign. Maybe something local—like asking for a sidewalk where one is needed—maybe national—like volunteering on a political campaign. In case you haven't noticed, we are in the middle of a presidential race this year. There is a candidate for every possible political belief. I urge you to take part in any way that suits your own convictions and interests. Freedom is strongest when it is used, not when it sits dusty on the shelf, and we welcome your involvement in public life together.

People who are born in the United States sometimes take it for granted. Like people anywhere. Or they concentrate on our faults and the unfair things about our society. New Americans such as you bring optimism. You would not have come if you did not see the chance for a better life for your family. One thing is certain—after the work to obtain citizenship, no one here is going to take it for granted. I ask that in the years ahead, you hold on to the hope and great expectation we all share with you on this day.

Thank you so much for coming to join us today as American citizens.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to call on my colleagues to reject the nomination of Betsy DeVos as the next Secretary of Education.

It is difficult to imagine a worse choice to head the Department of Education. Betsy DeVos doesn't believe in public schools. Her only knowledge of student loans seems to come from her own financial investments connected to debt collectors who hound people struggling with student loans. Despite being a billionaire, she wants the chance to keep making money off

shady investments while she runs the Department of Education. We need someone in charge of the Nation's education policy who knows what they are doing and who will put America's young people first, and that is not Betsy DeVos.

Let's start with her record. Betsy DeVos has used her vast fortune to undermine Michigan's public schools. She is sure she knows what is best for everyone else's children, even though she has no actual experience with public schools.

In Michigan, the K–12 policy she has bankrolled has drained valuable taxpayer dollars out of the public schools and shunted that money into private schools, sketchy online schools, and for-profit charter schools. Even worse, DeVos believes these schools should get the money with virtually no accountability for what these schools do with taxpayer dollars. The results have been a disaster for Michigan kids.

Let's be perfectly clear. This is not a debate about school choice. It is not a debate about charter schools. There are people on all sides of this debate who are genuinely pouring their hearts into improving educational outcomes for children. Massachusetts charter schools are among the very best in the country, and they understand the difference.

Before her nomination hearing, I received an extraordinary letter from the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association. The letter outlines their opposition to Betsy DeVos's nomination, citing her destructive record of promoting for-profit charter schools without strong oversight for how those schools serve students and families.

People who work hard to build good charter schools with high accountability are offended by the DeVos nomination. This abysmal record is troubling because the Secretary of Education is responsible for safeguarding the investments that the Federal Government makes in public schools and for holding States accountable for delivering a good education for all their students, especially those who need the help the most.

The Secretary is also responsible for enforcing critical civil rights laws, like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, but Betsy DeVos's confirmation hearing demonstrated to the entire world she is embarrassingly unprepared to enforce these laws.

Her apparent unfamiliarity with these critical civil rights laws has terrified families who have children with special needs, terrified families in Massachusetts and all across the country. These parents are afraid we could have an Education Secretary who doesn't even have a basic understanding of the Federal laws that guarantee their kids a chance to receive a public school education.

We still have a long way to go to make sure all kids in this country have a shot at a decent education, particularly children living in poverty, children of color, children with disabilities, and children who are immigrants or refugees. That is why the Federal Government got involved in education in the first place, to make certain that all of our children, not just some of them but that all of our children get a chance at a first-rate education.

Public education dollars should come with some basic accountability for how that money is spent and some basic expectations about what we get in return for these investments, not just doled out to some for-profit school that doesn't even meet basic standards in educating our children. This is also true in higher education, where the financial stakes are huge for America's college students.

The Department of Education is in charge of making sure that the $150 billion that American taxpayers invest in students each year through grants and loans gets into the right hands and that students get an education that will help them pay back their loans.

The student aid program is not well understood, but it is vitally important to get it right because $1 trillion of student loan debt currently out there will impact the future of an entire generation.

Betsy DeVos has no experience in higher education. During her confirmation hearing, I gave her the opportunity to show that she is at least serious about standing up for students. I asked her basic, straightforward questions about her commitment to protecting students and taxpayers from fraud by these shady for-profit colleges. Her response was shocking. She refused to commit to use the Department's many tools and resources to keep students from getting cheated when fraudulent colleges break the law.

In her responses to my written questions, she even refused to commit to doing what the law requires by canceling the loans of students who have been cheated by lawbreaking colleges. An Education Secretary who is unwilling to cut off Federal aid to colleges that break the law and cheat students would be a disaster for both students and taxpayers. Betsy DeVos's refusal to guarantee debt relief for defrauded students could leave thousands of Americans saddled with student loan debt that by law they are not required to pay.

Betsy DeVos also refused to rule out privatizing the Direct Loan Program. Think about this. As if our students don't have enough problems already, DeVos is ready to let Wall Street banks get their claws into our students and start charging extra profits on top of the already high cost of student loans.

If Betsy DeVos won't commit to strengthening the Federal student loan program and running it for students, then she is absolutely unfit to be in charge of it.

I am also deeply concerned about the conflicts of interest and potential government corruption if Betsy DeVos is allowed to take the reins of the Department of Education. Betsy DeVos is a multibillionaire, and that is fine, but for her, that is apparently not enough. She already makes money off of several businesses that could profit from decisions she makes as Secretary of Education—several businesses, at least, that we know about. She said she will get rid of the ones we know about, but she wants to keep her family trusts and whatever investments two of them hold a secret—a secret from Congress and a secret from U.S. taxpayers. She says she doesn't have to follow rules that everyone else follows and tell the Senate what her investments are or what they will be in those secret trusts. I want you to think about that for just a minute. She already has billions of dollars, but she won't give up her secret trust and her chance to make investments that could create conflicts of interest while she is running the Department of Education? Who exactly does Betsy DeVos want to help out—the young people of America or her own bank account?

You know, I really don't get this. I disagree with her education policy, but the one thing we ought to be able to agree on is that no one, especially not some billionaire, ought to keep investments that go up or down in value depending on the decisions she makes while she has a job working for the U.S. Government. Because of that concern, I wrote a letter with several of my Democratic colleagues to raise concerns about her potential conflicts that aren't clearly resolved by her public ethics agreement. We asked her some simple questions about the lack of financial transparency and the shady investments she plans to keep while she has a government job. What did we get back? Nothing. Zero. Bupkes. She thought our basic questions about ethics weren't even worth an answer. That stinks. This whole process stinks.

At every step along the way, the Republicans have made it clear that no matter her inexperience, no matter her radical views, no matter her potential conflicts of interest, no matter her secrecy, no matter her blowing off basic anti-corruption practices, they will ram this nomination down the throats of the American people sideways. Here are just a few egregious examples.

First, committee Democrats were allotted 5 minutes—5 minutes total—during her hearing to question Betsy DeVos on her troubling record. Republicans suddenly invented a new rule that we couldn't ask additional questions. This is an important job. I asked President Obama's Secretary of Education multiple rounds of questions, and he had led a public education system in the past, but I guess when a Republican nominee and megadonor is in line to run education policy, we are supposed to fall in line and keep quiet.

Second, breaking with standard practice and what we did for President Obama's Education nominees, we were

forced to hold Betsy DeVos's hearing before the ethics review of her billions was completed. The complicated ethics review raised a ton of additional questions, but we got absolutely no chance to question her about it.

Third, Betsy DeVos is the first nominee ever to go through the HELP Committee who has flat-out refused to fully disclose her financial holdings. She will be the first nominee in recent history to hold secret trusts. She was supposed to complete a form that requires nominees to list in detail all of their assets, investments, and gifts so that the committee has a full understanding of the nominees' potential conflicts of interest. No, she wants to keep many of her holdings in a family trust a secret, so she just won't tell.

Fourth, Republicans ignored and overrode the rules of the Senate in order to barely squeeze the DeVos nomination out of committee as quickly as possible. And now, with at least 50 Senators—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—publicly opposed to this nomination, the Republican leadership has rigged the vote so that Senator SESSIONS can drag her across the finish line just before he is confirmed as Attorney General. Why is Senator SESSIONS even voting on this nomination? It is a massive conflict of interest. As the AG, SESSIONS will be responsible for enforcing the law against DeVos if her cesspool of unresolved financial conflicts results in illegal behavior, but apparently the Republicans just don't care.

Let's face it: The Republican leadership wants DeVos, and they are willing to ignore her hostility to public schools, willing to ignore her indifference to laws that protect special needs kids, willing to ignore the giant ethical cloud that hangs over her—ignore it all so that billionaire and Republican campaign contributor Betsy DeVos can be Secretary of Education. The American people can see what is happening here.

I commend my Republican colleagues, Senators COLLINS and MURKOWSKI, for standing up for what is right and saying they will vote against Betsy DeVos's nomination on the floor. I know how difficult it can be to stand up for what is right even under overwhelming pressure from your own team to just keep your head down and go with the flow. They have been listening to the teachers and parents in their States, and I deeply respect their principled opposition to this nomination.

I have also heard from thousands of teachers, parents, and education leaders in Massachusetts raising deep concern about Betsy DeVos's nomination. I hear their concern, and I share their concern.

You know, this isn't just politics, this is deeply personal. It is personal for me. My first job out of college was as a teacher. I taught little ones, children with special needs, in a public elementary school. I have never lost my appreciation for the importance of strong public education because I have seen how public education opened a million doors for me, and I know it opens doors for young people in Massachusetts and all across this country. I believe that strengthening America's public schools is critical for securing a better future for our children and for our grandchildren. I also understand the vital role the Secretary of Education plays in making sure every young person has real opportunities and a fighting chance to succeed.

We are one vote away from making sure this job is not entrusted to Betsy DeVos. One vote. We need just one more Republican to stand up for the children of America, to stand up for public education, to stand up for college students, to stand up for basic decency and honesty in government. With just one more Republican, we can say this Senate puts kids ahead of partisan politics. With just one more Republican, we can say this Senate still cares about public officials who put the public ahead of their own interests. Just one more Republican, that is all we need. Just one.

I assumed that the rush to complete this nomination has something to do with the fact that Republicans' phones have been ringing off the hook from citizens who are outraged by the idea of this nomination. Before these Republicans decide whether to help Donald Trump reward a wealthy donor by putting someone in charge of the Department of Education who doesn't really believe in public education, I want them to hear from the people of Massachusetts, the people who on their own have contacted me about this nomination.

I have received countless letters and calls from constituents in Massachusetts, including a batch of letters from a new local grassroots organization—Essex County #6 Indivisible—that is very concerned that Betsy DeVos is a danger to our schools. So I just want to share a few of those letters with my colleagues right now.

I heard from Matt Harden, who is a teacher from Plymouth, and he wrote this:

> I have been a teacher for fifteen years and a parent for seven. I feel incredibly proud of the schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and view my position as a music educator not simply as a job but a vocation. The recent referendum in the Commonwealth regarding the expansion of cap on Charter Schools was soundly defeated by the electorate. I have grave concerns about Ms. DeVos and her ties to corporate interests in education. Schools are not businesses, and students are not products on an assembly line. This line of thinking is a clear and present danger to our students, and reflects a lack of familiarity with the public education system.
>
> In this matter, my concerns are not limited to the borders of our own state but the equitable access to education across our nation. Ms. DeVos is not the right person to be an intellectual and educational leader for our nation—we need real change and ideas, not privatization and politicization of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

I also heard from Alexandra Loos, a special education teacher from Cambridge. She had this to say:

> I am a special education teacher who works with children with developmental disabilities, and I urge you to vote against the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education.
>
> I have grave concerns about the qualifications of Ms. DeVos due to her lack of experience in the public education system as well as her record of support for charter and private schools that are not obligated to follow Federal education standards or guidelines.
>
> Most urgently, as a professional who specializes in evaluating and treating children with autism, Down syndrome, learning disabilities, ADHD, and other developmental and behavioral disorders, I am extremely concerned about Ms. DeVos's apparent lack of understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law that guarantees ''a free and appropriate public education'' to children with disabilities. During her confirmation hearing this week, Ms. DeVos appeared to be unfamiliar with IDEA . . . stating that she felt that enforcement of this federal law should be left up to the states. This is unacceptable and clearly indicates that Ms. DeVos is unqualified to serve as Secretary of Education.
>
> With approximately 13% of public school children in special education, it is essential that an Education Secretary be knowledgeable and supportive of the federal laws that guide special education services. Please vote ''no'' on Ms. DeVos's confirmation.

Yes, Alexandra. Yes.

My office also heard from Diana Fullerton, a school adjustment counselor from Salem. Diana said she had never written to a politician before, but she felt strongly enough about Betsy DeVos to write:

> I am a school adjustment counselor in an elementary school in Gloucester. I have never gotten involved much in politics until this election. I went to the Boston Women's March on Saturday and this is my first time writing to a politician. I am extremely concerned about Trump's nomination for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. In my work I support students who are very vulnerable: on IEPS, in high-poverty environments, identifying as gay or transgender, and coming from backgrounds where English is a second language. I believe that Ms. DeVos' extreme and uneducated positions on the needs of students in public schools could harm my children. Please vote against her nomination as Secretary of Education.

Thanks, Diana. I will.

I heard from another teacher from Newton, who said:

> I am opposed to Betsey DeVos as the next Secretary of Education. I have spent my entire life as a teacher—first in public and private schools for 14 years teaching French, then as a member of the faculty of Lesley University for 26 years, and now as a teacher in a Life Long Learning program at Brandeis. I cannot imagine having a Secretary of Education who has never had any direct educational experience. I am also very worried about her views of public education and her appalling record on civil rights. Strong education is the foundation of our democracy. Please do what you can to maintain and improve our current system.

Thank you.

Yet another teacher contacted our office, this one from Abington. She wrote:

> I believe in my community's public schools. In fact, I've worked in them as a

teacher for over 15 years. The nomination of Betsy DeVos has me seriously considering a change of employment. Betsy DeVos believes in school privatization and vouchers. She has worked to undermine efforts to regulate Michigan charters, even when they clearly fail, and yet she has never worked in a school. The marketplace solution of DeVos will destroy our democratically governed community schools. Her hostility toward public schools disqualifies her. I am asking you to vote against the confirmation of Betsy DeVos.

We also heard from parents all across the State, including Leslie Boloian, a mother from Andover. Leslie said:

I am a mother of an 8 year old who is dyslexic. She is smart and very capable of learning what other kids can learn; however, she needs specialized education. Through the public school system, she is learning to read and continues to reach new milestones daily. I fear that Betsy DeVos could put my daughter's education at risk.

I urge you to oppose Secretary of Education nominee Betsy DeVos, who is best known for her anti-public education campaigns!

The chance for the success of a child should not depend on winning a charter lottery, being accepted by a private school, or living in the right ZIP code. It is our duty to ensure all students have access to a great public school in their community and the opportunity to succeed. Betsy DeVos has consistently worked against these values, and her efforts over the years have done more to undermine public education than support all students.

Betsy DeVos has no experience in public schools, either as a student, educator, administrator, or even as a parent. She has lobbied for failed schemes, like vouchers to fund private schools at taxpayers' expense. These privatization schemes do nothing to help our students most in need, and they ignore or exacerbate glaring opportunity gaps.

We need a Secretary of Education who will champion innovative strategies that we know help to improve success for all students, including creating more opportunities and equity for all. Betsy DeVos is not that person, and I urge you to vote against her for Secretary of Education.

Thank you, Leslie.

Kate Brigham, a mother from Somerville, also wrote. She said.

My name is Kate Brigham, and I am a constituent of yours from Somerville. . . . I'm writing to urge you to vote against Betsy DeVos' confirmation as Secretary of Education. The future of our kids here in Somerville and across the country are depending on you to see the difference between education progress and privatization.

The majority of America's school children attend public schools. We cannot leave their futures and the future of our country in the hands of a woman whose ideas to privatize school funding have already left the state of Michigan and its children in shambles. Her personal financial conflicts of interest are staggering.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—which DeVos did not know was a federal law—guarantees rights to both students with disabilities and to their parents. So this isn't just about civil rights; it's also crucial to families. We cannot afford a Secretary of Education who's ''confused'' on what the law is. My own 2-year-old daughter benefits from MA's wonderful Early Intervention program and will need special education services when she turns 3 in September.

IDEA and the ADA were both signed into law by Republican Presidents. Disability rights are not and cannot become a partisan issue. Thank you for ensuring that public education for ALL will be protected. Somerville, and Massachusetts, needs it. And we won't succeed with Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education.

Thank you, Kate. Thanks for writing.

Samantha Lambert, a mother of four from Everett, also contacted us with her concerns. Samantha wrote:

I am a voter from MA who has struggled with the change coming as a result of this election. . . . It is difficult to focus when there is a new outrage at every turn.

No one frightens me more than Betsy DeVos. Why? The impacts of her ignorance and disdain for public education will remain with us for a generation. I have 4 children, all educated in the Everett Public School System, one of whom benefits from Special Education.

We have one opportunity to get it right with our children. I was asked by a conservative friend who was curious why this appointment brought such a backlash, and the answer was simple for me. Our job is to protect our children, the nation's children. Those unable to influence their future with a vote. There is no mandate for the destruction of our most treasured institution, the foundation of our democracy.

My son deserves a free and fair education, as do his siblings. As do their peers. The children in our school district are in the lower socioeconomic rung. Many rely on public transportation and neighborhood public schools. That takes the choice out of school choice, doesn't it? It favors students on economic lines, furthering the divide and putting an undue burden on the schools left behind who will struggle to serve the students that need this gift of education most.

The public hearing demonstrated that Mrs. DeVos is wholly unqualified for this appointment. Her answers or lack of answers, specifically regarding IDEA and school choice, were frightening. As a parent, I was literally shaking.

My nine-year-old son was listening to a portion and heard Senator Hassan mention dyslexia in her question. He cheered and asked if we were going to make sure all kids get special help to read. I couldn't answer him because in her answer, Mrs. DeVos seemed not to know that IDEA is a Federal law protecting these beautiful minds. Protecting them from being a line item that can be wiped away, their future successes and achievements going right along with it.

I ask you, please oppose Betsy DeVos for Education Secretary, for the good of ALL our nation's children.

Thank you, Samantha. Thanks for writing.

We also heard from Laura Fukushima, a mother and former teacher from Dedham. She wrote to say:

Before having my own children, I taught in public schools for five years—three in Boston and two in Tennessee (Sumner Country)—and I'm writing to ask you to vote against confirming Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education.

It's evident that Ms. DeVos is passionate about education—judging from the enormous amounts of money she has poured into shaping policy—and I have no reason to doubt her intentions are good. But that doesn't qualify her for this job. Here are my concerns:

1) Aside from having no experience in public schools, either as a parent or a student, she has no experience in any kind of school as an educator.

2) At her confirmation hearing, she demonstrated a lack of basic understanding of many pertinent issues and concepts—an intimate knowledge of which is required to shape good educational policy.

3) Despite lacking both the prerequisite knowledge and experience within the field of education, she actively used her wealth to sway legislators in Michigan away from their initial support of bipartisan measures, based on a broad coalition of informed participants, to regulate and improve charter schools. (For the record, I do support charter schools, but understanding that there is a vast disparity in their quality, I see the need for rigorous oversight.) Her efforts, I believe, have been more detrimental than beneficial to the children of Detroit.

4) Her suggestion that enforcing IDEA should be left to the states is very troubling. Such policy would leave our most vulnerable students very far behind.

While I agree with Ms. DeVos that our educational system would benefit from some additional choice for parents, I think she's wildly mistaken if she believes a completely free market will fix our schools. We need a Secretary of Education who believes in proper oversight and can help create effective measures of assessment and accountability to improve education for all our children. That's what the Department of Education is for. To run it successfully, we need a Secretary, unlike DeVos, who is well trained in the field.

Thank you, Laura.

A mother from Clinton also wrote about how she would be personally affected by Betsy DeVos, saying:

I have an 8-year-old daughter with Autism Spectrum Disorder who receives services through our public elementary school. I believe that every individual deserves an equal education. IDEA must be upheld! My daughter is doing very well with her studies because of the supports she receives. She is a very smart girl but needs and deserves accommodations. I am thankful there are laws to protect her.

Betsy DeVos thinks that states should decide how to fund education for individuals with disabilities. I believe it should remain federally mandated. I wouldn't be able to afford a private education for my daughter in a special school. I know there are many more parents like me.

I also opposed expanding Charter schools in our state. I believe publicly funded schools should be publicly run and overseen.

I request you reject Betsy DeVos for Education Secretary.

Thank you.

Another parent wrote to say:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. She has demonstrated NO commitment to public education throughout her life, and her support of charter schools in Detroit has been a demonstrated failure. The framing of for-profit charter schools as providing ''choice'' for parents is a false framing—it provides the illusion of a poorly regulated and poorly supervised choice for some parents while limiting the resources and choices left to the other parents and leading to a downward spiral in the quality of public education. Transferring public funding of education to for-profit charter schools, creaming off the children of the most motivated parents, and leaving the more difficult, lower income, and children with special education challenges is a prescription for failure of public schools and will result in herding lower-income students into dysfunctional schools, setting them up for a lifetime of underemployment.

I am not a teacher, nor a member of a teacher's union. I am a mother, and I was

proud to send my son to the Brookline Public Schools for his entire K–12 education. I want other children to have a chance for a quality education, not to be the fodder for a private, for-profit charter school with no commitment to the public good.

Quality public education is the foundation of a free society and the key to sustaining a vibrant economy in the future. Please oppose the confirmation of Betsy DeVos.

A woman from Canton also wrote in. She said:

As a parent of public school children, I urge you to reject the nomination of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. A free and appropriate education is the cornerstone of our democracy, but Ms. DeVos has shown no interest in preserving public education. In fact, she has worked tirelessly to divert public funds into private pockets by way of deregulating and expanding charter schools and to offer vouchers which can be used at private and religious schools. This is a clear violation of our principle of separating church and State.

Ms. DeVos's strategies have had disastrous consequences in Michigan. Eighty percent of charter schools there operate for profit. When schools look first to satisfy investors, they rely on teaching to standardized tests, not on educating children. Here in Massachusetts, we overwhelmingly rejected the idea, one funded by billionaires, and resisted by parents and public school teachers.

Please join us in opposing a ''lead educator'' who has never gone to a public school nor sent her children to one. Please consider that the nation's future depends on educating every child, and that to do so, we need to restore and strengthen our public school system, not dismantle it in favor of profiting off the backs of our youth.

Thank you.

It is no surprise that we also heard from many constituents struggling with student loans. One of those was Liam Weir, a college student from Brighton, who had this to say:

As a college student and a resident of the State of Massachusetts, I am writing you to express my deep concern over the potential appointment of Betsy DeVos to the position of Secretary of Education. Ms. DeVos is extraordinarily unqualified to lead such a department. The fact that the President has chosen such a person, with no experience in education administration in any capacity at any level, is an insult to the millions of teachers, students, and school administrators across the country. Ms. DeVos's policies will undermine already struggling public school systems by allocating taxpayer funds to advance a cynical and deeply troubling agenda against established science. I myself am a recipient of Federal college grants and loans, and I am growing increasingly concerned about Ms. DeVos's competency in managing the looming student debt crisis.

Now more than ever is a time for the Education Department to be run by capable and caring individuals, not willfully ignorant ones.

A young mother from Winthrop also reached out to us. She had this to say:

I urge you to vote No on the confirmation of Betsy DeVos, a singularly unqualified individual . . . among a veritable sea of unqualified individuals this administration has chosen to lead our country.

My husband and I have no personal stake in public education over the next 4 years. Our daughter is only 7 months old. But I am the child of two public schoolteachers in RI, my friends are teachers, my friends' children are in school, my nephews, cousins, etc. I believe in public schools and I believe that Betsy DeVos is not the right direction for our public education system. She is dangerous, and her lack of knowledge is appalling.

Also, and I thank you so much for asking about this at her hearing—student loans are not a business, they are a crisis in this country. My husband has a six figure debt, with interest rates at 7.5 percent. He had to take a job . . . rather than pursue his dreams of working in criminal justice because he needed a job that could pay his $1,000 a month student loan bill. Our saving grace is that I have a good job, and my student loan debt is nearly paid off—because I was loaned a reasonable amount at a reasonable 2 percent interest rate. We are a case study in how the program should work vs. predatory lending.

That is so true. Thanks for writing.

Liz Bosworth, a mother of two from North Dartmouth, had this to say:

While I am fully aware that you do not support the nominations for many of President Trump's nominees, I am currently most concerned about Ms. DeVos. I watched parts of her hearing and I remain concerned that there was a denial for a second hearing. I hope this leads to continued questions and a final opposition of her as Secretary of Education. Your lines of questioning served to highlight her lack of qualifying experience but still, in light of this last six month's politics, I believe anything is possible.

As the mother of two small children and a daughter-in-law, niece, cousin, friend, and wife of public school teachers, I find her to be quite alarming and somewhat scary as the potential leader of that office. We are strong proponents of public education and of teaching our children to value their time in school and to achieve high levels of success.

With that comes some anxiety around their aspirations to higher learning. As a master's level social worker, I will be paying off my loans until I start to pay for my son's higher education. I do not want the debt for my children that I have. At this rate, I am saving far much less money per month for their college funds while paying off my own. I want my children to go higher than myself, but I want them to do so with a level of confidence in their finances that I was not afforded. Ms. DeVos, highlighted by you in her confirmation hearing, has not been involved with student loans on any level and does not have the experience to become entrusted with my current debt or the debt of my children.

Finally, I would like to highlight my abject fear of the treatment of those students with learning disabilities, particularly severe and profound disorders, if she is confirmed. While I see many walks of life in my field, my mother was a proud special education teacher in New Bedford for 33 years. She was proud to be able to teach life skills like budgeting, simple cooking and social skills to her students who may not ever be college ready. We worry about those kids and what will become of them if Ms. DeVos is confirmed. My husband is currently employed in a collaborative that works with mentally ill children who need a different kind of educational process but can still achieve the same goals. I am not sure they would ever qualify for a voucher to attend some Charter school.

We are committed to families and community maintenance of all students with the right care at the right time. I am not sure that Ms. DeVos is committed in the same way.

Please vote to oppose Ms. DeVos.

Thank you, Liz. Thanks for writing.

I heard from another student in Boston who told me the following:

I am writing to you today as a public school teacher and a Ph.D. Candidate in Urban Education, Leadership and Policy Studies. I believe in public schools. Betsy DeVos believes in school privatization and vouchers. She has worked to undermine efforts to regulate Michigan charters, even when they clearly failed. The ''marketplace'' solution of DeVos will destroy our democratically governed community schools. She has no professional experience in the education field. She does not truly understand the nuances of public education nor does she want to understand.

I managed to earn scholarships that took care of most of my schooling, but I still have about $80,000 in student loans. (Not bad for 2 expensive private institution degrees!) I am a first generation college student and my single mother could not afford to help me pay for my schooling. Betsy DeVos just doesn't have experience in K–12 public schools, but she has no experience in running the student loan department. The Federal student loan program is far from perfect. We need someone running it who is knowledgeable in the process, believes in making college more affordable, and understands what it feels like to not be sure how you will pay for college. She has no qualifications of any kind in this area.

I am asking you to vote against the confirmation of Betsy DeVos. Please consider this request and the thousands of other people across the country who vehemently disagree with Ms. DeVos's candidacy.

Thank you.

Sarah Rothery, a mother of two from Northborough, told me about her two sons, saying:

I am writing to ask that you oppose the confirmation of Ms. DeVos for the cabinet position for which she was nominated under President Trump. I have put 2 sons through college thanks to Stafford loans and personal savings and I think she has no idea what is involved in middle class families financing college educations today. One of my sons is now an 8th grade history teacher in a public charter school, Abbot Kelly Foster, in Worcester, and worries that Ms. DeVos has no real understanding of urban education as well.

Thank you, Sarah. Thanks for writing.

I have also heard from Alicia Bettano, a former student from Merrimac who bravely shared with me her own experiences. This is from Alicia:

I suffer from a Non Verbal Learning Disorder. Up until I was 13 years old I was not diagnosed with anything. I went to aides, speech therapists, everyone. I had trouble in the maths and in sciences. I was thought of as stupid. I was yelled at by aides. When I was 13 and diagnosed, my teachers didn't understand. They thought sitting me closer to the white board would allow me to understand better, despite the fact that it was their teaching methods that confused me. I was told I would not go to college or graduate. My parents had to hire an advocate to work for me to get my teachers and school to understand my disability. It took me some time to figure out what I wanted and needed, but in May I graduated college.

Betsy DeVos would be a horror for those with disabilities; not just learning ones, but mental ones. I was lucky I had parents and one teacher backing me. What about the ones that don't? Putting Betsy DeVos into office will hurt our children in America—that's not making America great.

Alicia, thank you for writing. I really appreciate it. Congratulations on your graduation.

A man from Brookline also wrote in, saying this:

As someone passionate about education, especially the education of students in Massachusetts, and as a graduate of a public elementary school, middle school, high school and college; as a young professional burdened by education debt; as the husband of an early childhood educator working in a struggling Boston neighborhood; as a member of a family filled with men and women dedicated to careers in public education, I strongly urge you to oppose Secretary of Education nominee Betsy DeVos. My vote for or against candidates in future elections will be informed by whether the candidate publicly opposed this Secretary of Education nominee.

Betsy DeVos has consistently worked against public education and she is incredibly unqualified for this position. At best, she should be an undersecretary focused on public-private partnerships. If you must work with the incoming administration, suggest her nomination for that role, but you must oppose her cabinet-level appointment.

DeVos has no experience in public schools, either as a student, educator, administrator or even as a parent. She has lobbied for, and been employed by, initiatives that have undermined public education in America.

We need a Secretary of Education who will champion innovative strategies that we know help to improve success for all students, including creating more opportunities and equity for all. I urge you to vote against Ms. DeVos for Secretary of Education.

What does Betsy DeVos have to say to Matt and Diana or to the thousands of other teachers who have more experience in public education than she does? What does she have to say to Leslie and Samantha, whose children have benefited from the programs she wants to cut? What does she have to say to Sarah, who relied on Stafford loans to put her sons through college?

It is not just individuals who are worried about Betsy DeVos. We have heard from groups across the State as well. The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association wrote me, saying this:

Dear Senator Warren,

As the Association representing the 70 Massachusetts commonwealth charter public schools, we are writing to express our concerns over the nomination of Elisabeth DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education. We do not express these reservations lightly, but we believe it is important to raise certain issues that should be addressed by the nominee.

Both President-elect Trump and Ms. DeVos are strong supporters of public charter schools, and we are hopeful they will continue the bipartisan efforts of the Clinton, Bush and Obama Administrations to promote the continued expansion of high quality charters while pursuing reforms that will strengthen traditional public schools.

But we are concerned about media reports of Ms. DeVos' support for school vouchers and her critical role in creating a charter system in her home state of Michigan that has been widely criticized for lax oversight and poor academic performance, and appears to be dominated by for-profit interests.

As the senior Senator from Massachusetts and a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP), which will hold hearings on the nomination, you will be in a position to ensure the nominee commits to holding the national charter school movement to the highest levels of accountability and oversight that are the hallmark of the Massachusetts charter system.

By all independent accounts, Massachusetts has the best charter school system in the country. We are providing high quality public school choices for parents across our state. Our urban schools are serving the highest need children in Massachusetts, and are producing results that have researchers double-checking their math. These gains held across all demographic groups, including African American, Latino, and children living in poverty.

The cornerstone of the Massachusetts charter public school system is accountability. The process of obtaining and keeping a charter is deliberately difficult. The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is the sole authorizer and historically has approved only one out of every five applications. Once approved, each charter school must submit to annual financial audits by independent auditors and annual performance reviews by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Every five years, each charter must be renewed after a process as rigorous as the initial application process. For-profit charter schools are prohibited by Massachusetts law.

Our schools have also created partnerships with many Massachusetts public school districts to foster collaboration and best practices sharing, and have forged an historic Compact between Boston charter public schools and the Boston Public Schools that has become a national model.

Bipartisan support has been key to the development and success of the Massachusetts system. Created in 1993 by a Democratic Legislature and a Republican Governor, public charter schools have continued to receive support from all Governors, Republican and Democratic alike, and Democratic legislative leaders.

If the new President and his nominee intend to advance the cause of school choice across the country, they should look to Massachusetts for their path forward.

The history of charter schools in Michigan offers a more cautionary tale. The same researchers from Stanford that declared Massachusetts charter public schools an unqualified success, had mixed reviews for Michigan's charters.

According to media reports, last year Ms. DeVos actively campaigned against bipartisan legislation that would have provided more oversight for Michigan's charters. If these reports are true, we are deeply concerned that efforts to grow school choice without a rigorous accountability system will reduce the quality of charter schools across the country. We hope you agree that quality, not quantity, should be the guiding principle of charter expansion. Without high levels of accountability, this model fails.

We ask that you use the hearing to probe the incoming Administration's intentions regarding education policy in general and school choice and quality specifically.

We'd be happy to provide you with more information on the Massachusetts model and would welcome a meeting with your staff to brief them on our concerns.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Charter Public School Association Board of Directors.

The people of Massachusetts cannot afford Betsy DeVos. This is why I will vote no on her nomination and why I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH AND THE CABINET

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, President Trump's outstanding Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch has earned high praise from all across the political spectrum.

Some of it has come from unlikely corners, whether Democratic Senators, left-leaning publications, President Obama's own legal mentor, even his former top Supreme Court lawyer. We have heard from those Gorsuch has taught. We have heard from many who have worked alongside him. In fact, just a few days ago we received a letter from several of his former law colleagues. So let me share some of that with you now. The letter began:

We are Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.

Many of us have served in government, some during Republican and some during Democratic administrations; some of us have served in both. We have clerked for Supreme Court justices and appellate and district court judges appointed by Democratic and Republican presidents. We represent a broad spectrum of views on politics, judicial philosophy, and many other subjects as well. But we all agree on one thing: Our former colleague, Neil M. Gorsuch . . . is superbly qualified for confirmation.

He is a man of character, decency, and accomplishment, [one who represented all of his clients] without regard to ideology [and one] who merits this appointment.

Clearly, it is not going to be easy to paint Judge Gorsuch as anything but extremely qualified and exceptionally fair, but that hasn't stopped some on the left from trying. They started musing about blocking any nominee before the President had even nominated anyone. It is a good reminder that much of the opposition we are seeing from far left groups and Democratic Senators isn't so much about Judge Gorsuch as it is about their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the election.

As a Washington Post headline recently declared, ''Democrats' goal with court nomination: Make it a referendum on Trump.''

''[P]rominent Senate Democrats,'' the article read, are ''giving the nominee's 10-plus years on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit almost secondary consideration.'' It seems they believe their best, and perhaps only, bet to bring down this highly qualified judge is by ''inject[ing] Trump into the process.''

The very next day, the New York Times ran an article about Democrats' apparent hope that this Supreme Court fight will be ''More About Trump Than Gorsuch.'' In other words, our Democratic colleagues are finding it hard to oppose Judge Gorsuch on the merits, so they are trying to divert attention and invent new hurdles for him to surmount. That is the playbook. Sure enough, we see them running the play.

Consider the assistant Democratic leader's speech the other day. It was supposedly about Judge Gorsuch. He sure had a lot to say about President Trump, about things President Trump has done, about things President

Trump might do, about refighting old battles but precious little about the qualifications of the actual nominee before us, and precious little about the increasing number of accolades he has been receiving, especially from well-known folks on the political left. I mentioned several a moment ago.

Now we can add another to the list: Alan Dershowitz, the famous constitutional scholar and longtime Harvard law professor. Dershowitz described Gorsuch as ''highly credentialed and hard to oppose'' and dismissed the idea that he would be caricatured as some sort of ''extreme right-wing [ideologue].'' ''[T]hat doesn't seem to fit what I know about him,'' Dershowitz said, adding that Gorsuch will ''be hard to oppose on the merits.'' Indeed, he will.

That is precisely why our Democratic colleagues are making the debate on his nomination about other things and other people. That is also why they are arguing that there are special hurdles for Judge Gorsuch to clear—hurdles they are forced to admit were not there for the first-term nominees of Democratic Presidents.

When even a leftwinger like Rachel Maddow can't help but admit that Judge Gorsuch is ''a relatively mainstream choice,'' when even Maddow characterizes a Democratic attempt to filibuster his nomination as ''radical,'' it is hard to argue otherwise. That will not stop many on the far left from trying.

I invite Democrats, who spent many months insisting ''we need nine,'' to now follow through on that advice by giving this superbly qualified nominee fair consideration and an up-or-down vote. It is time to finally accept the results of the election and move on so we can all move our country forward.

That would also apply to other nominations before the Senate. Just before the election, the Democratic leader said he believed the Senate has a ''moral obligation, even beyond the economy and politics, to avoid gridlock.'' Put simply, he said: ''We have to get things done.'' Yet just a few months later, Democratic obstruction has reached such extreme levels that the smallest number of Cabinet officials have been confirmed in modern history at this point in a Presidency. It is a historic break in tradition, a departure from how newly elected Presidents of both parties have been treated in decades past.

In fact, by this same point into their terms, other recent Presidents from both sides of the aisle had more than twice as many Cabinet officials confirmed as President Trump does now. President Obama had 12 Cabinet officials confirmed at this point in his term, President George W. Bush had all 14 Cabinet nominees confirmed at this point, President Clinton had 13, and President Trump has a mere 4.

It seems this gridlock and opposition has far less to do with the nominees actually before us than the man who nominated them, just like we are seeing with President Trump's outstanding Supreme Court pick. The Democratic leader and his colleagues are under a great deal of pressure from those on the left who simply cannot—cannot—accept the results of a democratic election. They are calling for Democrats to delay and punt and blockade the serious work of the Senate at any cost. They would like nothing more than for Democrats to continue to resist and prevent this President from moving our country forward.

Unfortunately, many of our friends across the aisle have given in to these groups' calls for obstruction, and some have even gone to unprecedented lengths to delay for delay's sake. They have forced meaningless procedural hurdles, they have stalled confirmation votes as long as possible, they have postponed hearings, and they have even boycotted committee meetings altogether. Their excuses are ever-changing, and some border on the absurd. ''We don't like the seating arrangement,'' they say. ''We can't be late to a protest,'' they argue. There was even some excuse about a YouTube video.

Look, enough is enough. The American people elected a new President last November. Democrats don't have to like that decision, but they do have a responsibility to our country. The American people want us to bring the Nation together and move forward. It is far past time to put the election behind us and put this President's Cabinet into place, just as previous Senates have done for previous newly elected Presidents of both parties.

Mr. President, now I wish to say a few words about one nominee whom we will be voting on tomorrow. The nominee for Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos, is a well-qualified candidate who has earned the support of 20 Governors and several education groups from across the Nation. As Education Secretary, she will be our students' foremost advocate, working to improve our education system so that every child has a brighter future.

Importantly, she also understands that our teachers, students, parents, school boards, and local and State governments are best suited to make education decisions—not Washington bureaucrats. I have every confidence that Mrs. DeVos will lead the Department of Education in such a way that will put our students' interests first, while also strengthening the educational opportunities available to all of America's children.

I urge colleagues to join in confirming Betsy Devos so that she can begin the very important work before her without further delay.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

THE CABINET AND CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I sat here and listened with interest to the majority leader's comments about this strategy of obstruction and slow walking the President's Cabinet. I share his frustration. More than that, on behalf of the people we were sent here to represent—the American people—I regret that petty politics has gotten in the way of the ability of our colleagues across the aisle to get over the fact that the election didn't turn out quite the way they hoped and to get back to work on behalf of the American people.

This week we will continue to grind our way through consideration of President Trump's nominees, despite the best efforts of our friends across the aisle to obstruct and to slow walk. Because of their insistence on taking advantage of every possible procedural delay, they have tried to grind the Senate to a near halt, but we have overcome that obstruction. We came together early Friday morning and voted to move forward with the President's nominee for Education Secretary—about 6:30 in the morning. It was a little earlier than we usually convene, but I am glad we were able to get it done.

I am confident that we will get Mrs. DeVos confirmed soon. Then, thanks to former Democratic leader Harry Reid, the Democrats know they cannot block these nominees from taking office. Because of the so-called nuclear option, they reduced the voting threshold from 60 to 51, meaning that, with 52 Republicans and, hopefully, with a little help from some of our friends across the aisle, every single one of President Trump's Cabinet nominees will be confirmed. We can take that to the bank.

All they can do, which is all they have done up to this point, is to slow the process down for no reason other than the fact that they can. Again, thanks to Senator Reid, all of the President's nominees will be confirmed. This type of behavior is really pretty juvenile, if you ask me, and it can't actually accomplish anything. It is a strategy in search of a goal. They don't have any particular goal in mind, because at the end of the day, the President will get the Cabinet that he has nominated and deserves.

After the vote tomorrow on Mrs. DeVos for Cabinet Secretary of Education, we will vote to confirm Senator SESSIONS, our longstanding colleague, as Attorney General. In addition to him and the Education Secretary, we have the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Treasury, too. These, of course, are key positions in the new administration.

Now, 18 days after President Trump's inauguration, he still doesn't have the help he needs in these critical posts. I believe this kind of mindless obstruction is actually irresponsible, if not downright dangerous. I know our Democratic colleagues said they confirmed General Mattis, the Secretary of Defense, and later on the Director of the CIA and, yes, they finally confirmed the Secretary of State. But the Attorney General is part of the national security Cabinet. They run a lot of the counterterrorism efforts for the Department of Justice.

This is not only irresponsible, but this is, I believe, dangerous. It should also be an embarrassment. The American people expect their Senators and Congress to do our jobs and fulfill the duties to those who we represent. If our Democratic colleagues don't want to support one of the very well-qualified nominees of the President, that is fine. That is their right, but don't slow walk and slow down the institution of the Senate just to score some political points or to feed some of the irrational rage that you see depicted in some quarters.

Dragging this out doesn't do any good. It won't change the outcome, and it ill serves the American people. Let's get these nominations done so they can be sworn in and begin their service to this new administration and, more importantly, to the American people.

In addition to our work on nominations, last week the Senate started to consider a number of measures to block a host of regulations put in place by the Obama administration during the last 6 months that President Obama was in office. Under President Obama, our country witnessed a volcanic profusion of rules and regulations that empowered unelected bureaucrats and shut out the voices of the elected representatives of the people.

The result? Job creators have less freedom to operate and innovate and are instead suffocated by more and more redtape and compliance costs. That translates into a slower growing economy, which means less jobs and which means the American people are the ones who get hurt, directly as a result of this profusion of redtape and regulation.

According to recent reports, the 600-plus regulations issued by the Obama White House came with a $700 billion pricetag for our economy. Our economy is not even growing at 2 percent. I think this overregulation is largely responsible because this profusion of regulations hit businesses both big—they can absorb some matter of the costs—but also small businesses, including local community banks that are going out of business on a daily basis because they simply can't afford to compete and to pay for the countless lawyers to comply with all of the redtape and the mindless regulation from the previous administration. It is not just financial services. It is health care, it is agriculture, and it is all sectors of the economy.

I am grateful that President Trump has made it clear where he stands on all of this, and he has already issued guidance requiring the government to cut regulations should it want to add more: Cut two regulations for every one you want to add. With President Trump in the White House, Congress can reverse many of the Obama regulations. That gives the American people and our anemic economic growth some relief.

Through the Congressional Review Act, Congress can review and ultimately block recent regulations handed down by the Federal Government. That is what we did last week, and that is what we are going to continue to do. We can roll back many of the Obama administration rules that are killing jobs and stifling economic growth.

At the end of last week, we repealed the rule called the stream buffer rule, which actually didn't have anything to do with streams. It was a job-killing regulation that was more about stifling domestic energy production, and I am glad we did away with it.

On Friday, Congress passed another resolution—one I was happy to cosponsor. That was aimed at chipping away the regulatory burdens for our community banks and other financial services organizations brought on by Dodd-Frank.

I am all for transparency, but I am against laws that give advantages to foreign companies over our own. This Securities and Exchange Commission rule would have done that by forcing American companies to disclose confidential information that their foreign competitors can keep under wraps. It should go without saying that each of us want a level playing field for our businesses, which help to create jobs and grow the economy. That is why we blocked this rule.

Of course, this and other resolutions are the first few steps in a broader strategy to kill overbearing regulations so that our innovators and our entrepreneurs aren't suffocated by unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy. That is part of what the American people sent us here to do. Certainly, the verdict they rendered on November 8 is that they did not want a continuation of the status quo under the previous administration. They wanted change. It is integral to restoring our economy—the kind of change we are bringing about to restoring our economy and helping it grow for everyone.

I look forward to working with the White House and with our colleagues as we continue to find new ways to build up the American economy.

Mr. President, if I can just close on one last topic. I see some colleagues here wishing to speak. Tomorrow we will vote on the nomination of Betsy Devos to the Department of Education. The Federal Government, through the Department of Education, funds about 10 percent of public education, because most of that comes from our States; that is, the funding and the regulation of education from kindergarten through the 12th grade. What this fight over this well-qualified nominee is all about is power—as so many of these fights in Washington, DC, are about—and the desire to keep power over public education in all of our States and all across the country right here inside the beltway.

I believe President Trump chose wisely, not because he chose another education bureaucrat who knows all the acronyms and knows the arcanum known to people who have been brought up within that establishment. Instead, he chose an outsider, someone much like himself but someone more interested in results, rather than paying homage to and feeding the education establishment here in Washington, DC, and retaining the power over the important decisions that should be handed back down to the States, down to teachers, parents, and students, as they choose how best to get to accomplish our universal goal of making sure every child has a good education.

This fight isn't about the quality of education in our country. This fight, for those who are opposing Mrs. DeVos, is largely about whether we should retain power here in Washington, DC, so that Washington can continue to dictate to the States, parents, and teachers what policies they need to apply in our K–12 education system or whether we are going to return that power back where it should be—back into the hands of parents, teachers, and local school districts.

That is what this fight is all about. That is why I am glad that tomorrow we will confirm Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. Listen to what the American people told us on November 8 when they said they didn't want to maintain the status quo because the status quo is not working for them, it is not working for our economy, and, certainly, it is not working for our children, each of whom deserves a good education.

Yes, Mrs. DeVos will shake things up a little bit but, more importantly, she is going to be part of this effort to return power to parents and teachers and to our local school districts. That is what this vote will be about tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to briefly discuss a number of ongoing efforts in the early days of the 115th Congress. It is a strange time to be working on Capitol Hill, as strange as I have seen in my four decades in the Senate. That is true for a number of reasons. Let me give you an example. Republicans currently control the Senate, the House, and the White House, and are in widespread agreement about most major policy issues. Sure, there are details that need to be worked out, both on the process and the substance on things like tax reform, trade, and of course health care reform, but by and large Republicans all have the same ultimate goals for these key areas. Yet despite the overwhelming consensus that exists on most of these issues, there seems to be an obsession with advancing a narrative of a deeply divided Republican majority. According to this popular narrative, House and Senate Republicans have completely different views on tax reform, Republicans in Congress oppose everything President Trump wants to do on trade, and Senate Republicans are deeply at odds on

how to press forward on repealing and replacing ObamaCare.

As chairman of the Senate committee that is right in the middle of all these issues, I get asked to comment on these matters, literally, dozens of times every day. The questions take many forms. Senator X says Congress should do ''blank'' with ObamaCare. What do you think? Can the House's tax reform plan pass in the Senate? President Trump said ''blank'' today. Is that going to fly in your committee?

These questions may seem straightforward. However, the underlying question behind all of these lines of inquiry is: Will you publically disagree with or criticize another Republican so we can write another story about Republican divisions? Matters such as repealing and replacing ObamaCare or reforming the Tax Code are certainly important topics that are rightly under intense public scrutiny. However, given that these monumental efforts are still in the early stages, the fact that there are some relatively minor differences of opinion shouldn't be all that noteworthy. The existence of these differences in the initial stages of the process doesn't significantly jeopardize the success of these efforts. The purpose of the legislative process—particularly the process we use in the Senate—is to allow differences to be aired and worked through so, at the end of the process, consensus can be reached. Differing views on some issues at the beginning of the process are to be expected. Once again, they are hardly noteworthy.

Case in point, Republicans are united in our desire to repeal and replace ObamaCare. The vast majority of us want reforms that are more patient-centered and market-driven. As far as I know, pretty much all of us want to return most of the authority for regulating the health care system back to the States. On some of the other questions, let me make clear what my position is just so there is no confusion on these points. I believe we should repeal ObamaCare—including the taxes—and provide for a stable transition period. I believe the work to replace ObamaCare should also begin immediately, meaning that our repeal bill should include as many ObamaCare replacement policies as procedures allow. A more complete replacement can and should be crafted in the coming months as we work through some of the more complicated issues. That has been my position since roughly March of 2010, when the final pieces of ObamaCare were signed into law. I have repeated it numerous times over the years. Moreover, I believe most Republicans in Congress share that same view.

Do some Republicans have different views regarding the proper order and procedure for this endeavor? I am sure they do. But I don't know of a single Republican who does not want to get rid of ObamaCare. I certainly don't know any Republicans who are fine with the status quo in our health care system. That being the case, no one should be trying to parse anyone's words or split hairs in order to manufacture divisions in the Republican ranks on repealing and replacing ObamaCare.

I have little doubt that we can work through whatever differences do exist, and, more importantly, I think we will. I am not going to speculate today on the floor about what the final process or product will look like, but I will say that at the end of the day, only 3 numbers matter: 218, 51 and 1. Those are the numbers of supporters we need at each step to pass an ObamaCare repeal and replacement.

At this point, given what we currently know, I strongly believe that the process I described earlier—a full repeal and a responsible transition, coupled with a sizable downpayment on replacement, followed by a committed effort to implement additional replacement policies in the coming months—provides the best path forward to achieving those thresholds. Like I said, most Republicans in Congress agree with me.

We can discuss other ideas, and I am happy to engage in that discussion, but those numbers—218, 51, and 1—have to be the standard by which we judge any alternatives. And while I would love to see the final product pass with even larger numbers, and even with some Democrats onboard with us, those numbers give us a clear picture as to how much consensus is necessary.

Once again, I think we can get there, and I am continually working with colleagues in both the House and Senate to make sure we do.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to oppose the nomination of Betsy DeVos, President Trump's choice to be Secretary of Education. I fundamentally disagree with my colleague from Texas who said earlier that this is a fight about power and who maintains power, whether it is going to stay in Washington or whether it is going to be in our State and local communities.

In New Hampshire, we believe in local control of education. It is a bedrock principle of our public education system. This fight, today, is not about power in Washington versus power in the States; this is a fight about whether we are going to continue to support our public school system and our system of public higher education, or are we going to take the money out, the support out, and divert it into private and religious schools, and gut the public education system in this country?

My parents were part of the ''greatest generation,'' and they raised me in post-World War II America. They understood that the best way for my sisters and me to have opportunities for the future was to make sure we had a solid education. I benefited by going to great public schools in the State of Missouri and in the State of Pennsylvania, and I was also able to receive a quality public higher education. Without the opportunity to attend public universities in Pennsylvania and later in West Virginia and in the State of Mississippi, I would not have been able to get a college education because my parents wouldn't have been able to afford to send me to a private college or university, just like they wouldn't have been able to afford to send me to private K–12 schools.

I am grateful for the public schools I attended and proud of the support my parents and so many other parents have given to public schools across America. My children and grandchildren have benefited from the great public schools in New Hampshire.

As Governor, I was proud to work with the Republican legislature to improve the public schools in the State of New Hampshire. We expanded public kindergarten in our State because at the time I became Governor, we didn't have public kindergarten for all students. We were able to open the door for an additional 25,000 kids to go to public kindergarten. We were able to increase funding for schools in New Hampshire during my time as Governor. I learned during those experiences and also as a teacher—I taught in public schools in Dover, New Hampshire and also in Mississippi—the close connection between quality public education and a strong, growing economy.

I taught in Mississippi in 1970. At that time, there was no requirement for all young people to attend school. So if you didn't want to go to school, you didn't have to. We saw the negative impact that had on economic indicators in the State of Mississippi. Since then, the State has adopted compulsory education for students in Mississippi. But it was a great lesson to me to see how important good schools are and how they contribute to a strong economy in this country.

As Governor, when I talked to businesses in the State of New Hampshire, one of the things they told me that they needed in order for their businesses to succeed was a skilled workforce, young people who had a good education, who could learn advanced skills on the job. They looked to locate in communities where there was a strong system of public education.

I value public schools as one of our Nation's bedrock civic and democratic institutions because they provide the best opportunity for kids from all walks of life to get a quality education. They pass on to each new generation, including the children of immigrants, America's shared ideals and values.

Regrettably, after careful study of Mrs. DeVos's record as an activist, I have concluded that she doesn't agree with this view of our public schools. She has no relevant experience as a teacher or as a leader in public schools. She has never attended a public school, and she has not sent any of her children to a public school. To the contrary, she has spent her entire career

and countless millions of dollars of her personal fortune working not to improve public schools but to privatize them, to weaken them by diverting public funds to private and religious schools. Given her past record, it makes no sense to put Mrs. DeVos in charge of the Department of Education unless the aim is to devalue, defund, and perhaps eventually destroy our public schools. I think that is unacceptable.

In my State of New Hampshire, support for our public schools is bipartisan and it is passionate. In rural communities and small towns and our cities across the State, public schools are institutions that have strong support within our communities. They are a big part of our communities' identities and shared experiences. Across centuries and generations in the Granite State, public schools have been at the heart of our common civic life.

I think it is not surprising that my office has been inundated with letters, emails, and phone calls strongly opposing the DeVos nomination. My office has received more than 4,000 letters and emails from Granite Staters. That may not seem like a lot to somebody from the State of California, but from the State of New Hampshire, to have 4,000 letters and emails on a nomination is unheard of. And almost all of them oppose this nomination. In addition, we have received 1,405 telephone calls in opposition and only 3 in support. I am impressed not only by the volume of constituent messages but by the intensity of their opposition.

Megan is a social studies teacher in New Hampshire. She writes:

> Mrs. DeVos clearly lacks even a basic understanding of Federal education policy, laws and instructional practices. She has no relevant experience. There is just no way I would ever be certified to instruct students in New Hampshire if I lacked as much knowledge and experience in my field. But she gets to be the nation's chief educator? How is this good for kids?

Roger is a retired public school teacher from the central part of my State, and he writes:

> Please reject DeVos because she is anti-public education in word and in practice, lacking the understanding of the public education system and having no understanding of the dreamers sitting in public schools this morning, creating their own American dreams, learning of the promise and justice that is America.

Sam from our Seacoast region writes:

> It is important that we maintain a strong public school system. This is not a partisan issue. Any person, regardless of party, can see that Miss DeVos is unqualified to fill the position. You need to vote ''no'' to save our education system.

Mike from one of our university towns writes:

> I am really concerned that we might have someone with so little experience in education and with seemingly anti-public education views as our next education leader. I fear that a DeVos confirmation will only exacerbate the already segregated school experiences that children have in our country. I want all students to have a fair shake at a high-quality school experience, not just those who live in wealthy communities or who have parents savvy enough to advocate on their behalf.

Many of the letters I have received are from parents who are outraged by Mrs. DeVos's comments on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which is one of the landmark civil rights laws of the 20th century. In response to a question from my colleague, Senator HASSAN, Mrs. DeVos made it clear that she was unaware that that law was a Federal law and that it governs all our public schools in the United States.

IDEA ensures that children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education and that they are accommodated in our schools and classrooms, just like all other children. In her testimony, Mrs. DeVos said that decisions about how to treat students with disabilities should be left to the States. Can you imagine? What would happen in States that decide they don't want to make sure that those students can go to school?

I received this message from Marilyn, who lives in the western part of New Hampshire. She says:

> Thank you for opposing the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as Education Secretary. She is a dangerous, unqualified choice. As the parent of a daughter with Down syndrome, I fear for the future of IDEA if DeVos is in charge.

Ashley Preston, who was the Teacher of the Year in New Hampshire in 2016, wrote this to me:

> If our Secretary of Education does not understand and value the importance of Federal laws such as IDEA, how can we expect states and local school districts to do that? These are the elements crucial to ensuring the best chance for our future.

Mr. President, the Department of Education has oversight not only of K–12 public schools but also higher education, including a portfolio of more than $1.2 trillion in Federal student loans. I have had the opportunity not only to teach in our K–12 schools but to work in public universities in New Hampshire and in private universities. Listening to Mrs. DeVos's testimony, I was appalled by her lack of understanding of higher education policy. She acknowledged that neither she nor her children had ever received a Federal loan or Pell grant. And this is the worst part: When asked to commit to enforcing rules that ensure students are not cheated and end up with no degree but a mountain of student debt—in other words, the predicament of students who went to Trump University and so many other for-profit colleges—she refused to do that. She refused to say that this is something that we should support as a policy in America.

I am also deeply concerned by her support for charter schools that are not accountable and her reputation as ''the four-star general of the voucher movement.'' I believe there is a role for charter schools. I think as we try to improve our public system of higher education, we need to look at a number of models. I voted for New Hampshire's charter school law, but we should hold them accountable just as we hold our public schools accountable. We should ensure that they do not drain resources from public schools.

There was a report that came out in 2013 that was done by a working group under the auspices of the Annenberg Institute for Social Reform. They uncovered similar challenges across charter schools. They found that there was uneven academic performance; that some of them had overly harsh discipline practices; that funding sometimes destabilized traditional schools; that there was a lack of transparency and oversight that led to conflicts of interest and, in some cases, fraud; and that many of them practiced policies that kept students out for various reasons.

Mrs. DeVos was one of the architects of Michigan's first charter school law in 1993. It has been widely criticized for lacking accountability and safeguards for students. In her confirmation hearing, Mrs. DeVos refused to agree that for-profit charter schools should be held to the same standards as public schools. Just as disturbing is her support for school vouchers, which would siphon funding from public schools and divert it to private and religious schools.

Advocates of vouchers like to call it school choice, but, in practice, parents have learned that choice is not a reality. Florida, under Governor Jeb Bush, was the first State to enact a statewide voucher system, and nearly 93 percent of private and parochial schools in Florida—after that law—refused to accept any voucher students.

In New Hampshire, we have parts of the State where, if we don't have public schools, there are no other choices for our students. I don't care whether you have a voucher or not. You can't drive 3 or 4 hours to get to the closest private school.

So let's be clear: Vouchers and other privatization schemes advocated by Mrs. DeVos are not about pedagogy; they are about ideology. They are all about disdain for what many voucher advocates like to call government schools. Well, what they call government schools are our public schools. They are schools that our communities have created and control locally for the education of their kids.

What Mrs. DeVos fails to understand is that quality education has nothing do with whether a school is public or private. We have public schools in New Hampshire that can do better, and we have public schools that are world class. The same can be said about our private schools in New Hampshire. But what counts in public and private schools alike are high-quality teachers, support from parents and communities, facilities where kids can learn and be safe, rigorous academic standards, and the resources to make sure that children get the instruction they need, including individualized assistance for

kids with special needs. What counts is the political and budgetary commitment to create high-quality schools in every neighborhood, regardless of ZIP Code. Because Betsy DeVos does not understand these basic truths about education in America, because she is driven by an ideological hostility to our public schools, she is the wrong person to serve as our Secretary of Education.

I intend to vote no on the nomination of Mrs. DeVos, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in rejecting this unqualified nominee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in opposition to the nomination of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education. My reason is very simple: Mrs. DeVos lacks the experience required to oversee the Department of Education, an agency that serves over 50 million public school children across America.

Despite spending many years giving hundreds of millions of dollars to back political candidates and ballot initiatives that support unproven education policies, she remains shockingly unfamiliar with Federal law and even some very basic education concepts. Educating our children is an incredibly important job, and we need someone who is experienced, prepared, and well qualified to lead the Department of Education.

As I have said before, Mrs. DeVos has no experience in public education at any level, not as a teacher, not as an administrator, not as a student, not as a parent, not as a school board member, and not even as a borrower of public loans for college.

Ask any parent; our children are what we hold most dear. It only makes sense that the individual whom we entrust with our children's education should have at least some—some—experience in public education. Mrs. DeVos has absolutely no experience—I repeat, no tangible experience—with neighborhood public schools. In fact, her only experience in education is her work lobbying for the transfer of taxpayer money to private schools.

She has also pushed for the rapid expansion of charter schools without sufficient accountability to parents and to students, which brings me to her track record in my home State of Michigan. Mrs. DeVos has pushed for school vouchers to send our public tax dollars to private schools. Her staunch advocacy for the use of taxpayer funding for private and charter school systems earned her the nickname as the ''four-star general of the pro-voucher movement.''

The vast majority of children in Michigan and in the United States attend neighborhood public schools. Voucher programs rob these children of the resources they need to receive high-quality education near where they live. Michigan voters soundly rejected her plan, and we cannot—I repeat, we cannot—put her in a position to push for voucher programs on a national scale that will weaken our neighborhood schools and will weaken, in particular, our rural schools.

Let me be clear: I support innovative models for improving our education system but only when those models are proven to work. For example, I worked hard to ensure that all children have access to the skills and education that are vital to joining the modern workforce and competing in today's global economy. I introduced legislation that will reduce the price tag for higher learning by allowing students to complete college-level courses while they are still in public high school.

The Making Education Affordable and Accessible Act will help students save time and money as they kick-start their careers through a very personalized curriculum. Whether an early-middle college program or a dual and concurrent enrollment program, these models help traditional public school students save money and get ahead by earning college credits while they finish their high school education.

These programs are typically run by a local school district or an intermediate school district and are offered at little or no cost to the student. They also help students identify their major or interest area sooner so that they can complete their college degree and graduate as much as 1 year earlier. Across the State of Michigan, students are participating in more than 90 early and middle college programs, programs that are proven to significantly increase high school graduation rates.

Jobs for the Future found that, nationally, 90 percent of early college students graduate high school versus 78 percent nationally. This is just one example of the kind of innovative approach with proven results that policymakers should support to improve education outcomes.

Education reform must be driven by data and validated outcomes and not by political ideology. Our primary focus must always be on increasing opportunities for the millions of students in our neighborhood public schools. Given Mrs. DeVos's history of supporting policies that undermine traditional public schools and the communities they serve, I do not think she would act in the best interests of American students.

Michigan has been devoted to great public education for generations, a commitment that stretches back to even before the founding of our State. Some of our State's earliest pioneers, including my ancestors, settled under the guidance of the Northwest Ordinance, which stated that ''schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.'' Our Nation has strived to live up to this creed ever since, honoring the fundamental truth that all of our children have the right to an education no matter who they are, where they live, how much money their parents have, or how they learn.

All levels of government—State, local and Federal—share the responsibility of ensuring that our children have access to quality education. In addition to providing significant Federal dollars to local school districts, the Federal Government plays a critical role in preventing discrimination and creating opportunity.

Federal education laws play a vital roll in ensuring that all students have equal access to learning opportunities, laws like the landmark 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.

Before the enactment of IDEA, too many of our children with disabilities were denied the chance to learn from our broader communities. Likewise, our broader communities were denied the chance to learn from these youth and the extraordinary perspectives and contributions they offer to American society.

Now, thanks to IDEA, 6.5 million of our children, or 13 percent of all public school students, are not condemned to a life of isolation or mere accommodation. Instead, Federal law ensures that every child has access to the resources he or she needs to become productive and included members of our increasingly diverse 21st-century society.

IDEA assists public schools with offering high-quality special education and early intervention services for children with disabilities from birth to age 21. As a result, IDEA is responsible for millions of youth with disabilities graduating from high school, enrolling in college, and finding jobs as valuable participants in the American economy.

But IDEA will not enforce itself; it is the responsibility of the Department of Education and its leadership to monitor, evaluate, and provide technical assistance to States, making sure that our schools are offering learning opportunities that meet every student's needs.

It is the responsibility of the Senate to determine whether Mrs. DeVos can carry out this task and live up to the creed of ''forever encouraging'' education. Unfortunately, Mrs. DeVos has demonstrated little comprehension of the Federal role in protecting students with disabilities' equal right to an education. This became evident when she was asked directly about IDEA during her confirmation hearing, and Mrs. DeVos tried to excuse her erroneous answer by saying, ''I may have confused it.'' Every student knows the importance of doing their homework, studying for their exams, and practicing for any class presentations in advance. Every educator knows that the answer ''I may have confused it'' is not a response that leads to a passing grade.

With the stakes as high as they are, it is clear that Mrs. DeVos did not do her homework. She did not study for her potential role. She did not practice for her interview with the Senate committee and, most importantly, the

American people. She has contributed millions of dollars to Republican politicians over the years and probably thought that was the only qualification that she needed. We need to prove to the American people that she is wrong.

I take my responsibility under the U.S. Constitution to provide advise and consent to the President very seriously, and I know my colleagues here in the Senate do so as well. Given Mrs. DeVos's weak performance in her interview before the American people and her inability to demonstrate a basic understanding of key education concepts, I do not think we can give her a passing grade.

As Senators, we do not operate under a model of social promotion under which we pass an unqualified individual to a higher office simply because they showed up. Perhaps this is why Mrs. DeVos's nomination is expected to see the most bipartisan opposition to her confirmation of all of the President's nominations to date.

Mrs. DeVos's response regarding IDEA during her confirmation hearing was not the only response that I found alarming. As the father of two college-age daughters, I am extremely concerned about ensuring that our college campuses provide safe environments where students can learn and grow.

I was shocked by a recent comprehensive report done by one school that found that over 20 percent of female undergraduates experienced unwanted sexual contact. Sadly, this problem is not confined to one school. It is a public safety and health crisis that we must immediately take action to address.

The Department of Education has taken important first steps to combat the prevalence of campus sexual assault by opening investigations in over 200 schools and publishing guidance to ensure that universities are affording students title IX protections, the freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex and freedom from sexual violence.

Mrs. DeVos apparently has a different reaction to the threats many young students face while pursuing their higher education. As we saw during her confirmation hearing, she said it is ''premature'' for her to say if she will choose to uphold the Department of Education's guidance on preventing sexual violence. This is completely unacceptable to me as a Senator representing over 500,000 undergraduate students attending one of Michigan's outstanding colleges and universities, and this is completely unacceptable to me as a father.

It is also unacceptable in the eyes of over 1,000 graduates of the same school in Michigan that Mrs. DeVos attended herself: Calvin College. Calvin College alumni from the class of 1947 to the class of 2020 sent my office an extensive petition expressing their deep concern with Mrs. DeVos's nomination. In their letter, these alumni presented several reasons they oppose Mrs. DeVos's confirmation. Specifically, they expressed concerns that she does not understand or support the many Federal policies—like IDEA and title IX—that she would be required to enforce. They wrote: ''This is especially concerning given that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and title IX, which ensure that all students' educational experiences are free of discrimination that impede learning, are not of value to Mrs. DeVos.'' I cannot agree more with her fellow alumni.

My office has received over 8,000 calls in opposition to the nomination of Betsy DeVos, and I am sure my colleagues have also heard from thousands of their own constituents all across this country. The American people are making their voices heard, and they are telling the Senate that Mrs. DeVos is not the right choice to lead the Department of Education. I urge my colleagues to listen to their constituents who are forcefully—forcefully—rejecting Mrs. DeVos's misguided vision for neighborhood public schools in America.

I will be standing with the people of Michigan, and I once again call on my colleagues to join the bipartisan opposition to Mrs. DeVos's nomination. Our children's future depends on it, and for their sake, please vote no.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I believe Betsy DeVos is going to be an excellent Secretary of Education.

NOMINATION OF JEFF SESSIONS

Mr. President, I have been fortunate enough to get to know JEFF SESSIONS over the past 20 years. Not only is he a colleague whom I admire and respect, he is also one of my very best friends. I actually suffered through with him back when he had a nomination that was rejected by this body many years ago.

As you know, Senator SESSIONS has been nominated by the President to be the next Attorney General of the United States. It is an incredible honor. There is no doubt in my mind that my friend will be perfect for the job. He is more than qualified for this position, and I know he will keep his word when he says he plans to uphold the laws we pass in Congress.

Senator SESSIONS was elected to the Senate in 1997. That was 2 years after I was elected, and we have been very close friends ever since. For 20 years now, we have known each other and worked alongside each other on both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee. Those are the two major committees we have been on. He is seated just to my right in each one of the committees, and, as the Chair knows, you get to know a person pretty well when you have been sitting there for these 3- or 4-hour-long meetings. So we have had that relationship with each other.

Not only have we worked together, but we have also traveled and prayed together. You really get to know someone when you work, travel, and pray together. When working, a person's mind is revealed; when traveling, a person's character is revealed; and when you pray, the person's heart is revealed. I have come to know Senator SESSIONS as a God-fearing family man who puts others before himself and has a deep respect for the rule of law.

Family man—every time he has a grandchild, his wife and my wife talk about our competing grandchildren.

He helps those in need and makes sure that the legal system is protecting our citizens and holding criminals accountable.

A person only needs to look at the legislation and causes he has championed to know him. He played a key role in fighting for fairness and funding for the rural HIV/AIDS patients when negotiating a reauthorization of the bipartisan Ryan White CARE Act. His advocacy brought funding to low-income, mostly African-American women who did not have easily accessible health care before. Senator SESSIONS has been an author and supporter of many pieces of bipartisan legislation, including protecting victims of child abuse, reducing prison sentences for those who are unfairly targeted, and helping the families of our fallen military personnel.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator SESSIONS has become a fierce advocate for keeping our country safe from terrorism, and he understands the risks we face. In fact, Senator SESSIONS is tough on crime and is well suited to oversee Federal law enforcement activities and to assist local governments in their efforts.

Violent crime has recently been increasing. Furthermore—and I just found this out—the shooting deaths of police officers has increased by 68 percent just in the last year, between 2015 and 2016. That is pretty remarkable. These trends are unacceptable, and Senator SESSIONS has pledged to reverse the course by strengthening the partnership between Federal and local law enforcement and by going after drug traffickers, aliens who violate the laws, and criminals who use guns to commit crimes.

There is no question that Senator SESSIONS is qualified to do what he says he will and what the job asks of him. He served as a U.S. attorney for Alabama's Southern District, and he was also Alabama's attorney general, so he clearly knows the job. He doesn't have to be trained. It is because of his previous experiences that he will be able to transition from a partisan legislator to our Nation's top law enforcement officer with great ease.

Countless groups of people have come out to support the nominee: the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, former U.S. attorneys, a former FBI Director, current

State attorneys general, and many more. All of the law enforcement professionals are behind him, and there is a reason for it: It is because that is his record, and people are aware of it.

So I would like to take a minute to point out that it is cruel and unfair that people have tried to paint a picture of Senator SESSIONS as someone and something he is not. I think this is something that needs to be said.

The man the opposition has painted does not exist. You all know JEFF SESSIONS. You know that the awful things being said about him are completely false. In fact, back in 1981, the Ku Klux Klan ordered the tragic, extremely undeserved murder of a young African-American man by the name of Michael Donald. Because of Senator SESSIONS's help and support, these Klan members were convicted and given either life sentences or the death penalty. That is JEFF SESSIONS. Furthermore, he later played a major role in the destruction of the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama when he helped bring a civil suit against them. As a result, the KKK went bankrupt, and he caused them to fall apart in that region. Again, those were JEFF SESSIONS' efforts.

Before we vote on the confirmation of our friend and colleague, I ask that you all take a moment to seriously reflect how Senator SESSIONS has worked diligently with you over the past two decades and how perfectly qualified he is for this position.

As for me, I thank him for his tireless efforts in Congress, for his friendship, and for his fellowship. He will go down as one of the truly great U.S. Attorneys General in this country's history.

Mr. President, there are a lot of other nominees whom I have gotten to know. I had an experience of actually going to Trump Tower and getting to know some of the people who advise him. As I looked around the table, I saw people who were the right kind of people in health care, the right kind of people in energy, and the right kind of people in the military to give him advice in areas he might not have been exposed to in the past.

And I just noticed that it has been very slow. I was not aware of this until a few minutes ago, that apparently the Cabinet confirmations are the slowest since George Washington. This is something that is really wrong. You can criticize someone, but after a while, you just go ahead and you know the votes are there, and you make sure that you go ahead and do it.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. President, I would say this to the Presiding Officer, since he and I are both from Oklahoma, which is in the Tenth Circuit: Last week President Trump announced that he was nominating Judge Neil Gorsuch of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals to be a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. As someone who had been following the news and rumors of who the pick would be—I had been looking into potential nominees for weeks—I was pleased to see Judge Gorsuch's name come up because we know something about him.

After the untimely death of Justice Scalia a year ago, it was clear that the Presidential election would be about the direction of the Supreme Court for the next generation or maybe even generations. With the results of the election—the Republican President and Republican Congress—the American people have entrusted us to confirm a Supreme Court Justice who will adhere to the rule of law and will not try to read between the lines when interpreting legislation or the Constitution. With the selection of Judge Gorsuch, I believe President Trump has picked such a Justice. The President might not know or remember, but George W. Bush nominated Judge Gorsuch to his current position, and the Senate confirmed him unanimously by voice vote. We went back and looked at the record, and no one voted against him.

There is no question that Judge Gorsuch is qualified for the Supreme Court. He is a graduate of Columbia University, Harvard Law School, and Oxford. He clerked for Judge Sentelle of the U.S. court of appeals for the DC Circuit. He clerked for Supreme Court Justices Byron White and Anthony Kennedy, so he knows the job. There is no need for on-the-job training for him.

He has been in private practice. He has been a principal deputy to the Associate Attorney General and Acting Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Much like the Justice he has been nominated to replace, Judge Gorsuch has become known for his writing style. One of his former law clerks said that his ''favorite aspect of the judge's writing is his ability to humanize disputes.''

It appears that Gorsuch has more in common with the late Justice Scalia than just writing abilities. He has said that ''assiduous focus on text, structure, and history is essential to the proper exercise of the judicial function.'' That judicial philosophy has been borne out in his record on the Tenth Circuit.

My home State of Oklahoma is within the Tenth Circuit jurisdiction, so we know him very well. Oklahoma is the home of Hobby Lobby. Everyone is familiar with what Hobby Lobby is. A lot of people don't realize this, but it started out when I was in the State legislature. The Greens, who have Hobby Lobby, started out in their garage. At that time, they were putting together things that they could frame—miniature picture frames and that type of thing. With a loan of $600, David and Barbara Green began making miniature picture frames.

Today, Hobby Lobby is the largest privately owned arts and crafts store in the world, with over 700 stores in all but three States. They are people of faith, and when they were facing fines under ObamaCare for not providing certain insurance coverage that violated their faith, they were faced with an impossible choice. They took it to court, risking millions of personal dollars in doing so.

In siding with Hobby Lobby against ObamaCare's contraceptive mandate, Judge Gorsuch stressed the point that it is not for a court to decide whether the owners' religious convictions are correct or consistent, but instead the court's role is ''only to protect the exercise of faith,'' and the Supreme Court agreed.

Again, Judge Gorsuch defended the religious beliefs of the Little Sisters of the Poor in his dissent of the Tenth Circuit's refusal to rehear their case against the Obama administration regarding the same mandate that Hobby Lobby was contesting.

Time and again, Judge Gorsuch has defended religious expressions in public space. In addition to defending the First Amendment protections regarding the free exercise of religion, he is also skeptical of the idea that agencies should be given a wide latitude when interpreting statutory language. In a recent opinion, Judge Gorsuch suggested that the precedent of the judiciary to give deference to agencies on statutory interpretations limits the courts when reviewing the legality of agency actions. Gorsuch believes it is for Congress to write the laws, the executive to carry them out, and the judiciary to interpret them, just as our Founding Fathers intended.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to move Judge Gorsuch's nomination forward. He is going to be confirmed, and he will make a great Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, before my colleague from Oklahoma leaves the floor, while we disagree on this current debate in terms of voting, I just have to say when I see him that I constantly thank him for his efforts last year to work with us for the community of Flint. We are finding some hope in terms of replacing and addressing the lead contamination, and without the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma, that literally would not have happened. We have things we disagree on and agree on, and this one—coming together with the families of Flint, particularly with the children and the water impacts—he will always have a warm place in the hearts of all of us who care deeply about that issue. I thank my colleague very much.

Mr. President, I want to speak today about the nomination of Betsy DeVos. Betsy DeVos's nomination is very personal to many people who live in Michigan because Betsy DeVos is from Michigan, and her vision of education and her actions have unfortunately played a major role in undermining our public schools.

Families all across our State can tell the story of her work with Michigan

schools firsthand because they have seen it firsthand. They have lived it firsthand. They all say the same thing. Democrats, Republicans, Independents, people who live in cities that are big and small, parents and teachers, principals, and community leaders from across the State—overwhelmingly, they have told me that Betsy DeVos should not be our next Secretary of Education.

Everywhere I go, I can't believe how people will stop me about this and how strongly people feel in Michigan about this. They are saying this because, among other things, she has pushed for policies that have made charter schools in Michigan less accountable and has taken dollars away from public schools where the vast majority of children get their education. These are policies that have hurt our children and put their futures at risk.

I have received so many emails and phone calls from people involved every which way; at the grocery store, out at public events, people come up to me. I just want to share a couple of e-mails.

Chris is a teacher from Harper Woods and worked as a teacher in the Detroit public schools for over 20 years. He wrote: Betsy DeVos believes in school privatization and vouchers. She has worked to undermine efforts to regulate Michigan charters, even when they clearly fail. The marketplace solutions of DeVos will destroy our democratically governed community schools. Her hostility toward public education disqualifies her.

Those were Chris's comments.

In Michigan last year, State legislators put together a bipartisan plan, and our State legislature—House and Senate—majority is Republican. They put together a bipartisan plan to increase both funding and accountability for Detroit public schools.

There are a lot of wonderful things happening in Detroit. Businesses are coming back to Detroit, and economic development is also, but we have major work to do for our children and their schools. So there was a huge bipartisan effort that came together to increase funding and accountability for the public schools, including charter schools. It was a commonsense proposal. Betsy DeVos led the effort to stop it, particularly the part that brought critically needed public accountability for for-profit and nonprofit charter schools.

Unfortunately, right now in Michigan we have a system where anyone can apply to open a charter school. There are no statewide standards for revoking the charter, and taxpayer money is sent to them with virtually no public disclosure requirement. For example, we have for-profit charter management companies that say they are private businesses; therefore, even though they are getting public money, they say they are private businesses, and they should not have to comply with a series of disclosure requirements regarding teachers and other information that, frankly, parents would want to know and taxpayers have a right to know.

Thirty-eight percent of charters in Michigan are at the bottom 25 percent of the schools in our State. When you look at the bottom one-fourth, 38 percent of the charters are in that category, and there is unfortunately very little accountability for their performance.

Sadly, precious taxpayer dollars have been taken away from public schools—neighborhood schools—to fund these charters. When it comes to funding for public schools, she will not commit to protecting the critical Federal dollars that serve our children.

One mom, Hillary Young from Detroit, came to Washington to watch the confirmation hearing on Betsy DeVos in the HELP Committee. She wrote to me. She said that she was not impressed and told a group of parents afterwards: As a parent I can't stand silently and watch other children be subject to similar circumstances to my child in Detroit. My sixth grader was without a math teacher for over half the year last year because of funding reductions. The effect of DeVos's policies is not parents voting with their feet to go to better schools; it is children bearing the burden for fixing the education system they are supposed to be served by.

She goes on to say: DeVos's free market school choice system has left our city's education landscape in chaos, leaving less choice, less quality, and even more government bureaucracy.

We have seen parents get involved and speak out all across Michigan and, frankly, all across the country. I have received more mail, more emails, more phone calls on this nominee than any other, and I have received a lot on a lot of nominees, but there is a broad outcry.

People like Kathleen, who is a farmer and a grandmother from Farmington Hills, wrote to me: We have 15 grandchildren who are in the public school system, and we are terrified that there will be no more public schools and that the quality will be far inferior to charter and other private schools. I am writing you to respectfully ask that you do not vote to confirm Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education.

I am deeply concerned about what we heard in committee about her views on special education. In the HELP Committee hearing last week, she suggested that States should decide on whether or not to enforce IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Act that has been such a landmark, opening doors of schools in every neighborhood across our country, for children with disabilities. This law was enacted in 1975, and makes sure that children with disabilities have the same educational opportunities as other children.

My nephew Barry, who has now gone through the special education system in Michigan, is a wonderful young man with Down syndrome. And I have seen personally how important that was for him, to be able to go on and be successful in the community as a part of the community. It is a very important civil right, frankly, for children with disabilities, as well as an essential part of our educational system.

Betsy DeVos, after her hearing, when she was asked about special education, followed up with a letter days later and wrote about expanding the conversation about school choice opportunities for parents of children with disabilities, but she didn't say anything about helping those in traditional public schools or helping students in the schools they are in now.

For me, this is not about politics or partisan messaging or even charters or private schools versus traditional public schools; it really is about what is best for our children and for our country. Families in Michigan and all across the country know this. Tens of thousands of people have called me over the last few weeks and sent emails and letters. Who we choose to be the Secretary of Education doesn't just affect the over 50 million children who attend public elementary and secondary schools, it affects the future of our country, and it is a fundamental difference in views. A competitive free market system, with winners and losers, works in the private marketplace. I support that. Business is open. They compete, and if they don't do well, they close, or they do very well and they go on and they grow. That is a strength in our country. But it doesn't work for educating our children because we can't afford losers. We can't afford losers when it comes to something as basic as fundamental education and creating opportunity for our children in the future. We need to provide every opportunity for every child to work hard and succeed.

I support having choices. I support magnet schools and public charters—I did that as a State Senator—as well as other choices that are great opportunities for children, if there are equal standards and public accountability for taxpayers' dollars so that parents can have confidence in that accountability, and if it is part of the public school system, the public process, and only if they are in addition to quality neighborhood schools in every neighborhood and in every ZIP Code. It is not just a slogan to say it shouldn't matter where you live, what kind of opportunity you get or that your child has, and that is becoming more and more true. It certainly is in Michigan, where this philosophy has been a test case, and we are seeing it across the country. We can't afford losers. A winners-and-losers system is not good enough for our kids.

Betsy DeVos has a record of working against the vision of accountability and standards and choice within a system where every child has a quality neighborhood school in their neighborhood in every ZIP Code. She has worked against that vision. She doesn't believe in it. We have fundamental differences in what will help our children

for the future. That is why I will be voting no on her confirmation.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to thank my friend the Senator from Michigan for her comments and her views on this nominee.

I rise today to add my voice to those expressing concern about the nomination of Betsy DeVos to serve as U.S. Secretary of Education. The chorus of concerns not only comes from those colleagues who have already come to the floor last week or earlier today or throughout the evening and into tomorrow morning, but it also comes from literally tens of thousands of my constituents who have contacted me about Mrs. DeVos. I have been flooded with phone calls, emails, and social media messages from Virginians all across the Commonwealth, in many ways, in numbers that I haven't seen since the debate about the ACA. These Virginians worry about Mrs. DeVos's confirmation. They worry about what it would mean for our children, our students, and for progress toward improving and providing every child with a quality public education regardless of their ZIP Code.

Like many of my colleagues, I bring to the debate some direct experience as both a State and local elected official. I had the great honor of serving as Governor of Virginia. I was responsible in that job for how we were preparing our students for success in college and in the workforce. I took that responsibility very personally.

As somebody who attended good public schools all of my life, as somebody who was lucky enough to be the first in my family to graduate from college, I realized that I wouldn't have been able to have been Governor or, for that matter, obviously, Senator without that foundation I received from my education. Those public schools—and I had the opportunity to go to public schools in three different States growing up, and many of those public school teachers were the folks who framed my views about government, about our system, about how we actually get through in life.

I believe in many ways public schools and the whole notion of public education really form the cornerstone of what is the social contract in America—that getting that basic public education is the right of all individuals. When I think back on everything I was able to accomplish as Virginia's Governor, the validation I valued the most was that when I left the Governor's office in 2006, Virginia was consistently recognized by independent validators as the Nation's best State for a lifetime of educational opportunity from pre-K to college and beyond.

So as someone who is committed to reforming and looking at how we can make sure our public education can work for all, as someone who spent a career before in business and tried working in a philanthropic sense on how we could expand educational opportunities, I believe I bring some experience to this debate. That is why I stand here today unable to support the nomination of Betsy DeVos to serve as Secretary of Education.

To put it simply, Mrs. DeVos's single-minded focus on charter schools, on vouchers, and on converting Federal education dollars into a different program is simply out of step with the education climate in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Let me make clear that I have supported public charter schools. I believe they are a tool that ought to be in the toolkit. I have taken on those forces who stand for simply no reform in education. But I am unconvinced that Mrs. DeVos's complete setting of different priorities at the Federal level is in the best interest of our students, our teachers, or our public schools. That is exactly what I have been hearing from constituents all over the State, and I would like to very briefly share some of those concerns I have heard.

Laura from my hometown of Alexandria writes this:

> While many of our . . . President's cabinet picks worry me, none worry me more than Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education.

She says:

> I come from rural Appalachia, where [I] worked my way through public school in one of the poorest counties in the country, but that didn't stop me from ending up here in Northern Virginia working for the intelligence community.
>
> In areas like my hometown, where public schools are the only option, they become the lifeblood of a community. . . . On limited resources, our high school had to get creative about how to provide for the students, often partnering with the local university. But shutting the school down in favor of charters, or adding a for-profit alternative, definitely wasn't an option in my low-income area.

Another letter from a school administrator from the Shenandoah Valley says this:

> At her confirmation hearing it was quite clear she had no knowledge of instruction, curriculum, federal programs and—most disturbing—had no understanding of the federal laws that are in place to protect children with disabilities.
>
> It is a serious business to educate children, and the consequences are huge if we do it wrong.

Another comment—and again, these are just samples of thousands—is from Olivia, a teacher in Williamsburg, who shared this:

> I see so much potential in my students every day, and I feel very energetic as a young teacher about the opportunities that I know our public schools are providing already—and are capable of providing in the future.

She said:

> I am concerned for my LGBT students, low-income students, and for the future of myself and my colleagues as public school educators trying to do good for our students.

I have received thousands of similar heartfelt messages from every corner of Virginia. I welcome this level of public attention and citizen engagement.

Sometimes, as the President's nominees have come forward, I voted for many of them, much to the consternation of some folks. But it is my job to weigh, regardless of that public opinion, what I think is best for students in Virginia and, for that matter, students across the country.

With this outpouring from teachers, parents, students, administrators, civil rights groups, charter school proponents and opponents, and from both sides of the political aisle, I believe it does weigh. That is what I have done. I have listened to my constituents, but more importantly, I have listened to Mrs. DeVos's own words before the Senate HELP Committee, and let me say that I still have a lot of unresolved questions after reviewing Mrs. DeVos's testimony.

For starters, Mrs. DeVos did not demonstrate that she understood the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, IDEA. She didn't understand that it is actually a Federal law passed by Congress and signed by President George H.W. Bush, contrary to the impression Mrs. DeVos seemed to have at her confirmation hearing, saying that somehow complying with IDEA was simply a voluntary measure. That is not right, it is not the law, and, boy oh boy, did that frighten a whole lot of parents whose kids have special needs and without IDEA, would not have those needs met. They are concerned that Mrs. DeVos's seeming lack of familiarity with IDEA is indicative of how, if confirmed, her Department of Education would fail to protect the rights of these children—and every child—toward a free and appropriate public education that allows even kids with special needs to flourish.

Another area under the Department of Education's jurisdiction where I have concerns about Mrs. DeVos's commitment and level of understanding is campus sexual assault compliance and enforcement. Since 2014, I have been proud to support bipartisan legislation led by my colleagues, Senator GILLIBRAND and Senator MCCASKILL, the Campus Accountability and Safety Act. At the end of last Congress, this legislation had the support of more than one-third of the U.S. Senate, as well as a broad coalition of advocacy groups, law enforcement organizations, and many of our leading colleges and universities. The Department of Education's own Office of Civil Rights has also played a very important role in initiating and in conducting title IX investigations. So you can understand why so many folks, including myself, were concerned when Mrs. DeVos did not demonstrate any depth of knowledge about the difference of opinion surrounding particular policy issues related to campus sexual assault.

Similarly, when asked about a basic principle of education policy related to measuring student achievement, Mrs. DeVos was not able to articulate an understanding of the difference between growth and proficiency.

In the same vein—and while this has become the subject of late night comedy, I think it is a very serious matter—Mrs. DeVos was not able to clearly express her understanding or her commitment to enforcing the Gun-Free School Zones Act, which, again, is Federal legislation, also signed by President Bush, where compliance is not optional.

These are fundamental tenets of Federal education policy, not some obscure metrics, not small bills that languish in committee or small compromises. These are the principles and cornerstones of Federal education civil rights policy, and they cannot be more central to the Secretary of Education's core responsibilities of safeguarding students' civil rights and safety.

For all of those reasons and others, I am not able to support Mrs. DeVos's nomination to be Secretary of Education.

I know the Presiding Officer has had to hear a number of these comments. I hope that if she is not confirmed, the President will send down an Education Secretary nominee who brings more mainstream views to this very important issue. There are those of us, like me, who are all for education reform, but it has to be led by someone who will always put the needs of our kids first, and making sure they get a fair and appropriate education is guaranteed.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed by the qualifications of President Trump's nominee to be the leader of our Department of Education. Betsy DeVos has clearly shown a disregard—even a hostility—for the public school system. So I stand with the thousands of parents, teachers, and students of New Mexico in fighting to stop her confirmation.

Simply put, education is too important to New Mexico children and our State's economy to have a Secretary of Education not fully invested in the success of our public schools.

As someone who grew up going to public school, who is sending my own kids to public schools, I am deeply troubled by Betsy DeVos's record on privatization, which goes well beyond simply voicing support for vouchers and private school. Mrs. DeVos has been a key player in the well-moneyed effort to privatize and siphon funds away from public education, and she has time and again undermined the teachers we all rely upon.

It appears as though Betsy DeVos's most notable experience in education is spending her career and her fortune advocating for policies that divert public tax dollars away from public schools and into private schools. I cannot support a nominee who wants to weaken the kinds of public schools that so many New Mexicans rely on.

The privatization policies pushed by Mrs. DeVos would be especially damaging to rural New Mexico, where there are few options to begin with. It is not uncommon for students to travel more than an hour to get to and from school in those parts of the State. School administrators often wear multiple hats, sometimes running the after-school program or driving the local schoolbus. In rural areas in my home State, the public school is often the only choice, and there simply aren't enough students to support the kinds of for-profit private schools that Mrs. DeVos wants to replace them with.

Having a Secretary of Education who has spent her entire career pushing a privatization agenda is not reassuring to New Mexicans and is at odds with the needs of the students and families across my State.

Further, I do not believe that Mrs. DeVos understands the Federal Government's trust responsibility in serving Native American students. Given Mrs. DeVos's rushed nomination hearing in the HELP Committee, Senators were given very little opportunity to question her about her understanding of tribal issues and impact aid. So I am concerned that she will push her privatization agenda in these areas as well.

For example, the Zuni Public School District is a small rural district in Western New Mexico. Earlier this week, their school board sent me a letter asking that I oppose Mrs. DeVos's nomination. I want to take a moment and read a few passage from this letter:

> The beauty of the United States public school system, unlike many in the rest of the world, is that we take everyone who walks through our doors and love every child who sits in our desks, without question.
>
> This Board therefore stands by all of our students, no matter what color or ethnicity, regardless of their creed; every child who identifies on the spectrum of L,G,B,T, or Q; every child with either a physical or learning disability, or both . . . every child who speaks a second language; every immigrant child as well as every Native American child who can trace their lineage in this land back thousands of years; every child who sees their education as the bridge between their most ardent dreams and their most hopeful futures.

These are powerful words that I fully support, and I thank the Zuni Public School District for speaking out on this matter. We should all be this concerned.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the entire letter from the Zuni Public School District be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

During her nomination hearing, Mrs. DeVos demonstrated over and over that she is unfamiliar with even basic education issues, and she failed to commit to uphold the responsibilities of the Secretary of Education to support public schools. Given that Mrs. DeVos has no relevant experience as a teacher or school administrator, we should be very concerned with entrusting her to enforce key protections under title IX, under IDEA, and under other civil rights laws. In particular, Mrs. DeVos's lack of commitment to the Office of Civil Rights within the Department of Education, combined with the fact that she and her family have donated enormous sums of money to organizations that are anti-LGBTQ, anti-women's rights, and anti-Muslim, is simply troubling.

The mission of the Office of Civil Rights is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation with vigorous enforcement of civil rights. During her nomination hearing, Mrs. DeVos would not commit to continuing the Office's policies that are making our college campuses safer by focusing on prevention and response to sexual assault. In fact, she has donated money to organizations that actually make it harder to prosecute sexual assault on our college campuses. As amazing as that sounds, it is true.

If my Republican colleagues rubberstamp this nominee, they will confirm a Secretary of Education who doesn't believe in public schools, who will unravel rural education, and who has even worked to make it harder to protect women against sexual assault on college campuses. I believe that we have a moral imperative to ensure that all students have equal protections while attending school. Mrs. DeVos will be a massive step in the wrong direction.

As the members of the Zuni Pueblo wrote to me in their letter, ''our children are our most sacred gifts.'' This is what we are voting on with this confirmation.

We need an Education Secretary who is committed to upholding these principles. We need an Education Secretary who is committed to ensuring that every student has access to quality education, regardless of their background or their ZIP code, regardless of their ethnicity or their religion, and regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

In the last few weeks, my office has fielded thousands of calls and letters asking me to oppose this nomination. I have heard from more than 8,000 constituents on this one topic alone, many of whom called as parents, teachers, and some as students. That is more than any other Trump nominee whom we have considered to date. Never has an Education Secretary nomination received so much attention and opposition.

I stand with the thousands of parents, teachers, and students across the country, and in my home State of New Mexico, fighting to stop this nomination. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting no.

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

ZUNI PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #89,
12 TWIN BUTTES DR., ZUNI, NM,
January 30, 2017.

TO OUR HONORABLE SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES: We, the Board of Education of Zuni Public School District, ask you to add

your support as we stand in opposition to the appointment of Betsy DeVos as United States Secretary of Education on the following grounds:

During her confirmation hearing, Mrs. DeVos demonstrated that she was woefully ill-equipped to head the Department of Education. She has never attended a public school, never taught or administered in a public school, and her children have never attended a public school. She does not hold any degree in the field of education, either in theory, administration, or practice. She has a documented history of promoting a charter and voucher based system that she supported in her home state of Michigan, diverting funding and support away from public education and deserving children. Furthermore, when questioned in her hearing, Mrs. DeVos was unable to explain the difference between growth and proficiency, nor was she familiar with the federal law behind IDEA, two essential and basic aspects of education. As well, Mrs. DeVos advocated in her hearing to allow the presence of guns in schools during an era of rampant mass violence based primarily on the use of guns in schools. Mrs. DeVos has also publicly stated that she sees education as a way to further proselytize for the Christian faith, which would constitute a violation of the Constitutional separation of Church and State in public schools as it would in all federal institutions.

Our pueblo of Zuni is a small community in a western pocket of rural New Mexico. We are neither a rich district nor one that wields a great deal of political influence. What this Board does represent is a rich, Indigenous tradition and culture that holds high the ideals of hard-work, humility, and integrity. We are an agricultural, peace-loving society that has lived in this land since time immemorial.

Yet our memory is long. We remember the era during which education was combined with religion to be used as a weapon against the Native peoples of this great nation. We know the trauma such action has caused to reverberate through generations of good, decent Americans We also know the resilience of those same people who, despite the infliction of weaponized education, have come today to see literacy as their American birthright, and to crave that sacred American Dream for which we are all Constitutionally entitled to strive. This is a living medicine and healing that must not be undone through the dissolution of the separation of church and state, one that we must nurture and safeguard for all American children.

We are reminded during this time that, as you do, we hold publicly-elected positions designed to represent a broad spectrum of constituent. The beauty of the United States public school system, unlike many in the rest of the world, is that we take everyone who walks through our doors and love every child who sits in our desks, without question. This Board therefore stands by all of our students, no matter what color or ethnicity, regardless of their creed; every child who identifies on the spectrum of L,G,B,T,or Q; every child with either a physical or learning disability, or both; every child who speaks a second language; every immigrant child as well as every Native American child who can trace their lineage in this land back thousands of years; every child who sees their education as the bridge between their most ardent dreams and their most hopeful futures.

We further stand by each parent, guardian, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle; every member of kin that builds and holds strong the dream of education for each of our children, knowing as we have always known in Zuni that our children are our most sacred gifts.

And we, the Board of Education in Zuni Public School District, stand by the teachers, aides, administrators, counselors, liaisons, nurses, secretaries, custodians, cooks, and bus drivers who as their daily work participate in the painstaking and deeply patriotic act of ensuring equitable access to education for all of our students. It is through the diligence and action of just such citizens that this nation is able to deliver unto each new generation of American a passport to the possibility of American success.

The children, families and hard-working faculties and staff of the American public school system deserve a Secretary of the Department of Education who is most eminently qualified, through both education and experience, to advocate for all Americans: diverse, complex, and brilliant citizens; to work toward the most equitable education for all; and to uphold this cornerstone of our democratic republic.

It is for these reasons that the Zuni Public School District Board of Education respectfully requests your most passionate and vocal support in opposing the appointment of Mrs. Betsy DeVos. We also ask that you look toward the experienced and qualified education professionals working within the public school system to fill this highest position in the field.

E:lah'kwa (Thank you) for your representation,

ZUNI BOARD OF EDUCATION:
MR. JEROME HASKIE, *Board President*
MS. STEPHANIE VICENTI, *Vice Board President*
MS. MASIKA SWEETWYNE, *Secretary*
MS. BERNADETTE PANTEAH, *Member*
MS. SHELLY CHIMONI, *Member*.

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

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise to express my concern with the nomination of Betsy DeVos as the Secretary of Education.

The State of West Virginia is a State made up of a lot of small towns. We don't have any what you call large metropolitan areas. We are an urban rural State. For many communities in West Virginia, our schools are more than just classrooms, teachers, and textbooks. Our children in West Virginia learn more in their public school than reading, writing, and arithmetic. They are the heart of the community and a home away from home for most of them. They are a safe place to stay after school where no harm will come to them. They are a place where nutritional meals are served and health care services are provided by trusted school nurses.

After meeting with Mrs. DeVos and watching her answer questions at her confirmation hearing, I have a hard time believing she has the qualifications to be the Secretary of Education. I believe in local control of education and also that strong public schools are vital to our State's future.

Education is local. Each one of our 55 counties is responsible for the financing of the schools. If the counties do not have the sufficient funds, we have what we call a school aid formula that basically offsets that so that every child in West Virginia will get a quality education.

In my State, charter schools and school vouchers would pull already limited public funds and resources from the schools, students, and teachers who need them the most and could be harmed and would probably be harmed.

There are some towns in West Virginia with only one school—one school only—or where students have to travel for more than an hour on a bus to get to the school that has been consolidated. Voucher policies would be completely useless in these places. There is no place for them to attend.

In areas where there are a few private schools in my State, a voucher program would have devastating effects for public school children. The limited dollars that we do have, if you deviate that money whatsoever, then basically you are going to have the strain on the public system that will not be able to pick it up in the rural areas. There is no other way for us to have the funding we need.

Vouchers will siphon public funding away from our public schools, causing them to have to cut resources like teachers, advanced coursework, and preschool programs. They often do not pay the entire cost of attendance at a private school, making them unusable by low-income students and families.

Vouchers also can strip students with disabilities and their families of their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The most troubling part of that hearing, if you watched it or saw any parts of it, was the lack of understanding that every child deserves the opportunity for a quality education no matter what his or her disabilities may be. That is a responsibility we have as Americans.

With that, if you have never been in a public school setting, you have never attended a public school yourself and have always been privately schooled, your children have never attended a public school and have always either been privately schooled or home schooled, you have probably never been in a setting where you have seen a disabled child trying to get the opportunities that other children have, with a special aide who is working with them. You can say that is a waste of resources. I guess you could say that if it wasn't your child. If it wasn't somebody you knew, it would be easy to say that, But just the empathy you would have—it would be hard for a person to understand that. I believe that is a compelling reason to make me take pause and say that I believe we need somebody who has had that diversity, who has had that real classroom experience.

Another thing—never to be in a PTA meeting where you have problems with schools. You might have problems with the bus and transportation. You might have problems with extracurricular activities or lunch programs or a routine study program, where you can sit down with other parents and work through these programs. That is something that is hard for most of us in West Virginia to ever conceive, that you could never be in that position and never have that experience in life. I believe communities in West Virginia know our students' needs better than someone who never attended or worked in the public school system.

Many West Virginians have called and written to me expressing their concern about Mrs. DeVos. I have a letter I want to read from Diane from Marion County, my home county. We have hundreds of letters that have come in. Diane writes:

I am asking you to vote against the confirmation of Mrs. Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. As an educator with 44 years of experience in public schools, I recognize we have many issues, but I also know we do much that is right for children. Educators no longer simply teach core content. We know that children can only thrive if their social, emotional and physical needs are met. The whole child is now the focus of every teacher, and teaching has become a very difficult but a very rewarding job.

Educators need and DESERVE a Secretary of Education that knows and understands the tremendous responsibility each of us has accepted. We do not have the time to get the leader ''in step'' with us. We need and DESERVE someone who understands how policies can impact what we are able to do for our children. . . . We need and DESERVE someone who understands the value of academic growth versus proficiency. We need and DESERVE someone who understands how important it is to send food home in backpacks because our children will not eat during a weekend or holiday break.

I want to stop there and give you a personal experience. When I was Governor of the State of West Virginia, I would go around to the schools. The school would tell me what was going on in the community. I would always go to the cooks because they really had the pulse of the school. This was May, and school was getting ready to let out for the summer. One of the cooks was crying in the kitchen. I couldn't figure out what was wrong. I went back and tried to console her and talk to her.

I said: Can you explain why you are so upset? You are just about out for the summer.

She said: I know these little kids aren't going to eat much this summer.

She wanted to stay and cook through the summer, have all year so the kids would have nutrition. That tells you what we are dealing with in an awful lot of rural settings.

We need and DESERVE a leader who knows that almost every teacher utilizes his/her own personal funds to buy pencils, paper, classroom supplies and instructional materials for our students because the budget for what our children DESERVE is not given to us. That is the strain we already have on the system now. If you put any more strain on that by taking funds away makes it almost impossible.

My request is not politically motivated—my request for you to vote against Mrs. DeVos is about the teachers I work with in Marion County and across WV. One of the pillars of a great civilization is education. Although the American system of education is not perfect, we are still envied by many nations.

Education is a hope for children of poverty as well as those who have economic security. Please encourage President Trump to seek out a former or current state superintendent of education or a chancellor of higher education or anyone with the knowledge to walk in step with us as we make a brighter future for our children.

During her hearing, Mrs. DeVos demonstrated a lack of knowledge about the basic issues in public education, including the debate about how best to measure student progress. She also did not appear to have a solid understanding about the amount of student loan debt in this country, which is now the second-largest source of consumer debt in the United States, surpassed only by home mortgages.

Not only does she lack the institutional knowledge, but she has no personal or family experience with the student loan system or any experience running a major loan program like the one she would be in charge of as Secretary of Education. This leads me to believe that she would be unable to run the program effectively and efficiently.

What I have said and spoke to other people about—I understand and I think most of us have been in Washington long enough to understand how the system works. Even though the person would have the greatest of intent, the most honorable of intent, wanting to do a balanced job, if they never had the experience and they are charged with setting up programs that are supposed to incentivize schools, school districts, States, those programs are not going to lean to where they have no knowledge; those programs will go to where they have the most knowledge and in a direction of the policies they believe in. With that being said, incentives would go in that direction. When the incentives go in that direction, it pulls further resources away from a rural public education system.

At her hearing, Mrs. DeVos failed to recognize that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is a Federal law protecting access for individuals with disabilities to a decent public education and that she would be in charge of ensuring that the school implemented the act. No child should ever be denied access to the same public education because they suffer from a disability. As both a Governor and a father, I can never look a parent in the eyes and tell them their child cannot get the same education as another child simply because they suffer from a disability and it would be too costly for us to do.

West Virginians need an Education Secretary who has an understanding of the needs of all children, including those with disabilities, and is committed to ensuring they receive a quality education. A strong education is the building block for success for every child and the foundation for our country's long-term economic strength. We need an Education Secretary that understands the challenges that students, teachers, and schools in rural areas face.

Betsy DeVos has spent her career working in the private school system, not investing in and improving the public school system. Much of the policies that Mrs. DeVos supports would divert public funds to private schools—whether it was intentional or not—strip accountability from these schools, and significantly harm the public school system in my little State of West Virginia, which is all we have.

It is difficult to speak—and I try not to make it personal because I don't believe in the toxic rhetoric that goes on sometimes in this room, and it shouldn't in this great Senate Chamber of ours and on the Hill. So I know this is probably a good lady who is well-intentioned. She just doesn't have that personal experience it takes to grab this entire country and understand that we are different. States are different. We depend on it. We can't always go in one direction, and that is the flexibility. They are saying: Well, we will give you flexibility. We need the support from Washington to have the flexibility to make sure the children of West Virginia have the same opportunities that a child in Pittsburgh, PA, might have in a larger school district, one in a metropolitan area that could afford—because you don't have all the travel and everything else that is involved—to have a charter school.

In my State, even the legislature couldn't. They looked at charter and voucher systems, and they couldn't find a pathway forward because of the limited funding and knowing that it would divert. If there is no more funding going into it, that means you have to cut the pie more. They were concerned about even going in this direction. My legislature, in the last 2 years, has flipped completely to a Republican majority in both the House and Senate. They are all good people, well-intended. They are looking at all these different avenues, but at the end of the day, you have to take care of those whom you are responsible for. In rural West Virginia, that is a child who might have to ride 1 hour just to go to school. I don't know where you would put a charter school. I don't know where, with the voucher system, you could send him.

If we have a problem in deficiencies, that is basically the responsibility of the county and the community. It is the responsibility of the parents and guardians to be involved. It is a responsibility for all of us to speak up. I guess what we are going to end up with is all the children with disabilities or children who basically do not have the means or a person in their family who

is able to drive them or take them to a special school; they are all going to be left, so-called, behind.

It is just not who we are in West Virginia. I ask for your consideration that maybe we can find a Secretary who has the experience and understanding and has the real-life experience—they might have attended a public school themselves. I am a product—I am sure you are a product of public schools. We are a product of the public school system, probably, more than likely, rural public school systems. We did pretty well with them. People cared. We had to give a little bit and make some sacrifices, and we did that. The bottom line was that there were no options. We made the best out of what we had. These kids aren't going to have options. The majority of kids in West Virginia or Oklahoma will not have those options. You better make sure that school system you have, a public school in a rural setting, is giving that child every opportunity that he and she can excel. Who knows, maybe one day they will be sitting in my seat or your seat. I hope so.

With that, I say I must oppose her achieving the Secretary position that President Trump has nominated her for, with all due respect. I think I stated my reasons for that. I would hope that people understand our rural public schools truly need a champion. We need that champion to really step forward and lift us all up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I am here this afternoon to stand up to one of the most dangerous nominees in President Trump's Cabinet of Big Oil, big banks and big billionaires who are going to be populating the Cabinet of the United States.

The Secretary of Education is responsible for a budget that includes $36 billion for elementary and secondary education, $150 billion for higher education each year. On top of that, the Secretary of Education is responsible for more than $1.2 trillion in outstanding Federal loans.

This nominee, Betsy DeVos, would shape the policies and programs that affect more than 50 million students across our country. Young people may be 16 percent of our population, but young people represent 100 percent of the future of the United States.

We need a Secretary of Education who believes that all children deserve access to a quality public education, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, neighborhood, or disability status. Betsy DeVos does not share this commitment to equal opportunity, and she is unqualified to serve as Secretary of Education.

Betsy DeVos has a long and well-documented record of opposing public school systems. She has implemented school choice voucher programs. She has simultaneously expanded and deregulated charter schools. In Massachusetts, we recognize that education is a passport to the job opportunities of the 21st century. Massachusetts students at the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades are No. 1 in America in math, verbal, and science. We are No. 1 in math, verbal, and science, 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. If Massachusetts were a country, we would be second behind Singapore in reading for the whole planet. That is Massachusetts.

We have a very high percentage of our students who are minorities in our home State. I live in Malden. Malden is a city of 60,000 people. Malden High School, 2016 graduation class, 28 percent White, 25 percent Asian, 24 percent Latino, 23 percent Black, 1 percent Pacific Islander. What is our goal? Our goal in Malden—our goal in Massachusetts—is to be No. 1. No. 1, not just in the United States but No. 1 in the world. We know you can do it if you make a commitment to these kids.

It is not just our traditional public schools. It is our public charter schools, our private schools, our preparatory schools that are enormously successful. Many of them are world famous, these high schools. People send their children from around the country to go to a school in Massachusetts.

The success of our public charter schools is largely due to very strong accountability measures brought about through State regulations and rigorous oversight. That is the key to our charter school system. It is accountability. It is oversight. It should not be draining money out of the charter school system for profits for private corporations. It has to be invested in the kids, but Betsy DeVos wants charter schools to have less accountability and has fought to keep charter schools unregulated across Michigan.

When the Michigan State Legislature introduced a bipartisan bill that would have expanded oversight of charter schools, Betsy DeVos stepped in. She and her family donated $1.45 million to State legislators in order to strip the helpful oversight accountability language out of the bill. That works out to $25,000 a day over the 7-week period the bill was being debated. Betsy DeVos and her unlimited funding ultimately succeeded in blocking the commonsense accountability legislation. The students and families of Detroit were denied the key protections in oversight that their schools needed.

Betsy DeVos's school choice priorities go beyond expanding and deregulating charter schools. She has pushed for voucher programs that would use taxpayer money, your money, to pay for a child's private school tuition. Under a national voucher system, the funding that would normally go to local school districts would instead be diverted away from public schools toward for-profit, private institutions. In addition to the private schools that benefit from a voucher system, 80 percent of the charter schools in Michigan are run by for-profit companies, a much higher percentage than any other State. These companies are focused first and foremost on making money. We don't allow this to happen in Massachusetts. We have only one goal, and that is to be No. 1.

That money must stay in the school system, especially if you are trying to educate a minority population, which is the future workforce of our country. That is key. They don't come from the traditional backgrounds in many circumstances. The Secretary of Education must fight for all children and families, not promote companies seeking to profit off the backs of our students. Not even Michigan—the State where DeVos and her family money have tried to exert the most influence over education policy—has implemented a statewide voucher system. Despite spending $5.6 million on a campaign to promote school vouchers, the DeVos family failed to amend the Michigan State constitution. If Betsy DeVos is allowed to expand her school choice policies across the United States, it would be devastating for our students and for the future of our country. Her ideas are too extreme. They will not work for our students or for school districts in our Nation.

I also share serious doubts that Betsy DeVos will support all students in America. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the primary Federal law that ensures that all students in every State have access to a free and appropriate public education, regardless of physical or mental handicaps, learning or attention disorders. This law covers students who are blind, deaf, vocally or mobility impaired, and those with autism or ADHD. Congress passed the original form of IDEA in 1975. It is a bedrock law in our country. Yet when Betsy DeVos was asked about it during her nomination hearing before the HELP Committee, she stated that States should be responsible for determining how, and even if, to enforce IDEA.

Remember, IDEA goes right to the heart of what we are going to do for those kids with disabilities. That is a bedrock law in our Nation. States must abide by it. We need a Secretary of Education who understands longstanding Federal education law and will commit to protecting every student in America because every student deserves the guarantee that they can and they will receive a free and appropriate public education that is promised and protected by law.

If this laundry list of efforts to undermine public education wasn't enough to cause skepticism about Betsy DeVos's qualifications to be Secretary of Education, in her confirmation hearing, Betsy DeVos would not commit to keeping guns out of our schools. Her response when asked about the issue was: ''I think that is best left to locals and States to decide.'' Guns do not belong anywhere near our schools or our students and teachers, not in public or private schools, not in elementary schools, and

not in our high schools. I am proud to have stood with Senators CHRIS MURPHY and RICHARD BLUMENTHAL on the floor of the Senate for 15 hours calling for congressional action on commonsense gun safety legislation. As a Senator, the safety and security of Massachusetts' schools, neighborhoods, and communities are my top priority.

Our Secretary of Education has the safety of every student in every State in his or her hands, and I do not believe Betsy DeVos is up to that job. I do not stand alone in this conclusion that Betsy DeVos is unfit to be Secretary of Education. I received tens of thousands of letters and phone calls from constituents all across Massachusetts urging me to reject her nomination. These come from teachers and administrators, the people who work on these issues every day. I have a letter here from Todd Simendinger, the principal of Rockport Elementary School in Rockport, MA.

He wrote to me last week and said:

> Senator Markey, as a strong supporter of public education, I ask that you oppose the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. We must have a secretary who can commit to supporting every student in all public schools and provide leadership that will help our neighborhood schools succeed. Betsy DeVos's record in education and her performance at the recent confirmation hearing prove that she is the wrong candidate for the job. As a principal, I have spoken with teachers, parents, students, and community members who agree that America's future depends on a strong investment in our Nation's public schools.

The offices of so many of my colleagues who have spoken on the floor already have, like me, received these kinds of letters and messages literally on a minute-by-minute basis from our constituents. Their passion is born of a deep commitment to ensuring that the very best education for all of the children of the Commonwealth can only be provided if the standard for that education is high. I commend them, and I agree with their concerns. All children deserve that standard.

So, from my perspective, you cannot have a more fundamental issue before us, this privatization of the public school system in America, the voucherization of our public school system in America. There is a model. It is Massachusetts. We do it right now. We are No. 1 in the country. We look over our shoulders at those who are behind us. But it is a standard that basically says: We are going to invest in the public schools and the charter schools. We are going to make sure they have the highest possible standards.

That is a recipe for ensuring that every child, regardless of their national nationality or their income, gets the education they need for a portable passport to a global economy for the rest of their lives. That has to be our goal. What is happening using the philosophy of Betsy DeVos is a failure. It is a proven failure. We already see the results. What is happening in Massachusetts, what happens in implementing the standards of the laws that we already have on the books across our country—it points us in the correct direction.

So with that, I urge a ''no'' vote on Betsy DeVos and her nomination as Secretary of the Education Department.

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

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

CONGRATULATING THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, American history was made last night. The New England Patriots won the Super Bowl. This triumvirate of Robert Kraft, Bill Belichick, and Tom Brady continues this historic journey to being recognized as the greatest single football team in the history of the United States. Even as the Falcons were ahead by 25 points, even as the rest of the country thought the game was over, we in Massachusetts, we in New England, we have our own motto: In Belichick we trust. In Brady we trust.

We knew it was not over. We knew there was still hope. We knew there was a plan that could be implemented that would ensure that the Patriots once again would prevail.

I thank the Presiding Officer for giving me this opportunity to be recognized on this most important of all subjects. This incredible Patriots victory has brought joy to people all across New England. It has brought dismay to people in other parts of the country. They still continue to be mystified by this incredible team and the incredible leadership those three great leaders provide. But for us, we realize we are in the presence of greatness. We know how spoiled we are to have such a great team.

I just wanted to rise and congratulate the New England Patriots, their leadership of Bob Kraft, Bill Belichick, Tom Brady, but all of this team, because their motto is a very simple motto. It says: Do your job. That is what every Patriot did last night. Because they stuck it out through every single play, at the end of the day, they were able to enjoy that historic victory.

For my part, I can't be more proud of any group of New Englanders. It was just a fantastic victory. As a season ticket holder, when I was 19 years old, when it was seven games at $6 apiece—$42 as a season ticket holder at Fenway Park. You can imagine how almost impossible it is to believe that we have reached such a stage where even those who have been critics of the Patriots now are forced to recognize that Bill Belichick is the greatest coach of all time; Tom Brady is the greatest quarterback of all time; and the Patriots, led by Robert Kraft, is the greatest franchise of all time. We are very proud that victory last night cemented that place in history.

Once again, I just want to congratulate each and every one of them and especially the Patriots fans who, through thick and thin, have been with that team every step of the way.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today as a product of New Jersey public schools, the son of Cuban refugees whose parents decided to leave everything behind because they did not like the dictatorship from the right and did not like what they saw in the Sierra Maestra, as the Castros were seeking to overthrow that government from the right, and who fled their own country in order to seek a better life in the United States.

They were the lucky ones. They saw the handwriting on the wall, and they got out before the true brutality of the Castro regime took hold in Cuba. When they arrived here, they had nothing more than the promise of a brighter future and, if not for them, then for their children.

In so many ways, it is the quintessential immigrant story; indeed, the quintessential American story. My mother worked as a seamstress in the factories of New Jersey. My father was an itinerant carpenter. We didn't have a lot of money—just enough to live in a small apartment in a tenement in Union City and put food on the table. But that was plenty. It was plenty because my parents knew that living in America gave their children access to a free public education, and they always taught us that an education was the key toward a better life.

Growing up, I was a quiet kid. I was very studious. I got good grades, but I struggled with public speaking. I know some of my colleagues wouldn't believe that today, but it is true.

Unfortunately for me, one of the final requirements before I graduated high school was a public speech class. Again, I did all the work, but I refused to actually stand up in front of the class and speak. I thought I could get away with it, but my teacher, Gail Harper, had other ideas.

She kept me after class. After my classmates left, she forced me to recite short stories and poetry and speeches I had written that were part of the classwork. Eventually she told me that I was going to be the narrator in a school production, which meant that I was going to be speaking on stage in front of the entire student body. I was

petrified—petrified. And I was inclined to refuse.

I am not sure if there would have been a more terrifying thought to me in the world than having to get up in front of my entire student body, but Ms. Harper told me that she knew that I could succeed. If I refused, however, she would have no choice but to fail me. And if you knew my late mother, that was not an option.

So I swallowed my fear, and when I got out there, I found that Ms. Harper's work paid off. Not only did I realize that I could overcome all of that fear and anxiety, but it had instilled in me a hunger to keep working, to get better at speaking in front of people, a skill that I honestly owe my life's work to.

For me, Ms. Harper was so much more than a teacher; she was a mentor and one of the unsung heroes of our public education system. And I am privileged to have had an opportunity to tell her that during her lifetime.

Now, thanks to my parents' commitment and incredible public schoolteachers like Ms. Harper, this product of New Jersey public schools went on to get a law degree from Rutgers University, a State institution, and was able to rise from a tenement in Union City to 1 of 100 Senators in a country of over 300 million people.

I got my start in politics fighting for public schools in my hometown. When I was in high school, I was told that because of my grades and my activities, I could be in the senior honors program but that I had to cough up $200 for the books. My parents were poor. We lived in a tenement. I didn't have $200 for the books. And I couldn't understand, for the life of me, if I had the ability and the grades but not the money, that I would be barred from being in the honors program. So I raised such a ruckus that they gave me the books, told me to be quiet, and they put me in the honors program. But I had friends who had the same circumstances; they had the ability and the grades, but they didn't have the money. Unlike me, they didn't say anything, and they didn't get in. So I didn't think that was right.

I petitioned to change the school board from being appointed by the mayor at the time to being elected by the public. Ultimately, I won the fight to change that school board and became the youngest school board member at that time in history when I was 20 years old.

So I understand the promise of public education. I understand the challenges that come with it. I understand the need for parental engagement and the extraordinary impact that good teachers can have on our children's lives.

I understand that our schools need access to adequate resources in order to allow every student to reach their full potential. And I understand that we have a long way to go to ensure that we truly do guarantee every child in America equal access to a high quality public education regardless of where they live, regardless of the happenstance of where they were born, regardless of their station in life.

Most importantly, I understand that our public education system has formed the foundation upon which the American dream has been built for generations. It is the great socializing factor of our Nation, and there is no substitute for it. At its core, it is an all-taker system. It does not care whether you are wealthy or poor, whether your family predates European settlement, came on the Mayflower, or is first-generation American. It does not care whether you are White or Black or Hispanic or Asian or Christian or Jewish or Muslim. It does not care whether you struggle with learning disabilities or autism or Down syndrome.

Our public education system welcomes you with open arms and adheres to the fundamental principles that all are welcome, all are equal, and all deserve a chance to learn and earn a better life for themselves and their families.

While we work to improve public education and renew our commitment to our children, we need a partner in the Federal Department of Education that also understands these challenges and shares our values. Unfortunately, I do not believe that Betsy DeVos is that candidate.

While I do not question her intentions, her limited experience and advocacy for policies that fundamentally undermine public education make her unqualified to be the Secretary of Education.

Mrs. DeVos has never participated in the public education system that she would be tasked with overseeing either as a student or a parent or a teacher or an administrator. I don't see that fact in and of itself alone as disqualifying but, coupled with the policies that she has advocated for in her home State of Michigan—pushing for more charter schools while simultaneously working against accountability for them, even as they profit off the backs of children while showing little improvement in student outcomes; advocating for voucher schemes that put public funding into private schools even for families that do not need the additional assistance, while depriving public schools of vital funding that they depend upon to provide a quality education to every student—it becomes clear that Mrs. DeVos does not understand that fundamental commitment to American children.

My concerns about Mrs. DeVos were compounded by the answers she gave in her confirmation hearing before the HELP Committee. Guns have no place in our schools—at least in my view—except in the hands of trained law enforcement personnel tasked with keeping our children safe, yet when asked if she would do away with gun-free school zones, if told to do so by the President, Mrs. DeVos, after trying to avoid the question with a nonanswer about grizzly bears attacking schools, said she would ''support the President.''

I do not believe that it is the role of a Cabinet Secretary to simply and blindly support the President, regardless of how misguided or dangerous an idea might be, nor do I believe that it is reasonable or responsible to make it easier to bring guns in and around schools, where they endanger our children. We must do a better job of securing universal background checks and treating mental health issues, but more guns is not the answer.

Mrs. DeVos also said in her testimony that she believed that compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act should be left up to the States. IDEA, as the act is known, guarantees a ''free, appropriate public education'' that is individualized to meet the needs of every student with disabilities.

When Congress first passed IDEA in 1975—though it was called then the Education for All Handicapped Children Act—it came with a promise that the Federal Government would cover 40 percent of the cost to educate those with special needs. Unfortunately, we have not met that obligation, providing less than half of that funding in recent history.

IDEA is Federal—not State—law. It is Federal law that needs increased funding and attention from the Federal Government. And when this was pointed out to Mrs. DeVos, she said simply that she ''may have been confused.''

Our children with disabilities deserve a real Federal partner that understands the challenges they face and is committed to getting them the resources they deserve, not a Secretary of Education who is confused about the Federal role in education.

These are only a few examples of how Mrs. DeVos has shown herself to be unprepared and unqualified for the very serious position to which she has been nominated.

If confirmed, Mrs. DeVos would take over a multibillion-dollar Federal student aid and student loan program that helps American families afford the skyrocketing cost of higher education.

I, myself, was a recipient of Pell grants and other Federal student aid and would not have been able to afford the cost of a college degree without them. Yet not only does Mrs. DeVos have no experience with student loans or managing such a program, she has very little, if any, engagement with any policy issues pertaining to higher education.

At a time when trillions of dollars of student debt are acting as a barrier to obtaining a higher education, hindering a generation of graduates from entering the middle class, and acting as a drag on our economy, we deserve a nominee who understands these issues.

As we continue to struggle with the best ways to measure student progress and achievement, we deserve a Secretary of Education who understands basic concepts like the difference between proficiency and growth.

So let me just say, my own experiences have given me an incredible faith

in the power of public education systems, while Mrs. DeVos has worked only to undermine them. I believe that the Federal Government can be a strong partner in ensuring a free, quality public education for all students, especially those with disabilities, while Mrs. DeVos seems to think that the Federal Government should not be involved in these endeavors.

I believe that guns must remain out of our schools, but Mrs. DeVos seemed to indicate that they could have a place there. Most importantly, I believe that our students, parents, teachers, and educators should be able to trust the person tasked with overseeing them. And the 50,000 New Jerseyans who have reached out to me to oppose her nomination have clearly shown that she has not earned that trust.

Here is one example of a constituent who reached out to my office.

Dear Senator,

My name is Beth More and I live in your great State of New Jersey in Fanwood in Union County. I am writing today to express my deep opposition to the appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. As a mother of two boys in our public school system, and one with special needs, I am deeply concerned and troubled by Mrs. DeVos's lack of public school experience. In fact, the thought of her steering money and funding away from public schools is not only a threat to my children, but a threat to the 50 million other children currently receiving a public education. She lacks understanding in even the most basic issues that affect our schools, and that, my Senator, is scary. I urge you to strongly oppose this and tell your other colleagues in the Senate the same.

So I implore my colleagues to put politics aside, to examine Mrs. DeVos's qualifications closely, and to be open to the input that you all are receiving from your own constituents, like Beth More.

I hope that if you are open in your mind in that regard, you will oppose Betsy DeVos's nomination to be Secretary of Education, as I will.

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

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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 94–304, as amended by Public Law 99–7, appoints the following Senator as the Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki) during the 115th Congress: the Honorable ROGER WICKER of Mississippi.

The Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law 106–286, appoints the following Members to serve on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China: the Honorable MARCO RUBIO of Florida (Chairman), the Honorable JAMES LANKFORD of Oklahoma, the Honorable TOM COTTON of Arkansas, the Honorable STEVE DAINES of Montana, and the Honorable TODD YOUNG of Indiana.

The Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law 85–874, as amended, reappoints the following individual to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: the Honorable ROY BLUNT of Missouri.

QUORUM CALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 and the following Senators entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 2 Ex.]

Cantwell	Grassley	McConnell
Capito	Isakson	Menendez
Cornyn	Kaine	Murphy
Donnelly	Lankford	Tillis
Fischer	McCain	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORAN). A quorum is not present.

The clerk will call the names of absent Senators.

The senior assistant legislative clerk resumed the call of the roll and the following Senators entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 2 Ex.]

Barrasso	Gardner	Murray
Cotton	Moran	Schumer

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A quorum is not present.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to instruct the Sergeant at Arms to request the attendance of absent Senators, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 91, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 53 Ex.]

YEAS—91

Alexander	Barrasso	Blumenthal
Baldwin	Bennet	Blunt
Booker	Graham	Nelson
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Brown	Harris	Perdue
Burr	Hassan	Peters
Cantwell	Hatch	Portman
Capito	Heinrich	Reed
Cardin	Heitkamp	Risch
Carper	Hirono	Roberts
Casey	Hoeven	Rounds
Cassidy	Inhofe	Sanders
Cochran	Isakson	Schatz
Coons	Johnson	Schumer
Corker	Kaine	Scott
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sessions
Cortez Masto	King	Shaheen
Cotton	Klobuchar	Shelby
Crapo	Lankford	Stabenow
Cruz	Leahy	Sullivan
Daines	Lee	Tester
Donnelly	Manchin	Thune
Duckworth	Markey	Tillis
Durbin	McCain	Van Hollen
Enzi	McCaskill	Warner
Ernst	McConnell	Warren
Feinstein	Menendez	Whitehouse
Fischer	Merkley	Wyden
Franken	Moran	Young
Gardner	Murphy	
Gillibrand	Murray	

NAYS—4

Collins	Rubio
Heller	Wicker

NOT VOTING—5

Flake	Sasse	Udall
Murkowski	Toomey	

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A quorum is present.

The Senator from Tennessee.

(The remarks of Mr. ALEXANDER pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 50 are located in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the nomination of Betsy DeVos to be Secretary of Education. Simply put, Betsy DeVos is completely unqualified to serve as Secretary of Education in this great Nation.

Many others share this view. I have heard from thousands of parents, teachers, and other citizens of Wisconsin who are concerned about the future of our education system urging me to oppose Mrs. DeVos and certainly opposing her vision for America's students. As of today, over 20,000 Wisconsinites have emailed me, and we have had over 7,000 phone calls opposing the confirmation of Mrs. DeVos, and Senate Democrats are unified in our opposition to Mrs. DeVos serving in this capacity. Even two Senate Republicans have announced that they cannot support Betsy DeVos. If just one more of my Republican colleagues were to announce their opposition and were to vote no, we could do the right thing and tell President Trump that he really needs to find a new candidate, a new candidate for Secretary of Education who is qualified to run that Department.

While Betsy DeVos has spent decades advocating for a particular vision for education, she has never actually worked as a teacher or as an administrator. Her career has involved investing hers and her family's considerable

wealth and using those resources to advance the privatization of our K–12 education system. She did not attend a public school either for grade school, high school, or college, and nor did her children. She has never worked as a teacher, principal, professor, counselor, or in any other formal role in our education system.

Her confirmation hearing before the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee clearly demonstrated how little she knows about Federal education law and policy. It was startling to see her ignorance about critical measures like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or the debate over growth versus proficiency as a measure of student achievement. Betsy DeVos has demonstrated that she has neither the knowledge nor the experience in education that would allow her to be a successful leader of the Department of Education. Mrs. DeVos has worked to advance a vision of K–12 education that is fundamentally hostile to our public education system.

My home State of Wisconsin has a long and very proud tradition of support for public education. Back at the founding of our State, we wrote the guarantee that every child should receive a free public education into our very founding document, our State Constitution. Wisconsin had the first kindergarten in the United States. Wisconsin is proud of something that we actually call the Wisconsin idea in higher education; that the walls of the classroom should be the borders of the State, if not the borders of this Nation or the entire world.

Mrs. DeVos's experience in education, however, has been a decades-long effort to privatize it. Her record of support for vouchers as well as charter schools that lack adequate accountability and oversight is very troubling and could lead to diversion of public dollars in even greater amounts out of public education.

Regardless of any vision or experience on education, Mrs. DeVos is a nominee with, let's say, complex and opaque finances. She has a very opaque record of financial dealings and political giving, including on matters directly related to the work that the Department does which she seeks to lead. Given her and her family's investments in companies that benefit directly from Federal education programs, I remain very concerned about what we simply still don't know.

I am also troubled by Mrs. DeVos's and her family's long history of contributing to organizations that have been hostile to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, even promoting the discredited idea that sexual orientation or gender identity can be changed through conversion therapy.

While she told me and several of my colleagues at her hearing that she believes all students should be treated equally, I really remain concerned about how this long history of support for these anti-LGBTQ organizations will influence a Department which, over the last 8 years, has shown some tremendous leadership in supporting LGBTQ students and parents in the education system.

The Federal Government's primary role in elementary and secondary education is to promote equity. I am not convinced that Mrs. DeVos will be the leader the Department needs to do just that. Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 as a civil rights measure. It was designed to ensure that every student, regardless of ZIP Code or parents' income, has access to a quality public education.

We continued that important tradition in reauthorizing this law, which is now in the form of a very strongly bipartisan bill, the Every Student Succeeds Act. The next Secretary of Education will have to implement that act.

I fear that Mrs. DeVos, as a vocal proponent of State and local control, will not be the strong voice we need to hold States accountable for serving all students, particularly those who have been historically left behind.

When we passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, we made sure there were strong Federal guardrails to assure that we never forget why there is a Federal role in education to begin with, for equity and civil rights and to make sure that every child can succeed. Furthermore, I am very concerned that Mrs. DeVos would not commit to robustly supporting the Department's Office for Civil Rights or enforcing the very guidance that protects transgender students from discrimination.

Betsy DeVos lacks knowledge about and commitment to the Federal laws that ensure students with disabilities have access to the various supports that they need to receive and benefit from a quality public education.

As I noted, she has demonstrated a complete lack of understanding about our Federal obligations to these students. I have heard from numerous parents in Wisconsin, parents of students with disabilities who were appalled by her inadequate answers to questions at our education panel hearing. She was unprepared to answer questions about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and these parents have written to express their distress about what her filling the role of Secretary of Education could mean for their children if she were to be confirmed.

One Wisconsin mother of three special needs children wrote to me about how this Federal law provided the legal rights that she needed to advocate for them, to advocate for the best possible educational environment for her three sons with special needs.

I heard from another mother, Melissa from Beloit, who detailed how the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act makes it possible for her daughter, Rowenna, who has Down Syndrome and autism, to actually thrive in a public education setting, along with her peers.

Finally, as a strong proponent of making college more accessible and affordable, I do not believe that Mrs. DeVos has the experience or vision that will allow her to successfully lead the Department in supporting higher learning.

There is a student debt crisis in this country, but Mrs. DeVos doesn't have a plan to address it and has even expressed skepticism about a Federal role.

While she has acknowledged that there are some bad actors in higher education, she has also refused to commit to enforcing regulations that help students who are defrauded by dishonest schools like Corinthian Colleges. We need a Secretary of Education who is an advocate for those students, not one who is looking for ways to shirk that responsibility.

Despite the fact that the Department oversees billions of dollars in grants and loans that allow students to pursue higher education, she has expressed skepticism about any Federal role in making college more affordable. She has even refused to oppose cuts to a program that helps students who commit to a career in public service or to support efforts to ensure that the value of the Pell grant keeps pace with the cost of college.

For all of these reasons and many others, Betsy DeVos is not the right choice for Secretary of Education. I call on my colleagues to defeat her on the question of confirmation and to afford this new President the chance to send us a nominee who is prepared to be an advocate for all students and public education in this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my postcloture debate time to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Florida is recognized.

CHINESE POLITICAL PRISONERS JIANG TIANYONG AND TANG JINGLING

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I know that we are in the middle of an important debate about a topic of education in our schools. One of the topics I hope young Americans will learn more about is the state of affairs across the world when it comes to human rights.

We are a vibrant society engaged in a heated debate, as we often have been throughout our history, about items of political matters. If you look here today, there are people standing up to speak on different sides of an issue. You see that the Republican Party today controls the White House, the Senate, and the House, and yet you have people with the freedom in this country to be able to stand up and oppose that. We have seen that across the country with demonstrations and speeches and all sorts of other protected speech. We are very fortunate

and blessed to live in a nation with those freedoms. That is not the case all over the world.

I wanted to take this opportunity in the midst of all of this debate and discussion about an important topic, the nomination before the Senate, to remind people that despite our differences on these issues, we are truly blessed to be able to live in a country where opposing the party in power does not mean you go to jail.

As I have been doing for some time now, I wanted to come this evening and highlight yet another example of human rights abuses that is taking place in a very important part of the world. For the past couple of years, my office and I have been highlighting human rights cases through our social media campaign. We call it hashtag ''Expression NOT Oppression.''

The goals of this are to raise awareness about these cases and the individuals who are suffering at the hands of these repressive governments. We know that through history some of the oppressed people—we may not think these floor speeches matter; we may not think that mentioning it here in this forum matters, but it does to them because one of the first things oppressors tell them is that the world has forgotten about them, and they don't matter anymore. That is one of the first reasons we come: to raise awareness and let them know we know their names, we know their story, and we will continue to speak out on their behalf.

The second reason is to show their families and their loved ones that elected officials—like me here in the United States—have not forgotten them because we know that tyrants, as I said, like to tell political prisoners that they are alone in their struggle.

The third reason is to call for action, whether it is for the administration to make their causes a priority, too, or to call on these governments to release these individuals.

There is one more reason I think that this effort, hashtag ''Expression NOT Oppression,'' is important. As well as all the good work being done here on both sides of the aisle in defense of human rights, promotion of democracy and the defense of God-given freedoms like religious freedom and freedom of the press and free speech, which we celebrate here even in this debate, have to continue to be pillars of our foreign policy. I hope that these cases we highlight bring those guiding principles to light.

Today, I want to discuss the cases of two Chinese political prisoners whose courageous wives I had the opportunity to meet last week when they visited in Washington, DC. These women personally requested that I intervene on behalf of their husbands, pressing on the Chinese Government to unconditionally release them and, in the case of one, to account for his whereabouts. Perhaps just as importantly, they urged me that I press our own State Department to prioritize these cases diplomatically in the hope that these families can be reunited in the not-too-distant future.

I come here today to urge our now new Secretary of State, Mr. Tillerson, to prioritize the release of these men in his diplomatic engagement with China. In the coming weeks, I also expect that we will have a chance to hear from the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to China, Governor Branstad of Iowa. When he comes before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for his confirmation hearing, I will bring up these cases and others and urge him to make their freedom a priority of his work if confirmed.

Jiang Tianyong is a 45-year-old lawyer. He was disbarred by the Chinese Government because of his vigorous human rights advocacy, including his representation of blind legal advocate Chen Guangcheng, fellow rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, Falun Gong practitioners, and other human rights cases. Despite the risks of this work, he has been steadfast in his support of the families and of their right to lawyers and legal advocates caught up in China's sweeping nationwide crackdown on the legal community in July of 2015, which ensnared roughly 250 lawyers and advocates.

Consistent with a spate of recent media stories, Jiang's wife indicated that his family and friends lost contact with him in late November of last year. That is when a Chinese state-controlled newspaper reported he had been detained for a series of trumped-up charges.

His wife has received no formal confirmation of his precise whereabouts, and, to date, he has been denied access to a lawyer of his choosing. Even more troubling is that this is entirely legal under China's laws, even though it violates all international norms of justice. Under China's own laws, authorities may hold him, or anyone, for up to 6 months without informing his family where he is held and without allowing him to access a lawyer, conditions that the United Nations Committee Against Torture has found place ''detainees at a high-risk of torture.'' Indeed, reports over the past months about four other human rights lawyers provide detailed information about the Chinese authorities' use of torture to extract ''confessions'' and impose unbearable psychological pressure.

All of these realities underscore that China remains a country of rule by law. Congressmen CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey and I cochair the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which found in our 2016 annual report that ''the Chinese Communist Party has continued to reject the notion that the rule of law should supercede the Party's role in guiding the functions of the State.'' As such, lawyers, advocates, dissidents and others often find themselves in the party's crosshairs, persecuted under the law, rather than protected by it, and they have no recourse of justice.

A second Chinese individual I want to highlight today is lawyer Tang Jingling, who has also been disbarred for his rights advocacy. He first gained prominence as a lawyer working on cases related to village compensation, corruption, and by representing activists. In January of last year, he was convicted of ''inciting subversion of state power.'' That is the charge, and he was sentenced to 5 years in prison. He was first detained in May 2014 on suspicion of ''picking quarrels and provoking troubles.'' Just imagine that. Picking quarrels and provoking troubles is a crime in China. This happened, by the way, during the lead up to the 21st anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, when the Chinese Government worked desperately to wipe out any discussion or memory of this historically brutal crackdown. In reality, all Tang and other activists did was participate in a nonviolent disobedience movement seeking legal and social reform in China.

Following his conviction, Tang eloquently wrote:

> Inside the grand edifice of the court, we can see stately and ornate furnishings and decorations, and we can see the government employees in dignified attire. But we cannot see the law and we can definitely not see justice.

He continues, movingly, speaking of the faith that has sustained him in the midst of injustice:

> The Holy Bible has a passage that reads: ''Blessed are those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake.'' Today, we have been pronounced guilty, thrown in prison, separated from our families, and have endured humiliation and difficulties—and I am far from being able to convince and prove to others how these tribulations could have become my blessings. But God's will is inevitably difficult to understand. I often pray and ask him to give me more strength, so that I may persevere until the moment of revelation. I dare say, in 2011, while in a secret jail, and now in detention, almost every day I have passed has been calm and fulfilling. I have never lost my direction.

The courage and conviction of these men should be an inspiration to us all—an inspiration that should propel us to act. I would add a reminder again of how blessed and fortunate we are to live by the grace of God in a nation where we have the freedom to speak, to object, to state our views without fear of the circumstances and the consequences that these brave men now face. The Chinese people who yearn for the protection of their most basic human rights and bravely stand with their fellow marginalized countrymen are China's greatest asset—not its biggest threat, as the government of the Communist Party wrongly believes. Any government which views its own people with such fear and hostility will, as has often been said, find itself on the wrong side of history.

So I hope more of my colleagues in this body, in the House, and especially in the administration will join their voices in support of these political prisoners and all who languish in jails, prisons, and gulags simply because

they want a better life, because they want a say in their future and have bravely made these aspirations clear.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

CONGRATULATING THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, before getting to the matter at hand, I thought I would take a minute to congratulate the New England Patriots, the Kraft family, Bill Belichick, Tom Brady, and all of the Patriots players and fans everywhere for the greatest comeback victory in Super Bowl history. They really demonstrated the grit and determination and resilience that New Hampshire and New England is known for, and we are very, very proud of them.

Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in opposing the nomination of Betsy DeVos to serve as the Secretary of Education. Our Nation recognized early in its history that public education is a necessary foundation for our democracy. It is critical that we continue to support a strong public education system that prepares all of our young people to participate in our democracy and to compete in the 21st century workforce.

All public officials, regardless of their party affiliation, should share a reverence for the importance of public education to our country's success, both now and into the future. They must show a commitment to enforcing our laws so that all students have the opportunity to succeed. I agree with my colleagues that Mrs. DeVos has not shown a commitment to or an understanding of these principles, and that is why I oppose her nomination.

This nomination process has been extremely disappointing from the start. Mrs. DeVos failed to provide critical information on her finances. Members of the HELP Committee were only given 5 minutes to question Mrs. DeVos on her views on our Nation's education system.

In the questions she did answer before the committee, Mrs. DeVos demonstrated a complete lack of experience in, knowledge of, and support for public education. She was unable to address basic issues—issues any New Hampshire school board member could discuss fluently.

She showed that she lacks an understanding of issues facing students with disabilities. She has potential conflicts of interests that she still has not answered basic questions about. She supports diverting taxpayer dollars to private schools without accountability requirements.

As Governor of New Hampshire, I supported public charter schools. They play an important role in driving innovation in education and in providing additional opportunities for nontraditional learners, but they must meet the same standards as other public schools.

In Detroit, Mrs. DeVos led efforts to oppose accountability requirements, even for for-profit charter schools. In her testimony before the HELP Committee, she declined to support enforcing accountability requirements. It is clear that Mrs. DeVos would pursue policies that would undermine public schools in my home State of New Hampshire and across our Nation.

In the past several weeks, thousands of Granite Staters—including students, parents, teachers, principals, and superintendents—have called and written into my office. They have shared their concerns about Mrs. DeVos. They understand that she is completely unqualified for this position. Our children, their families, and our Nation deserve better than a Secretary of Education who does not value public education.

Ensuring access to public education for every student is an issue that is deeply personal to my family. Shortly after my husband Tom and I welcomed our first child into the world, our son Ben, we found out that he had severe and pervasive physical disabilities. It became clear to Tom and me that we were going to need a little bit of extra help if our son was going to have the kind of future we all want our children to have.

We were lucky because we found that help in our community—not only among friends and neighbors but in a public school system that welcomed Ben. I still remember the day that a schoolbus pulled into our driveway. We wheeled Ben onto the lift and up into the bus, and off he went at age 3 to his first day of preschool—a publically funded, inclusive preschool. As I sat on the stoop and watched the bus pull away, I found myself thinking that if Ben had been born a generation or two earlier, Tom and I would have been pressured to put Ben in an institution. There wouldn't have been the resources in our community or in our school system to include Ben.

But because of the work of the champions—the families, the advocates—who went before the Hassan family, Ben was able to go to school in his hometown. He was able to learn and to make friends, to do what we all want our children to do. That is the power of public education. It is the power of making sure that all kids are included.

Our family was able to live like any other family and feel like any other family because Ben could go to school in his hometown. As Ben went from preschool to elementary school to middle school to high school, we found that his peers accepted him, interacted with him, and grew with him. I still remember a day when I got a call from one of Ben's teachers, saying that the tire on his power wheelchair had gone flat. That is the type of call that a parent of a child with complex needs dreads because it means that you have to stop everything—because if the wheelchair can't move, your child can't go through their day.

But instead of my needing to take a day off from work and pursue the repair of Ben's chair, it was other students in our Career and Technical Education Center in Exeter who came forward and said: ''We can fix that.'' Their education preparing them for a trade and a career served Ben's needs that day beautifully. Both Ben and his peers learned that day. Ben's experience in public education was made possible because of so many advocates, educators, and families who came before our family.

But this was not always the case for students who experience disabilities. When I served in the New Hampshire State Senate, I grew to know a woman named Roberta. Roberta, born in the early 1950's, had spent a good portion of her life in our State's school for individuals with disabilities. Roberta left that State school as we began to work, after the passage of the IDEA, to bring people out of institutions and into the communities.

Later, as Roberta learned to advocate for herself and tell her story, she recorded some of her memories from the Laconia State School, the separate school—so-called school—for students with disabilities. Roberta wrote:

> Some of the attendants and residents at the Laconia State School sexually, verbally, emotionally and physically abused and assaulted me. The staff said they did this to me because I misbehaved or acted silly. The attendants and residents there hit and kicked me with their hands and feet. They pulled my hair, whipped me with wooden or metal coat hangers, wet towels, hair brushes, mop and broom handles, hard leather belts, straps, rulers and hard sticks, stainless steel serving utensils and clothes.

Roberta adds:

> Additionally, they bullied me by laughing at me and calling me names. They spat at me, bit and pinched my arms and other body parts causing me pain. The employees and supervisors at the institution threw buckets of cold water on my body, clothes and all. They said that the cold water would calm me down.

Roberta's experience was, unfortunately, what life was like for some students with disabilities before IDEA. Years later, after Roberta left Laconia State School, after she was reintegrated into her community, she appeared before a State senate committee that I was chairing because she was the main proponent of a law that we passed in the New Hampshire State Senate to remove the word ''retarded'' from all of our State statutes. Roberta knew that it was the judgment of people who first interacted with her, people who believed she had intellectual disabilities, that caused her parents to believe that they had to put not only Roberta but her sister Jocelyn in an institution. Both Roberta and Jocelyn happened to have the misfortune of being born with disabilities.

It is that contrast between Roberta's experience and my son's that keeps me focused on the importance of making sure that we include all children in our public school system but also that we have the laws in place to ensure that they get the free appropriate education that all American children deserve.

Unfortunately, Mrs. DeVos has demonstrated a lack of understanding of the challenges facing students with disabilities. At our hearing earlier this month, I questioned Mrs. DeVos on whether she would enforce IDEA. Not only did she decline to assure Senators that she would enforce the law to protect students with disabilities, but she was confused about whether IDEA was indeed a Federal law to begin with.

While I am pleased that Mrs. DeVos later clarified that she is no longer confused about whether IDEA is a Federal law, she has done nothing to reassure me that she would enforce it or that she understands how fragile the gains we have made under IDEA are.

The voucher system that Mrs. DeVos supports has often, intended or not, hurt individuals who experience disabilities. Children and families lose legal protections enshrined in the IDEA. In some cases, students and their families have to sign away their civil rights before they can receive their vouchers. Yet many of the private schools that take those vouchers—the schools that Mrs. DeVos wishes to push students to—lack basic resources or accommodations for children who experience disabilities.

So if a family determines that the school that has accepted their voucher really does not have the resources or the expertise to educate their child, they have no legal recourse. Mrs. DeVos's unfamiliarity with IDEA, her comments on students with disabilities was something my office heard about often from Granite State parents who contacted the office with concerns about her nomination.

A mother from Hopkinton, NH, wrote to tell me about her daughter who attends Hopkinton High School and experiences severe disabilities—is nonverbal and requires assistance for all aspects of her daily care.

This mother wrote:

> Despite all of this, because of the extraordinary support we have received, she is living a rich and loving life at home and is part of the public school system. I have no confidence that Betsy DeVos would understand or support the role that public schools have for taking care of all students.

This mother also called Mrs. DeVos's lack of understanding of IDEA ''appalling.''

I also heard from a parent from Concord, NH, who said:

> My stepdaughter currently has a 504 plan for both a physical and cognitive disability at Concord High School, who, incidentally, are doing an excellent job of working with her to make sure her learning needs are met. My children deserve a future and so do all children.

This parent said she was feeling ''vulnerable'' as a result of Mrs. DeVos's nomination. Parents all across our Nation deserve to know that the rights of their children will be protected, and they are rightfully concerned with Mrs. DeVos's nomination.

In New Hampshire, I am proud of our work to build a future where every child can get the kind of education they need to be competitive and successful leaders in the 21st century economy. Just last week, I visited Souhegan High School in Amherst, NJ. Souhegan has become a pioneer in competency-based education. I visited numerous classrooms where students were doing hands-on lessons in Earth science, in literature to make sure they could master the material before them in a way that would stick with them.

They were great examples of what we have learned about the importance of hands-on, project-based learning, how much better students retain information, knowledge, problem-solving skills, when they actually have a problem to solve, and how important it is for them to learn to collaborate with their fellow students, just the way we expect people to collaborate as a team in the workplace.

After I visited the classes, the students at Souhegan had formed a panel to talk with me. There, students with a variety of interests, backgrounds, and education levels talked to about how important it was for them to have control of their own learning, to learn in a way, in a style that worked for them to work with their peers and build off of each other's strengths and learn from each other.

I also talked with them about New Hampshire's pilot, project-based competency assessment program called PACE, something that New Hampshire received waivers to do over the last year, and they are in the process of continuing right now. New Hampshire is piloting a program that moves us away, just as was recommended and foreseen by the Every Child Succeeds Acts from high-stakes, one-time testing to project-based assessments that are built into the project-based competency learning they are doing.

We are seeing great success with this pilot, and schools across the country are beginning to adopt it as well. That is the power of strong, innovative public education. This was an approach developed by teachers and parents and students and our Department of Education and our statewide school board as well as local school boards together. Just as we have important initiatives surrounding project-based learning in New Hampshire, we also have strong public charter schools.

I still recall a visit to our North Country Charter School in one of the more rural parts of New Hampshire, a school that was formed—a regional effort—to allow students for whom traditional high school was not working, whether it be because of their learning style, because of particular events that were happening in their home, or other emotional or developmental issues.

It allows them to come together and go to school in a way and in a place that works for them, keeping them in school, helping New Hampshire meet its goal set in law that no child drop out of high school before age 18.

The strength of the students I saw at the Country Charter School graduation was extraordinary; students who would overcome particular challenges, whether it was personal, whether it was academic—speaking for themselves and about themselves and their vision of their own future to a crowded, excited room of friends and family.

That is another kind of public education that supplements our statewide public education system and is something we can work together to do, holding all schools accountable. The vision that Mrs. DeVos, on the other hand, outlined and has devoted much of her work to, would dismantle the progress we have made, diverting taxpayer dollars to private, religious, and for-profit schools without accountability requirements.

Mrs. DeVos advocates for a voucher system that leaves out students whose families cannot afford to pay additional tuition costs, and leaves behind students with disabilities because the schools do not accommodate their complex needs. In his book, ''Our Kids,'' Robert Putnam notes that education should be a mechanism to level the playing field, but today the inequality gap is growing because affluent students start better prepared and are more able to pay.

Putnam also points out that daycare and transportation needs constrain the amount of choice that poor parents have when it comes to voucher programs. We should all be working to fix that gap, but the voucher programs that Mrs. DeVos advocates for threaten to increase the gap. The system that Mrs. DeVos advocated for in Detroit, MI, has undermined public schools and hurt students in the process.

In 2014, Michigan taxpayers spent $1 billion on charter schools, but laws regulating them are weak and the State demands little accountability. The Detroit Free Press reported on the Detroit school system, finding a system where school founders and employees steered lucrative deals to themselves or to other insiders, where schools were allowed to operate for years despite their poor academic records.

The Detroit Free Press described a system with no State standards for those who operate charters and where a record number of charter schools, run by for-profit companies, refuse to detail how exactly they are spending taxpayer dollars.

One Detroit mother said that Mrs. DeVos's ''push for charter schools without any accountability exposed my children and their classmates to chaos and unacceptable classroom conditions.''

In Florida, the McKay Scholarship Program voucher for students with disabilities that Mrs. DeVos has pointed to also raises significant concerns, including no due process rights for students under IDEA, no accountability requirements for participating schools, and absolutely no evidence of student success.

Additionally, the McKay voucher often does not cover the full cost of the

private school, leaving parents responsible for tuition and fees above the scholarship amount, not to mention responsibility for transportation. This puts students and their families at risk. Rather than taking the approach we have in New Hampshire, where charter schools supplement a strong public education system, this system of unaccountable schools destabilizes and undermines public schools.

Now, given that Mrs. DeVos's goals for K–12 education are what they are and the fact that we were only given 5 minutes to question her at the hearing, many key issues facing American students were not discussed at all in her confirmation hearing. In particular, we did not talk about higher education. When I was Governor of New Hampshire, I was proud of our work to make college more affordable, building a 21st century workforce pipeline for our businesses.

We froze tuition for the first time in 25 years at our public university system, and we actually lowered it at our community colleges. We engaged in increasing and more robust job training efforts, where we partnered businesses with community colleges or other learning centers to make sure we were engaged in the kind of job training that would prepare students for the 21st century economy.

I was hoping that at our hearing for Mrs. DeVos's confirmation, we would discuss higher education, but issues relating to higher education have been lost altogether in this discussion. What is clear, though, is that Mrs. DeVos has absolutely no experience in higher education. Her written responses following our hearing were troubling. On student debt, Pell grants, reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and job training efforts, her responses were vague and offered no vision for issues that are critical to millions of Americans. When asked about for-profit colleges, which have had a history of taking advantage of students, including but not limited to our veterans, Mrs. DeVos said she was agnostic—that is her word—about the tax filing status of higher education institutions. That is just not acceptable.

I believe we should be expanding Pell grants. We should lower the interest rates on student loans. We should be expanding apprenticeship and job training opportunities. We need to crack down on predatory for-profit colleges.

We need an Education Secretary who understands and is able to focus on higher education, and it is clear that Mrs. DeVos does not have that experience or focus.

Mr. President, our Founders understood that public education for our citizens was essential to the functioning of our democracy. In 1786, Thomas Jefferson wrote:

> I think by far, the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom, and happiness.

Generation after generation has worked to build on those ideals, including, as we do that work, more and more Americans in the process and creating a system that gives all students an opportunity to succeed.

We need an Education Secretary who is committed to upholding that principle, not rolling our progress back, and we should all be working together to ensure that we have strong neighborhood public schools, not dismantling them.

I join with my colleagues here today and the thousands from my State who have made their voices heard. We need just one more vote to defeat this nomination and to make clear that the Senate truly values our Nation's public schools.

I surely hope that there is another Senator willing to break with the President and vote against this woefully unqualified nominee.

We all have learned in this wonderful country of ours, with each generation, as we include more and more people who have been marginalized, left out, who weren't counted, that when we include them, we certainly honor their freedom and dignity—important and sufficient, of course, in its own right. Then when we do that, we also unleash the talent and energy of everyone, and that strengthens us all, helps us thrive, helps our economy grow, and makes sure that America not only leads but deserves to.

It is our job in the Senate to listen to the thousands speaking up for our children and for the public education system that serves all Americans.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the nominee for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. I am here not only to reiterate my concerns about Mrs. DeVos but to share some of the letters and emails I have received from Hoosiers about her nomination.

Every Hoosier and every American deserves access to a quality education. It prepares our students to enter the workforce, to secure good-paying jobs, and to succeed. As I have said, after reviewing the record of Mrs. DeVos, I believe she lacks the commitment to public education needed to effectively lead the Department of Education. I am deeply concerned that she will not focus on priorities important to Hoosier families: expanding access to early childhood education, improving our public schools, and addressing increasing student loan debt.

Now I want to share some of the concerns I have heard from people all across Indiana about Betsy DeVos.

A current undergraduate student at Purdue wrote to me, urging me to vote against Betsy DeVos. The student wrote as follows:

> I am concerned that she will cause major damage not only to our public K–12 schools, of which I graduated from, but also to federal student aid programs, which allow many of my fellow students and I to attend our nation's fantastic public universities.

A mother of three children in Fishers wrote:

> I believe our democracy needs well-funded and accountable public schools for all. Mrs. DeVos demonstrates zero interest in supporting strong public education. For the future of our children, our democracy, and our standing in the global economic system, I ask that you vote against Mrs. DeVos.

A soon-to-be college graduate who is pursuing a career in public education wrote:

> I will be graduating from Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion. I have spent the past semester student teaching at a local school district in Gas City, IN.
>
> One of the largest reasons that I wanted to embrace a career in public education is to push students to see their potential, just as I had a teacher do the same for me. Teaching is not simply facilitating learning, but rather it is taking the time to fully invest in the students. Getting to know their students, listening to what they have to say, and using the resources presented to best prepare students to succeed.
>
> I have been able to see this firsthand and put this into practice as I have been in three different school districts throughout my time at Indiana Wesleyan University. . . . As a soon-to-be teacher in the state of Indiana, I ask you to consider voting no for the nomination of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education.
>
> I chose this path as it directly impacted me, and I want to see students find success. With the right reform, we can see this happen, but with the suggested reforms of Betsy DeVos, we will not be able to help students succeed.

Here's another story. This one is from Muncie.

> As a mother and public education advocate, I am writing to request that you vote no to the appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. As you are aware, there are many challenges facing education in the United States. . . . Ms. DeVos' track record in the state of Michigan would be devastating to the country as a whole if she were to be given the position of Secretary of Education. For the sake of my children, their dedicated teachers and children across the nation, I respectfully request your ''no'' vote to her appointment.

A woman in Zionsville wrote as follows:

> I feel that the DeVos agenda plans a dangerous voucher program that robs public schools of money and allows unprecedented support of K–12 programs with opaque standards, curriculum and accountability. In Indiana we have struggled with the skills gap and graduating students that are prepared for the available workforce positions. . . . I beg you to speak out against the appointment of Ms. DeVos as Secretary of Education.

Hoosiers have the right to an educational system that strives for high standards, transparency, and success, and I do not believe the DeVos model will be able to deliver on any front.

A retired special education teacher who taught in Mishawaka for 24 years wrote:

I implore you to vote ''no'' on the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. Her selection by Donald Trump was clearly an attempt to further dismantle the public school system in the United States. The poor, the disadvantaged, and the disabled would suffer great educational setbacks with her as Secretary of Education.

A woman in West Lafayette wrote:

As a future special education teacher, I find it horrifying that [Ms. DeVos] seems to be unaware of the IDEA Act, which protects the rights of millions of children with disabilities. It is completely unacceptable that our country should have someone in charge of education who is unaware of this monumental law. Education is so important for the future of this country and everyone deserves equal opportunity to get a good education. . . . This is why I ask you to please vote no for DeVos.

In a letter from Greenwood, a woman wrote:

As a mother of two children, one with severe disabilities, please know I do not support Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. I can only hope that you will bear with me as I offer the story of my son below.

My son was born full-term and healthy. From 18 hours until two weeks old, he fought for his life. At two weeks old, a heart defect was discovered. Next was heart surgery, recovery, and he was home at exactly one month old. Saying we were ill-prepared for the future would be an understatement, to say the least.

We had no way of knowing the repair to his heart would not also repair all the damage to his brain and body. He was eventually gifted multiple diagnoses: cerebral palsy, congenital heart disease, significant mental and physical disabilities and severe GERD. To match the diagnoses, he was also provided coordinating medical equipment: wheelchair, communication device, standing equipment, a special seating device, feeding pump, and leg braces.

Skip ahead to today and you'll discover a 15-year-old doing his absolute best to find his place in this quick-paced world. It took a long time, but over the past 3 to 4 years, he mastered his communication device and has shown he is capable of learning and understanding.

While it took all this time for him to show us, it took the relentless dedication of very special teachers to really make it happen. His teachers worked tirelessly to develop extremely specific Individualized Education Plans for him. I am certain without the Individuals with Disabilities Act and Free Appropriate Public Education, he would not have achieved his current level of learning. I also feel his teachers would not have been able to get him to this level without the right educational tools in our public schools.

I wanted you to feel my emotions and how difficult his life truly is. Please don't make his education any harder than it already has been.

A former public schoolteacher in Indianapolis wrote:

I watched all of Betsy DeVos's Senate confirmation hearing. As the minutes churned by fear, fury, and grief built within me. I will not sit back and watch as a nominee for Secretary of Education prepares to take the helm who does not commit to protecting children in public schools. I hope you stand with me to firmly reject Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education. We must commit our care, our love, and our attention to upholding the promise that all kids deserve a shot at success through education.

These kids are our future, and we owe it to them to lead wisely. Unfortunately, Ms. DeVos will not lead us to that future.

A mom in Evansville wrote:

I have one child in college and two others in public elementary schools. My children have received and are getting very good education in public school and are in advanced classes. I am very concerned about the appointment of a woman who has been advocating against our public school system for years. We must do better for our children. Please fight for our public schools and our children, and do everything in your power to keep Betsy DeVos from becoming our Secretary of Education.

This is just a small sampling of the letters and emails I have received from Hoosiers all over our State who are deeply troubled and who are opposed to Betsy DeVos. They wrote to me not as Republicans, Democrats, or Independents but as concerned Hoosiers, as moms and dads who love their kids. They are worried about an issue we should all be able to agree on: the importance of ensuring our children have access to a quality education.

While I said I would vote against Betsy DeVos's nomination, I will continue to fight for our public schools, our teachers, and our students. I will continue fighting for them because ensuring our students have access to good schools and good teachers lays a foundation for our students to reach their potential, and it is fundamental to their success and in turn our country's success.

We love our schools, we love our kids, and all we want is the best for them and an extraordinary education. That is why I will be voting against Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my postcloture debate time to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York may accept 18 minutes.

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

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

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the nominee for the Department of Education, Betsy DeVos. I cannot vote for her confirmation.

The mission of the Department of Education, as mentioned, ''is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.'' The Department achieves this by establishing policies on Federal financial aid for education and distributing as well as monitoring those funds, collecting data on America's schools and disseminating research, focusing national attention on key educational issues, prohibiting discrimination, and ensuring equal access to education. After considering that mission, I do not believe Betsy DeVos should be the next Secretary of Education.

Surely we can agree that every child in the United States should have access to a first-rate education to ensure a chance of a good job and good pay. I know this from my own life experiences and, in particular, the impact that a good teacher can have on a young child. You see, my first grade teacher, Mrs. Frances Wilson, God rest her soul, attended my law school graduation. I would not be standing here were it not for the education I received, and I know that to be true for so many of our colleagues in the Senate.

After I reviewed Betsy DeVos's nomination, including her record and confirmation testimony, and after speaking with teachers and students and parents from across California, it is clear she does not understand the importance or the impact of a public school teacher like Mrs. Frances Wilson.

Why? Well, first and foremost, our country needs a Secretary of Education who has demonstrated basic competency when it comes to issues facing children. They just need to know what they are talking about. When questioned in the hearing by my colleague Senator FRANKEN, it was clear Mrs. DeVos didn't know the difference between two basic theories of testing: proficiency and growth. This, in fact, is one of the biggest debates occurring in the education community today, and she was unaware of the significance of the nuances and the difference between the two. As we know, proficiency essentially asks whether a student has a basic competency or understanding of a subject; looking at a child and asking: Is that third grader reading at third grade reading level?

Growth. It is a question of whether a student is progressing from year to year or asking if a third grader who started their year reading at first grade level can now read at second grade level. Has there been progress? This debate will define how we are judging schools across the country, and her lack of knowledge and fluency demonstrates her complete lack of experience, understanding, and curiosity about one of the hottest issues in modern education.

Now let's talk about guns in schools. At first, she at best showed ambivalence toward gun-free school zones, but it gets better. She went on to say that she does not have any questions, and that without any questions, she does not believe you need guns in schools. Then she went on to say, well, but we need guns in schools, yes, because grizzly bears may pose a significant threat to the safety of our children and perhaps their education.

I say Ms. DeVos poses a far greater threat to public education.

Let's talk about title IX. Another moment in her hearing is when the

nominee refused to commit to actually enforcing title IX. Now, let's be clear that title IX was brought into being because our country had a rampant policy of discrimination against women in our education system. For example, women were not being admitted to the University of Virginia. Even Luci Baines Johnson, the daughter of President Johnson, was barred admission to Georgetown University after she got married because it was common perception at that point in time that if she was married, then that is what she should pursue. She should pursue a career in the home and could not be capable of doing that as well as working outside the home. Title IX is a law that guarantees women and girls the right to a safe education, free from discrimination.

Let's be clear how title IX helps today. It is title IX that required universities to prioritize a safe environment for girls—safe from abuse and sexual assault. We know this is a real issue. In fact, the Department of Education estimates that one in five women has been sexually assaulted during her college years.

As attorney general of California, I was proud to bring together colleges and local law enforcement agencies to create protocols for investigating and prosecuting sexual assaults. It has helped schools and law enforcement implement changes to California law to better protect survivors of sexual assault. I championed new methods to allow California to process rape kits and clear a longstanding backlog of rape kits in the State crime labs. I fought to ensure that survivors have the support they need and that their attackers face swift accountability and consequences for their crimes.

There is no question that ending campus sexual assault should be a moral imperative for our country, and it should be a priority for the next Secretary of Education of the United States. For that reason, it is unfortunate—and, yes, troubling—that Mrs. DeVos will not guarantee enforcement of title IX.

Then let's talk about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. I know my colleague Senator HASSAN has spoken extensively about this. This act has been around for decades—four decades, to be exact. Before it existed, we were not prioritizing these children. We did not give them the services they needed. We had written off a whole population of our children. When asked by my colleague MAGGIE HASSAN about this piece of legislation, the nominee showed a complete lack of knowledge about how it is implemented. That is simply unacceptable. We cannot go back to a time when we wrote off a whole population of people, and it cannot only be the parents of those children—but all of us, as the adults of a society and a country—who look out for our most vulnerable children.

Then, let's talk about for-profit colleges, which I know something about since I had to sue one of the biggest for-profit colleges, which was defrauding students as well as taxpayers. I know about the reality of abuses of for-profit colleges, and I applaud my colleague ELIZABETH WARREN, who asked whether or how she would protect against waste, fraud, and abuse at for-profit colleges. She asked this of the nominee, and it was troubling to see that the nominee was equivocal at best.

Now, let's talk about the nominee's record as it relates to the children of her home State of Michigan. Since the growth of charter schools, Michigan has gone from performing higher than average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the year 2000 to below average by the year 2015. A 2015 Federal review found an ''unreasonably high'' number of charters in Michigan which were among the bottom 5 percent of schools nationwide. According to a report from Chalkbeat, an education publication, when the Michigan legislature attempted to add oversight for both charter schools and traditional public schools in Detroit, the nominee's family opposed the measures and poured $1.45 million in the legislature's campaign coffers—an average of $25,000 a day for 7 weeks. The oversight measures, she is happy to say, never made their way into the legislation. We cannot have someone who wants to lead our highest Department of Education who does not support the importance of oversight, of making sure that the children are getting the benefit of their bargain.

According to data released from the Michigan Association of Public School Academies in 2015, only 17 percent of Detroit charter school students were rated proficient in math, compared to 13 percent of students in traditional public schools. Even Eli Broad, a great Californian and strong supporter of dramatic education reforms, has expressed strong concerns about the nominee's nomination. That should tell us all something.

Now let's talk about the impact on California. During the campaign, President Trump said he would take $20 billion from existing Federal education programs—which, by the way, is more than half of the Department's budget for K–12 education—and instead put that money into a voucher-like system. The President also committed to getting rid of the Department of Education in its entirety, which would put half a million teachers out of work. The nominee has committed to working with him on these plans.

Let's be clear. This plan would be devastating for public schools, including the schools in California that serve over 6 million students. This also means California students could lose $2.3 billion in Federal education funding, which could end critical programs. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act serves thousands of California's disabled students and serves them well. But his plan would slash $1.3 billion in Federal funding—money that our children rely on. The Trump proposal to cut the Department of Education budget would also harm California's students. Some $3.8 million in Pell grants for California students could be lost, 43,000 or more teacher positions in California could be eliminated, and $8.96 billion in student loans could be at risk for California's college students.

The bottom line is this—fewer teachers, fewer resources for students and parents, and less aid to make college affordable. Maybe one school will cut their after-school program or stop teaching the arts, or it doesn't have a guidance counselor or decides they will just let class size balloon because they don't have enough teachers. We know that is not good enough for any of us.

There is a clear connection between public education and public safety. When I was the district attorney of San Francisco, there was a rash of homicides one year. All of us in a position of leadership were rightly concerned, and we did the predictable and the right thing: We figured out how to put more cops on the street, we looked at our gang intervention strategies, and we figured out very predictable and good ways of reacting to these crimes after they occurred.

But I asked a question. I asked a member of my staff: Do an assessment and tell me who are these homicide victims? In particular, who are the homicide victims under the age of 25? The reason I asked that question is pretty simple. There were just a lot of them. Sure enough, the data came back to me. It included the fact that, of the homicide victims under the age of 25, 94 percent were high school dropouts.

Over the years, I have taken a closer look at this issue. I have learned that 82 percent of the prisoners in the United States are high school dropouts. I have learned that an African American man who is a high school dropout between the age of 30 and 34 is two-thirds as likely to be in jail, have been in jail, or dead. There is a direct connection between what we do or do not do in our public education systems and the price we all pay in terms of our public safety. I say to everyone concerned: There are good reasons to care about the education of children. If nothing else, be concerned about why you have to have three padlocks on your front door. If we don't educate our children in our public school system, we all pay the price.

Mrs. DeVos's agenda means fewer teachers and resources and worse schools. Fundamentally, her lack of understanding of the rights teachers have today, the rights parents have today, and the rights students have today mean one thing: She cannot—and will not—uphold the law if she does not understand the law. Her testimony has made clear that she does not understand IDEA, she does not understand initiatives like gun-free zones in schools, and she does not understand the history or the need for title IX.

If Betsy DeVos gets her way and cuts funding for public schools, that means fewer teachers. If she does what she did in Michigan, that will mean poor outcomes with fewer high school graduates. What we know is that these are the kinds of policies that prevent us from actually achieving all that we know we can be as a country, which is about paying attention to all the members of our society, and, in particular, our children, and investing in them with the education they so richly deserve so they can one day stand in this Chamber as a Member of the Senate, doing the best of what we know we can do as a country.

Simply put, I will say this. It is clear from her testimony that Betsy DeVos has not done her homework. She hasn't done her homework in terms of preparing for the job, and she did not do her homework in terms of preparing for her hearing. I say that right now the Senate must do our job, we must do our homework, and we must refuse to confirm her as the next Secretary of Education.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I wish to begin by congratulating our new Senator from California for her first speech in the Chamber. I know it is not her first official speech, but she is here on this important night to talk about the state of public education in this country and this confirmation process. So I thank her for her remarks. I also want to thank the ranking member of the Education Committee of the Senate, Senator MURRAY from Washington State, who is here tonight as well. I know she has been here all day today and was here all day on Friday as well, because the set of issues we are discussing are so important.

As I sat here listening to the Senator from California, I was thinking about the work we have done recently on the committee on which we both serve—the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee—with the leadership of Chairman ALEXANDER, a Republican from Tennessee, and Ranking Member Senator MURRAY, from Washington State, to pass a new reauthorization of No Child Left Behind—a bill that if you said: Let's have a rally on the steps of the Capitol to keep No Child Left Behind the same, not a single person in the United States would have shown up for that rally. It took this body 7 years—7 years after we were supposed to reauthorize No Child Left Behind—to actually do the work. But when we did the work, we were able to get it through the committee once unanimously. This committee has on it, among other people, Senator BERNIE SANDERS from Vermont and Senator RAND PAUL from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. They seldom agree on anything, but they agreed on that bill. We got it out of the committee almost unanimously, and then passed it on the floor of the Senate with over 80 votes. It passed with a huge bipartisan vote in the House of Representatives, and it was signed by the President. It was 7 years too late, but we were able to do it in a bipartisan way—which is what education issues should always require. It is a shame that tonight we are here with a partisan divide because of the selection President Trump has made to lead the Department of Education.

So I just want to say thank you again to Senator MURRAY for her leadership.

Since our first days before we founded this country, education has been an American value. In Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, colonists recognized their collective responsibility to educate their children. They wrote into law that children, both wealthy and poor, must be taught to read and write, and to learn a skill, like blacksmithing, weaving, or shipbuilding, to secure their economic independence. As democracy took root in early America, public education became not just an ideal but an imperative. An enlightened public, the Founders believed, was essential to self-government.

Thomas Jefferson wrote that we must ''educate and inform the whole mass of the people. . . . They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.''

Benjamin Franklin believed: ''The good education of Youth has been esteemed by wise Men in all Ages, as the surest Foundation of the Happiness both of private Families and of Common-wealths.''

With education, the common man would be able to select leaders wisely and fight back against the tyrannical instincts of those in power. He would be able to understand, maintain, and protect his rights, so that government could not usurp authority and devolve into despotism.

In a country ''in which the measures of Government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the Community as in ours,'' George Washington explained, ''knowledge . . . is proportionally essential.''

This set of beliefs represented a fundamental break from the aristocratic ways of the old world. A republic that was ''for the people'' and ''by the people'' required an educated people.

With this new world also came a new conviction that individuals could determine their own future, that their birth or circumstance no longer limited their potential. This foundational idea grew to become the American dream: Every child, regardless of who her parents are or where she came from, could achieve an education and grow up to achieve a better life.

Over time, as our Republic became more and more democratic, as the right to vote and lead was secured by African Americans and women, education became the fundamental means by which Americans sought to secure their liberty and their equality.

Perfecting our Union by expanding education has not come without struggle, but we have often succeeded because we have recognized that symbiotic relationship among the needs of our country and the success of individual Americans and our aspiration to move forward. This included the need for a universally literate workforce in the 1830s and the creation of Horace Mann's Common School Movement; the demand at the turn of the 20th century to replace out-of-date Latin schools with progressive high schools that prepared students for the emerging industrial workforce; the challenge of providing World War II veterans with a career path and the creation of the GI bill for college education; and the need to tear down the barriers of Jim Crow school systems in the 1950s and 1960s.

Too often, as a country, we confronted these challenges too late and at the tragic expense of our fellow American's potential. ''With all deliberate speed'' has proven not fast enough, especially for children living in places like the Mississippi Delta and South Central Los Angeles.

At each of these turning points, we have asked for more from our public schools. To their credit, our educators—teachers, specialists, and principals—have risen to the challenge, many times much sooner than the rest of us. They have helped us build a nation admired for our forward progress, for opportunity, and for equality.

That is the American ideal from our founding until today. I come to the floor tonight with a sense of urgency because our generation is at risk of being the first American generation to leave less opportunity to our children than we inherited. If we do that, we will have broken a fundamental American promise to our children.

In our Nation, education is supposed to be at the heart of opportunity, but today our education system fails far too many kids. Schools that once were engines of opportunity and democracy are now too often traps for intergenerational poverty.

As a result, only 3 out of 10 children born to very low-income families in the United States will make it into the middle class or higher. Only 4 out of 100 will make it to the top 20 percent of income earners. Already, the United States has less social mobility than at least 12 other developed countries—among them, Canada, Japan, and Germany.

In America, children growing up in poverty here hear 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers by the time they reach kindergarten. In fourth grade, only one in four of our students in poverty is proficient in math, and fewer than that can read at

grade level. As few as 9 will receive a bachelor's degree by age 25.

As a nation, we are falling behind the rest of the world. When George Bush, the son, became President in 2000, we led the world in college graduates. Today we are 16th in the world. American 15-year-olds score lower than their peers in 14 countries in reading, 36 countries in math, and 18 in science.

Much of the rest of the developed and developing world is figuring out how to produce more and more educated citizens, while the United States is standing still and therefore falling behind. We must refuse to accept outcomes that are a tragedy for our children, a threat to our economy, and an immeasurable risk to our democracy.

To make change, we need to stop treating America's children as if they belong to someone else. To meet our children's needs, we must invent a 21st century approach to education, a system for the delivery of free, high-quality education built for the future, not for the past.

We must have the courage to shed old ways of thinking, abandon commitments to outdated approaches, and explore new ideas. This reenvisioned system must focus like a laser on what is best for kids, not what is convenient for adults. It must be comprehensive and integrated from early childhood to postsecondary education.

A 21st century system of public education must set high expectations, demand rigor, and create meaningful accountability. This system must embrace different kinds of schools and create a culture that is focused on continuously learning from each other—among traditional, charter, and innovation schools, and across districts, cities, and States.

We need to change fundamentally how we prepare, recruit, place, train, retain, and pay teachers and school leaders. That entire system belongs to a labor market that discriminates against women and said you have two professional choices: one is being a teacher and one is being a nurse. So why don't you come teach Julius Caesar every year for 30 years of your life in the Denver Public Schools, where we are going to pay you a wage far lower than anybody else in your college class would accept.

Those days are gone. We had discrimination in the labor market that actually subsidized our school system because very often the brightest students in their class—very often women—had no other career options and therefore were willing to teach.

That whole system needs to be transformed in the 21st century. We have 1.5 million new teachers whom we have to hire over the next 6 to 8 years in this country, and we have no theory about how to hire them or how to keep them. Fifty percent of the people are leaving the profession now in the first 5 years.

This new system of public education should embrace technology and personalized learning. We must create space for innovation in school autonomy, and we must also provide choice to parents and kids, but our goal is not, and should not be, school choice for choice's sake.

For a youngster in a low-income family, there is no difference between being forced to attend a lousy school and being given the chance to choose among five lousy schools. That is no choice at all. It is certainly not a meaningful one. The goal is, and must be, to offer high-quality education at every public school so parents can choose among grade schools in their neighborhood and throughout their cities and towns.

We must refuse to accept the false choice I have heard over and over again during this confirmation process that you either support school choice in whatever form or you defend the status quo, just as we must reject the idea that you cannot support public schools and advocate for change.

This old rhetoric and manufactured political division will not work for our kids. We need to rise above the narrow, small politics that consume our attention and permit and prevent us from making tough choices. Instead, we need to recognize that a 21st century education can and should look very different than a 19th century education or a 20th century education, and no matter what approach or method of delivery, it must be high quality.

The good news is, we know it is possible to reverse course and create meaningful change. Several cities around the country have already begun creating roadmaps to this 21st century approach. Denver is one of them.

In Denver, we made a deal—create a public choice system that authorizes charters, creates innovation schools, and strengthens traditional schools. We empowered schools through autonomy and worked to create a culture of shared learning and innovation focused on all ships rising. We demanded quality, and we implemented strong accountability. High-performing schools were rewarded, replicated, and expanded. Low-performing schools had to be improved or be shut down.

We made tough decisions. We closed schools. I sat in living rooms, classrooms, and gymnasiums with parents urging them to demand more from the school district, even if it meant that their child had to go to a different school. Along with concerned citizens, teachers, and principals, I went door-to-door to enroll kids in new schools.

Denver created innovative teacher and school leadership policies. We tried to rethink the tired model of the last century and create a new career for this one. That is why today in Denver you will find teachers teaching other teachers and being paid for it, knowing that their job is not only to educate their students but also to improve the honorable craft of teaching so our kids can achieve even more.

We used the levers of Federal law, strong accountability, and civil rights protections as the backbone of change. We cannot have made the changes we did had it not been for the national demand for improvement in our schools—the civil rights impulse that underlies the Federal involvement in public education, as well as the courage of our community to demand something better for our children. Denver has begun to see the results of hard work.

Over the last decade, Denver Public Schools students' achievement growth increased faster than the State's in both math and English. This outcome was achieved by students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch and also students not qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch. Latino and African-American students' achievement in English and math grew faster than their counterparts' throughout the State.

Sixty-one percent more students graduated in 2016 than in 2006. We have a long way to go, but I would suspect that if we could say of every urban school district in America that we are graduating 60 percent more students this year than we were a decade ago, we would be feeling a lot better about where we are headed as a country. In Denver, over that time, the overall ontime graduation rate increased almost 30 points, and the ontime graduation rate for Latino students has doubled since 2007.

Since 2006, Denver Public Schools' enrollment has increased—many cities have lost enrollment—over 25 percent, making it the fastest growing urban school district in America, partly because Denver has grown but also because parents and kids and families have now found schools that are responsive to their families' needs and supportive of their children.

I am the first to say, and I always will be the first to say, that we still have a lot of work to do to make sure the ZIP Code Denver's children are born into doesn't determine the education they receive. But cities like Denver are moving in the right direction. Now we need to move a nation in the right direction.

Tonight, as we stand here in this marbled Chamber among these statues that tie us to our past, I am thinking of our future. I am thinking of the millions of poor children across time zones our Founders could not have imagined, heading home after a long day at school, shifting their backpacks of books to find a comfortable spot, sharpening pencils for math and pastels for art, clearing a space on a busy dinner table for homework. I am thinking about children teaching other children, older brothers and sisters teaching their younger siblings, expecting that they will have more opportunity than their parents. I am remembering the naturalization ceremony I attended just last Friday at Dunn Elementary School in Fort Collins, CO, where Kara Roth's fifth grade class welcomed 26 new Americans from 13 countries to the United States. I am thinking about

teachers and principals and students—while we are here speaking—who are up tonight, planning for tomorrow, and hoping for a future that allows them to review at home before they teach tomorrow the best lessons for teaching the productive and destructive forces of volcanoes, what Scout learns in ''To Kill a Mockingbird,'' or the mathematical reasoning that calls on us to invert the second fraction when we divide. I am imagining a country that fulfills our generational responsibility by providing quality early childhood education to every American family who wants it—a K–12 school for every child to which every Senator would be proud to send his or her child or grandchild and access to college and skills training that prepare students for economic success without shackling them to a lifetime of debt.

All of that leads me to comment briefly on President Trump's nomination for Education Secretary. I have no doubt that Mrs. DeVos sincerely cares about children. It is not her fault that President Trump nominated her. So let me be clear that I am addressing the President and not Mrs. DeVos when I say that this nomination is an insult to school children and their families, to teachers and principals, and to communities fighting to improve their public schools all across this country.

Even with the limited questioning allowed at the education committee hearing, it quickly became clear that Mrs. DeVos lacks the experience and the understanding to be an effective Secretary of Education. The bipartisan progress of American education achieved over the last 15 years was predicated on a deep commitment to three principles: transparency, accountability and equity.

Mrs. DeVos's testimony and public record failed to establish her commitment or competence to protect any of these foundational principles. Her ''let a thousand flowers bloom'' approach asks American school children to take a huge step backward to a world without the high expectations and transparency that we need to give parents and taxpayers the information they deserve on how our schools are performing. Those high expectations, paired with the clear commitment to accountability, ensure that our successful schools should be replicated and our struggling schools should be held accountable for improvement, regardless of whether it is a choice school or a district school.

Finally, we know that the Secretary of Education holds the sacred job of ensuring that every child in America gets the resources and the support they deserve, regardless of their income, background, or educational needs. This commitment to equity is at the core of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Mrs. DeVos has shown no evidence of her commitment to be the torch bearer for both excellence and equity. Her ideology and dogmatic approach communicates a lack of understanding and appreciation of the challenges we face and the depths of solutions they demand.

A commitment to choice without a commitment to quality serves ideology rather than improvement, and a commitment to competition without a commitment to equity would forsake our democratic ideal that a free, high quality public education must open the doors of opportunity for all. For the first generation of students to whom that promise feels elusive, they deserve an Education Secretary who has the courage, competence, and commitment to orient our mighty education system to build opportunity for all. Mrs. DeVos shows none of those skills, and our young people cannot afford to wait 4 years for their chance at the American dream.

Millions of Americans recognize this, which is why this nomination has generated more controversy than any other. I look forward to working with anyone—as I have over the years, including even Mrs. DeVos—anyone interested in improving our children's opportunities and taking seriously the future of our democracy. But I will not support her nomination. I will vote no on this nomination and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, over the course of this debate, over the last 9 hours, plus 6 hours on Friday of the 30 hours that we have on this, many Senators have come to the floor to talk about their concerns about the nomination of Betsy DeVos to be Secretary of Education.

There are open questions about her extensive financial entanglements. There are open questions and a clear concern about her lack of understanding of basic education issues. We have heard that time and again, as well as the many ways in which her vision for our education system is really at odds with where families and communities nationwide want us to go.

But let me take just a moment to focus on one major concern in particular. It is a public health threat that I know is deeply concerning for families and communities across this country, and that is the epidemic of sexual violence on our college campuses. One out of five women and 1 out of 71 men are sexually assaulted while in college. In 2013 alone, college campuses reported 5,000 forcible sex offenses, and a recent study indicated that number could be much greater.

There should be no question that sexual violence on our campuses is a great, widespread, and unacceptable problem—one that I expect any incoming Secretary of Education to be informed about, to be concerned about, and committed unequivocally to confronting head-on.

Much of the discussion so far has been about the commitment of a Secretary of Education to our K–12 system. Serious concerns have been raised, but it is important to know in this debate that the Secretary of Education also has responsibility over our higher education institutions.

In our hearing, Betsy DeVos actually agreed with me that President Trump's horrifically offensive leaked comments from 2005 describe sexual assault. She was clear. But I was deeply disappointed, to say the least, in Mrs. DeVos's responses to simple questions about whether she would seek to continue the Obama administration's work to protect students and stand with survivors. When she was asked whether she would uphold the guidance issued under the Obama administration to hold schools accountable for stronger, more effective investigations of sexual assault, she wouldn't commit to that. She would not commit to that. When I asked her whether she would continue key transparency measures, like weekly public reports on active investigations into potentially mishandled sexual assault cases, she dodged the question.

These answers are especially concerning given that Mrs. DeVos has gone so far as to donate to an organization dedicated to rolling back efforts to better support survivors and increase accountability. Let me tell you that again. Mrs. DeVos has gone so far as to donate to an organization dedicated to rolling back efforts to better support survivors and increased accountability.

Let's be clear. The epidemic of sexual assaults on our college campuses means that in States across the country, students' basic human rights are being violated. I am deeply proud to see the work that has been done on this issue over the last few years. Survivors have bravely stepped up to make clear they expect far better from their schools and their communities. By speaking out, by being courageous and speaking out, they have shown other survivors they are not alone.

Key university leaders have made fighting campus sexual assault a top priority by developing new partnerships in their communities and prioritizing prevention. New measures to increase transparency and awareness went into effect in 2013 thanks to the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. These are hard-won steps forward on an issue where some Democrats and Republicans have finally been able to find common ground.

There is much more to do. The next Department of Education should not be standing on the sidelines, much less taking us backward on an issue that is so critical to student safety on campus.

So I hope that as my colleagues are listening to the debate here today, tonight, and tomorrow, that they consider what Mrs. DeVos's leadership at the Department of Education means on this issue, the issue of making sure men and women on our college campuses can go there to learn and not be worried about being a victim of sexual assault and having nowhere to turn and not have the confidence that their voices will be taken seriously.

On another area, nominees for Secretary of Education have largely been people, over the past, who were very committed to our students, who had long careers dedicated to education, and who were focused on keeping public education strong for all of our students and for all of our communities.

Public education is a core principle that our country was founded on, that no matter who you are, where you come from, or how much money you have, this country is going to make sure all young people get an education. That is how our country has been strong in the past. That is how our country has to be in the future. Free public education.

Well, Betsy DeVos is a very different nominee. She has spent her career and her fortune rigging the system to privatize and defund public education, which will hurt students in communities across our country. She is not personally connected to public school—except, by the way, through her work over the years trying to tear them down. She has committed herself for decades to an extreme ideological goal to push students out of our public schools and weaken public education.

I can talk at length about Betsy DeVos's record of failure and her devastating impact on students, but all people really need to do is watch her hearing in our Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Just go back and watch the hearing. This was a hearing that people across the country heard about—and for good reason—from local newspapers, to local news, to ''The Daily Show,'' to ''The View,'' and posts that went viral on social media. A lot of people in our country heard Betsy DeVos for the first time in that hearing. They were not impressed.

She refused to rule out slashing investments in our public schools. She was confused that Federal law provides protections for students with disabilities. She did not understand the basic issues in education policy or the debate surrounding whether students should be measured based on their proficiency or their growth. She argued, as we have all heard, that guns needed to be allowed in schools across the country to ''protect from grizzlies.'' Even though she was willing to say that President Trumps's behavior toward women should be considered sexual assault, as I just talked about, she would not commit to actually enforcing Federal law protecting women and girls in our schools. Her hearing, quite frankly, was a disaster. It was so clear to millions of families how little she really understood about education issues.

I have to tell you, as a former preschool teacher myself and a former school board member, someone who got my start in politics fighting for strong public schools, as a Senator committed to standing strong for public education in America, as a mother and a grandmother who really cares deeply about the future of our students and our schools, I know that we can and we must do better for our children and our students and our parents and our teachers.

The decision we are making here on whether to confirm Betsy DeVos for Education Secretary will help set the course for our public education system for years to come. So I hope, again, that our colleagues are listening to this debate and thinking about it and not just voting rotely on this. This is so important.

Quite frankly, I am disappointed that our Republican colleagues have moved us so fast into this debate. I have been in the Senate a long time. I know what the usual practices are when we go through hearings and listen to nominees from Presidents who are Republican and Democrat, Republican majorities and Democratic majorities. I was here when the Senate was 50–50. There are practices we have to make sure that all Senators get the information they need so they can make a wise decision with their vote for which they will be held accountable.

Quite frankly, the usual practices here were really being ignored. The right thing to do was being ignored. This nominee was jammed through like I have seen none other. Corners were being cut. The minority was being brushed aside. I really think that is wrong.

Earlier this month, Republicans on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee scheduled Mrs. DeVos's hearing even though she had not yet finished her standard ethics paperwork and even though she had not and still, by the way, has not answered my questions about her financial disclosures to our committee. In fact, when we started the hearing, the Republican chairman, the senior Senator from Tennessee, whom I have worked with greatly—we worked together to pass the replacement of No Child Left Behind. I have a tremendous amount of respect for him. But I was shocked and surprised when he preemptively declared that he would be limiting questions for each Senator to just 5 minutes—a shocking and disappointing breach of committee tradition, clearly intended to limit public scrutiny.

Mrs. DeVos is a billionaire. She has extraordinarily complicated and opaque finances, both in her own holdings and those in her immediate family. We know that she has invested in education companies, for-profit companies, for decades. Over 100 conflicts were identified. Her ethics paperwork raises questions about the company in which she plans to remain invested. She still, by the way, has not fully answered my questions about her committee paperwork.

As I told the Republican chairman at our markup, the process that has taken place on Mrs. DeVos's nomination is a massive break in the tradition of this body. We should not have had a vote in this committee until all Senators had received appropriate responses to reasonable questions and until a second hearing was held so that Senators could get these serious concerns addressed and do their job scrutinizing the nominee.

Understand, we had a hearing. We were limited to 5 minutes each. And we did not have all of the paperwork, so we could not do our homework to make sure we were asking the questions we needed that needed to have a public debate. So, again, that is another reason I am deeply concerned about this nominee. We do not yet know whether there are conflicts of interest.

For a Secretary of Education who wields tremendous power over our K–12 system and our higher education system—as we all know, there have been tremendous questions over the past decade about access to higher education; whether you go to college and get the degree you have been promised; whether institutes have been responsible and accountable; and how we as the Senate and House can come together to make sure that when a student takes out a student loan or invests in a higher education institution, they know they are getting their money's worth and if there are taxpayer dollars involved, that the taxpayers are getting their money's worth as well. So conflicts of interest are extremely important to this nominee. To this point right now, here we are voting tomorrow, and we don't have the answers to those questions.

So these are just a few things. I have been out here on the floor to talk about them. We have heard from many of our other colleagues. It is no surprise to me that this has lit a firestorm across the country. Having a Secretary of Education, someone who is responsible for our children's education—schools are the center of our community. Community members own those schools in their minds. This is where they send their kids to school, where they have basketball games, music concerts. It is where the community comes together. Yes, we all complain about public education. Who hasn't? But at the end of day, we love our local schools, and we want them to know that the Secretary of Education—the highest person in the land to oversee them—has that love, too, and is there because they want to make them better, not because they want to tear them down.

So, yes, this nominee has taken off like no other because of her hearing, because of her conflicts, because she has attacked and gone after basic public education, which so many people

are proud of in their own communities and want to make better. So I, like everybody else, have heard from many of my constituents, more than I can ever remember in my entire Senate career. This has ignited a public storm. I want to share some stories from my constituents who have reached out and urged me to vote against Betsy DeVos because they know better than anybody why their school is so important to them, why their teachers are so important to them, why their children's public education is so important to them.

One of the major concerns I have continued to hear from my constituents about is her disconnect from the working class.

A woman from Marysville, WA, said: Betsy DeVos, a billionaire herself, does not represent the working class and certainly not her family experience with public education.

Betsy DeVos never attended public school or even sent her own children to public school.

In Olympia in my State, an employee at a high-poverty public school says she works with some of the most in-need children in the area. She is very concerned that Betsy DeVos's push toward a privatized public school system would only benefit those in wealthy communities and leave her most vulnerable students behind. She believes Betsy DeVos would absolutely not look out for their best interests.

In our rural communities, there is no private school to get that voucher and send your kids to. The policies she is pushing only mean that those schools will have taxpayer dollars taken away from them to send to other kids with vouchers to go to private schools, who live nearby or have the additional resources to use those vouchers to go to school.

A teacher in Seattle wrote to me with a story that I can't get out of my head. It really inspires me to keep going in this fight. This teacher serves preschoolers with special needs who face a number of challenges. She teaches at a title I school, where most families are low income, and many of them are immigrants and non-native English speakers.

She believes that her children deserve access to the best educators out there and that if DeVos's agenda was put in place—a system of privatized public education—her students would be failed, because without strong public schools, we would fail students who are low income or living with disabilities or impacted by trauma or who belong to racial or ethnic minorities. She says Betsy DeVos does not have her students' best interests in mind, and her students deserve the best, as I believe all of our students do, no matter their financial status, their race, their religion, or any other difference they might have from their peers.

A mother in North Bend wrote to me expressing her worry that vouchers only benefit the wealthy, leaving the middle class and poor without the benefit of a good education. Being part of a middle-class family herself, she is proud that her first grader is already mastering addition and subtraction and is reading and writing sentences all because of her local public school.

My constituent in Auburn said that money and ZIP Code should not determine who gets a better education, and she said that Betsy DeVos's worrisome policies would make that the case. She is strongly urging me to reject a nominee who doesn't look out for those who are the most in need.

A man in Kelso wrote in, saying that the public school system is what ensures we all get a good education. It is what gives so many parents hope that their child can have an even better life than they had, that public education is a great equalizer for everyone to have a chance to succeed, and I couldn't agree more.

Those are just a few of the letters I have gotten from people who are worried that the nominee's push for taking public tax dollars and using them for private schools and for-profit schools only, robbing our public schools of the resources they need, will not be the right choice for public education.

I wanted to share a few other letters from my constituents who wrote to me regarding Betsy DeVos's nomination. One of them was from Seattle. She emphasized how important it is that our Secretary of Education be dedicated to providing a quality education to all students and to strengthening our public education institutions. She strongly believes that Betsy DeVos will not be that kind of Secretary.

A retired teacher in Federal Way asked me to work as hard as I can to protect public education because she believes every child's right to a free and quality public education is at risk with Betsy DeVos's nomination.

Many constituents expressed their disbelief that the nominee for Secretary of Education has absolutely no experience in public education. Her children never even attended a public school.

One, a teacher in Bellingham, is fearful of an Education Secretary who doesn't truly understand what the needs of kids look like today. She asked how someone with no experience can be expected to lead our country's education system.

A woman in Puyallup wrote to me, saying that education is the greatest gift we can give to our children, and she thinks that confirming Betsy DeVos, with her plans to weaken public education, will rob so many children of that gift.

Mr. President, those are just a few of the letters I am getting. There are many more, and later this evening, I will be reading from some of those letters because they tell the story better than I do.

I know some of our colleagues are wondering why this woman set off such a firestorm when her nomination came up and why so many people are calling and writing and rallying and letting their voices be heard.

It is not easy to rally the public. This came from within. This came from many people in this country who understand, as so many of us do, that public education and the right to an education, free—free education is critical and fundamental and a core philosophy of this country that all of us want to be successful and want to be great again.

To have a Secretary of Education who doesn't agree with that, who in fact promotes the exact opposite, who has said that our public education system is a dead end, who has proposed, promoted, and paid for campaigns to take public tax dollars to send to private, for-profit schools, that is not what our country was built on. It is not the foundation that our forefathers put out in front of us.

They said: We are going to build a system unlike any other, where no matter who you are or where you come from or how much money you have or what you look like, in this country, we are going to make sure you get an education, a free education, paid for by all of us, to go to school in your community and to be who you want to be. That is a dream of this country, and we will not stand by and give our votes to a Secretary of Education who does not share that philosophy.

That is why there is a firestorm. That is why parents and teachers and students and grandparents and community leaders and superintendents from across the country are writing us and asking us to vote no. It is not too late. If we have one more Republican who votes no, then we will be able to say to the President: Mr. President, we reject this nominee, and we ask that you send us one who will work with all of us to make sure our public education system is a core principle of this country, is valued by this country, and is pursued by the top person in the Department of Education, our Secretary of Education. It is not too late.

With that, I have many more letters that I will be reading later. I know some of our other colleagues will be over here. Again, I ask everyone to stop and think. This is a critical nomination. It has hit a chord in our country because people do care. They want our country to be strong. They want this country to be great, and they know our public education system is an absolutely critical part of that.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. FRANKEN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mr. President, I rise this evening in opposition to the nomination of Betsy DeVos to be our next Secretary of Education. This is one of the most important jobs in our government. The Department of Education bears responsibility for making sure that every child in America has the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential, which means that the Secretary of Education has an enormous amount of power to shape our Nation's future. This is not a job for amateurs.

President Obama's first Secretary of Education was Arne Duncan, who had spent 7½ years building a record of accomplishment as CEO of Chicago's public school system, previous to which he had been director of a mentoring program and the founder of a charter school.

When Secretary Duncan stepped down, he was replaced by Dr. John King, Jr., the recipient of a doctorate in education administrative practice. He had served as Deputy Secretary under Arne Duncan and was previously the education commissioner for the State of New York. Each brought to the job a background in public education that informed their understanding of what students, parents, teachers, and administrators need in order to succeed, which brings me to Betsy DeVos.

There are reasons to be skeptical about Mrs. DeVos's nomination right off the bat. As my Republican colleague, Senator COLLINS of Maine, put it: ''The mission of the Department of Education is broad, but supporting public education is at its core.''

Well, in Mrs. DeVos, President Trump sent us a nominee with no experience in public education. Mrs. DeVos has never been a public school superintendent or a public school principal or a public schoolteacher. She has never attended a public school. She has never sent a child to a public school. Mrs. DeVos has no formal background in education, no classroom experience, and no demonstrated commitment to supporting public education whatsoever.

In fact, Mrs. DeVos has a long history of actively undermining public education. She and her family have spent millions of dollars advocating for an ideology that would steal funds from public schools in order to fund private and religious education. Let's take a moment to talk about what that means.

Mrs. DeVos ran a political action committee called ''All Children Matter,'' which spent millions in campaign contributions to promote the use of taxpayer dollars for school vouchers. The argument was that these vouchers would allow low-income students to leave the public school system and attend the private or religious school of their family's choice. Mrs. DeVos has described this as ''school choice,'' claiming that it would give parents a chance to choose the best school for their children, but that is not how it works. In reality, most school vouchers don't cover the whole cost of private school tuition, nor do they cover additional expenses like transportation, school uniforms, and other supplies, which means the vouchers don't create more choices for low-income families; they simply subsidize existing choices for families who could already afford to pay for private school.

As it happens, we have a real-life test case that we can look at to determine whether Mrs. DeVos's argument holds water. Mrs. DeVos heads up a voucher program in the State of Indiana, and guess what happened. Today, more than half of the students in the Hoosier State who received vouchers never actually attended Indiana public schools in the first place, which means that their families were already in a position to pay for private school. Indeed, vouchers are going to families earning as much as $150,000 a year.

I am sure these families appreciated the extra help, but as of 2015, nearly half of Indiana's children relied on free and reduced-price lunch programs. These are the kids Mrs. DeVos claims would be helped by school vouchers; instead, taxpayer dollars were taken away from public schools that remain the only choice for these low-income families and given to families who could already afford private school, who were already sending their kids to private school. That is the reality of school vouchers.

That is why after Mrs. DeVos developed a similar proposal for a voucher program in Pennsylvania and an analysis projected that, just like in Indiana, the vouchers would mostly benefit kids already enrolled in private schools, voters rejected it on multiple occasions. Yet Mrs. DeVos and her family continued their fight for school vouchers. In fact, she has been such a fervent advocate that her political action committee, ''All Children Matter,'' received the largest fine for violating election law in Ohio's State history—a $5.3 million fine that nearly a decade later she still hasn't paid.

Why do this? The evidence is clear that Mrs. DeVos's voucher obsession doesn't help low-income families. Quite to the contrary, it represents a serious threat to the public school system—a system that as many as 90 percent of the children rely on—but Mrs. DeVos describes as ''a dead end.''

The truth is that Mrs. DeVos's education advocacy isn't really about education at all. She describes her goal as follows: to advance God's kingdom. Now many families choose to send their children to religious schools, and many children receive an excellent education at religious schools, but it is the public school system that the Secretary of Education is supposed to focus on, and that is not the part that Mrs. DeVos and her family have put at the forefront of her advocacy.

Mrs. DeVos spent a decade serving on the board of the Acton Institute, which seeks to infuse religion in public life, beginning with public education. She and her family have devoted millions to promote the institute's work, including promoting ideas like this:

> We must use the doctrine of religious liberty to gain independence for Christian schools until we train up a generation of people who know there is no religious neutrality, no neutral law, no neutral education, and no neutral civil government. Then they will get busy in constructing a Bible-based social, political, and religious order which finally denies the religious liberty of the enemies of God.

Those are the words of Gary North, a Christian Dominionist for whom the Acton Institute serves as a forum.

Of course, not everyone who believes in the potential of parochial schools shares his view, but this is the kind of stuff Mrs. DeVos and her family have spent millions and millions of dollars promoting. It is fine for someone to hold strong religious views and to advocate for those views and to spend their family fortune encouraging others to adopt, but it is entirely fair to ask whether the mission of building a Bible-based social, political, and religious order is compatible with the mission of the Department of Education. So, yes, based on Mrs. DeVos's radical ideology, I was skeptical when her nomination was sent to the Senate, but I understand that others in this body may not have shared my discomfort.

Within this Chamber we have important differences when it comes to education policy and, for that matter, the appropriateness of using taxpayer funds to advance God's Kingdom. And do you know what? That is fine. But we all have the exact same responsibility when it comes to vetting the President's Cabinet nominees.

Each of us is called upon to determine not just whether we agree with the nominee's ideology but whether that nominee is free from relevant conflicts of interest and, critically, whether the nominee is competent, whether he or she is capable of doing the job. Making that call is our job, and that is why we have the process that we have. It is why we ask to see the nominee's financial information. It is why we ask them to submit written answers to questionnaires about their experience and their record. And it is why we have them come to the Senate to sit in front of committees and to answer our questions.

Unfortunately, during her hearing, Mrs. DeVos proved beyond a shadow of a doubt not only that her ideology is fundamentally incompatible with the mission of the Department of Education but that she is fundamentally incompetent to be its leader. Throughout the hearing, she was unable to answer basic questions about her views on important issues, she was unfamiliar with basic concepts of education policy, and she was unwilling to make basic commitments to continue the Department's work on behalf of our most vulnerable children.

Let me give you one example of what I mean. During my 5 minutes of questioning, I asked Mrs. DeVos to weigh in

on the debate about measuring growth versus measuring proficiency. I am going to take a few moments right now to make sure that everyone here and everyone watching at home understands what this debate is about and just how central it is to the future of education policy. The difference between the two approaches, proficiency and growth, is very easy to explain.

Let's say a fifth grade teacher has a student who comes into the classroom reading at a second grade level. Over the course of the school year, the teacher brings the student up to a fourth grade level. If we are measuring growth, we would say: Well, that teacher brought that student up two grade levels in 1 year. That teacher is a hero.

If we are measuring for proficiency, we would say: Well, that student is still reading below grade level. That teacher is a failure.

That is the difference between measuring growth and measuring proficiency. It took me all of 30 seconds to explain that, but I could spend all night talking about what this debate means for students, teachers, school leaders, and our entire education system.

Everyone agrees that there should be accountability in our education system—accountability for school systems, schools, teachers. We want to know we are getting results. That was the core idea behind all the standardized testing in No Child Left Behind. The problem was that No Child Left Behind set up a system in which we assessed student learning by measuring proficiency and only proficiency. As the law was implemented, all sorts of problems emerged from taking this approach.

For example, teachers in Minnesota would tell me how measuring proficiency would lead to what they called ''a race to the middle.'' See, measuring proficiency only measures whether or not students are performing at grade level—at this line of proficiency, at grade level—and a teacher is measured by what percentage of her students or his students are above proficiency or at proficiency. A teacher does not get credit for helping kids who were already well above grade level to perform better, and they don't get credit for helping kids who are way below grade level start to catch up. So we had this race to the middle because it is a yes-or-no question: Did this student achieve proficiency or not? A teacher's entire career could depend on how many of his or her students met that arbitrary goal.

So under this system, understand this, please. A teacher had a strong incentive to ignore all of the students at the top who were already going to meet proficiency. No matter what you did to that kid, that kid was going to beat proficiency in the No Child Left Behind test at the end of the year. They had a strong incentive to ignore all the kids at the bottom because, no matter what you did, that student wouldn't reach proficiency. The only thing—or one of the only things—I liked about No Child Left Behind was the name. And we were leaving behind the kids at the top and the kids at the bottom because of the insistence on proficiency.

I can't overstate how central this issue is to education, and I can't tell my colleagues how important it is to educators across America. If you talk to any State education secretary, any district superintendent, any local school board member, any principal, any classroom teacher—and, heck, parents—they will have an opinion on measuring growth versus measuring proficiency.

So when Mrs. DeVos came before the HELP Committee, I asked for her opinion on this very basic—this extremely basic—extremely important question, and she had no idea what I was talking about. Let me be clear. She wasn't reluctant to declare her opinion. She wasn't trying to strike a middle ground. She did not know what I was talking about.

We would not accept a Secretary of Defense who couldn't name the branches of the military. We would not accept a Secretary of State who couldn't identify Europe on a map. We would not accept a Treasury Secretary who doesn't understand multiplication. In fact, in nearly any circumstance, if a candidate for a job is asked a question that basic and that important and simply whiffs on it the way that Mrs. DeVos did, there is no second question. There is just a thank you for your time, and we will let you know, and will you please send in the next candidate.

Earlier this year, the University of Minnesota hired a new head football coach. I wasn't there for the interview. But imagine if the first question for a candidate for football coach of your university was as follows: How many yards does it take to get a first down? And imagine if the candidate answers as follows: Thank you for your question, Mr. Athletic Director; I can pledge to you that I will work very hard to get as many first downs as possible to make sure, we hope, that we lead the team to touchdowns.

This wasn't the question. The question was this: How many yards does it take to get a first down?

Well, thank you again for the question. I can tell you this: I will look forward to working with you to prevent the other team from getting first downs also.

Understand, that is how basic my question to Mrs. DeVos was, and that is how shocking it was that she simply didn't know enough about education policy to answer it.

This inexplicable failure alone was enough for me to conclude that Mrs. DeVos lacked the knowledge and understanding that should be a bare minimum for anyone seeking the position. But the entire hearing—the entire hearing—was a showcase for her lack of qualifications. I would urge any of my colleagues who haven't had a chance to watch it. I urge you to do so before casting a vote for this nominee. It was one of the most embarrassing scenes I have witnessed during my time in the Senate. In fact, I believe it may have been one of the most embarrassing performances by a nominee in the history of the Senate.

Asked about the right of children with disabilities to get a quality public education, she didn't know that this right is protected by a Federal law—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Asked about guns in schools, she suggested that maybe guns should be kept on hand in case grizzly bears attacked. This was in answer to a question from Senator MURPHY, who in Congress represents Sandy Hook and who, as a Senator, represents those parents. That was her answer to him.

Asked about whether she would hold private parochial schools that get taxpayer funding to the same standard of accountability as public schools, she couldn't or wouldn't say.

Asked about a family foundation that has donated millions of dollars to an organization promoting conversion therapy for LGBT youth, she claimed she had no involvement, which is ridiculous. Even if Mrs. DeVos's own role as vice president of that foundation was a 13-year clerical error, as she now claims, she herself has donated approximately $75,000 to support that anti-LGBT organization's work.

Now, understand that none of these were difficult questions. None of these were gotchas. All of these failures took place during a single 5-minute-per-Senator round of questioning, because after that first round, the hearing was cut off and our chairman refused to allow any further questions.

By the way, I would like to say a word about that move to cut off questioning. I have great respect for the chairman of the HELP Committee, LAMAR ALEXANDER. We have worked together, and he worked with Senator MURRAY on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, changing it to ESSA, the Every Student Succeeds Act. I respect the chairman tremendously. But his decision to end that hearing was wrong, and his rationale was simply false. Our chairman insisted that because Secretary Duncan and Secretary King had been subject to only a single round of questions, there was a precedent to deny the minority a second round of questioning of Mrs. DeVos. That simply isn't so.

First of all, as I discussed earlier, both Ernie Duncan and John King were experienced education professionals with long records of public service. Even if Republican Members had occasion to disagree with them on policy matters, there was no question that their backgrounds had prepared them for the job of Secretary of Education, and that is the bigger point here. There were no further questions. In both cases, committee members weren't denied the opportunity for a second

round of questioning. They simply chose not to engage in one. Indeed, when I asked the Congressional Research Service, they confirmed that those hearings did not establish the precedent that our chairman claimed.

Instead of allowing us to question Mrs. DeVos further, the chairman invited us to submit additional questions in writing, presumably so that she could get some help from her Trump administration handlers in answering them. Even so, her written responses only served to further expose her own lack of understanding of how education policy affects Americans.

For example, I asked Mrs. DeVos in writing about the effects of trauma and adverse childhood experiences on education. This is a subject I have been interested in for a long time. A lot of kids in our country live in extreme poverty. Some may have a parent in prison or a parent who has passed away. These kids may also experience physical abuse or emotional abuse or neglect. There may be some drug or alcohol abuse taking place in the house. Some have witnessed domestic violence in their home or street violence in their neighborhood. Some have seen siblings shot and killed right in front of them. Decades of research have shown that the trauma that comes from such adverse childhood experiences actually changes a child's brain chemistry and affects their behavioral development, their mental and physical health, and their chances to succeed in school and in society longterm. But research has also shown that these challenges can be overcome and that the kids who do overcome them are the most resilient kids you have ever met.

Our public education system was designed to give these kids a shot. Teachers and administrators often lack the resources they need to give these children the chance they deserve. Because Mrs. DeVos's crusade for school vouchers would further rob our public schools of these limited funds, I wanted to know her thoughts on this important issue.

This is take-home. Her written answer was brief and superficial. She wrote that she had heard that children are impacted by trauma and that trauma can cause difficulties in a child's education. That was it. Was she unfamiliar with the literature? Was she unwilling to acknowledge that poor kids face special challenges? Would she be remotely interested in addressing these challenges as Secretary of Education? I guess we may never know.

I also asked Mrs. DeVos in writing about her vision for education in rural communities. As the Presiding Officer knows—the Governor and now Senator from South Dakota—many of our children in America attend school in rural America, 10 million American kids, schools that struggle with teacher shortages and transportation challenges. I asked how would her school choice agenda help them. In her response, she pointed to online schools, which are often run by for-profit companies, many with questionable records. In fact, one of the country's biggest online schools recently agreed to a $168.5 million settlement in California for allegedly defrauding families—a $168.5 million settlement.

But even online schools that aren't out to rip off students often wind up failing them. A 2015 Stanford study showed that, on average, kids in online schools lose the equivalent of 72 days of learning in reading and 180 days of learning in math, and that is for each 180-day school year, which means that kids in online schools can fall up to a year behind in math.

Of course, as the Presiding Officer knows, many rural communities lack reliable broadband access. I have been on rural education tours where I find students who go to a McDonald's parking lot so they can get WiFi to read their public school assignment or get materials to study. This is another answer that wasn't an answer at all, yet another piece of evidence that Mrs. DeVos is simply not up to this job.

Like many Americans, I have serious concerns about many aspects of the Trump administration's agenda. Still, I believe that as a United States Senator, it is my job to evaluate each nominee on his or her own merits. That is why I voted for nominees like Secretary Mattis and Secretary Chao, even though I disagree with them on important issues. General Mattis, for example, has nearly a half century of military service under his belt, he has earned the respect of leaders on both sides of the aisle, and I believe he will be a much needed voice of reason on the Trump administration's foreign policy. Ms. Chao has a lengthy background in public service, including as Secretary of Labor and Deputy Secretary of Transportation. I believe she will bring significant and valuable experience to her important role. I may well take issue with the decisions they make and the agenda they implement as members of President Trump's Cabinet, but at the very least, each illustrated during their confirmation hearings that they have a basic understanding of the issues they will be responsible for. Mrs. DeVos is different.

I have heard from Minnesotans about many of President Trump's nominees, but the outcry over this nomination far surpasses anything else. As of a week ago, my office had received 3,000 calls about this nominee. A grand total of 12 were in favor of her confirmation. Additionally, we received more than 18,000 letters and emails, and again the overwhelming majority of them have urged me to oppose this nomination.

For example, a woman from Brainerd, MN, wrote to say that she never contacted one of her representatives before and didn't consider herself very political—in fact, she was neither a Democrat nor a Republican, but she has a daughter in second grade and a son beginning kindergarten in the fall, and she wanted me to vote against Betsy DeVos. ''How,'' she asked, ''is someone who has never had any experience in public education supposed to competently preside over it?''

A mother of two public school students in Faribault, MN, wrote of Mrs. DeVos: ''As I watched her during the hearing, I was in disbelief that she would be appointed to such an important position.''

Another constituent from Warren, MN, wrote: ''This woman is so unqualified, it's scary.''

Last week, I went to dinner with Vice President Walter Mondale at his favorite restaurant. Afterward, he took me into the kitchen to greet some of the men and women who worked at the restaurant. One of the guys in the kitchen—I am a little unclear of whether he was taking dishes to the dishwasher or he was washing dishes. He is not a teacher, he is not an education advocate, just a guy who works in the kitchen. He said: ''Please vote against DeVos.''

There is a reason why this nomination has been met with such overwhelming resistance on the part of the American people, and I know I am not the only one who has heard it. In fact, two of my Republican colleagues and fellow HELP Committee members who sat through that hearing, Senator COLLINS and Senator MURKOWSKI, have stepped forward to announce they cannot vote for this nominee. They don't agree with me on every aspect of education policy, but, believe me, when we put ESSA—Every Student Succeeds Act—together, the committee voted unanimously. There is a lot of agreement on education policy on our committee, but Senator COLLINS and Senator MURKOWSKI saw the same hearing I did. Like me, they saw a nominee who simply does not understand the needs of the students our Secretary of Education is supposed to serve.

I will let my colleagues speak for themselves as to the reasons why they will be joining me in voting against this nominee, but I would like to close by asking a few questions of my colleagues who are still considering a vote in her favor.

If Mrs. DeVos's performance didn't convince you that she lacks the qualifications for this job, what would have had to have happened in that hearing in order to convince you? If you cannot bring yourself to vote against this nominee, is there anyone President Trump could nominate for any position that you could vote against? If we cannot set party loyalty aside long enough to perform the essential duty of vetting the President's nominees, what are we even doing here?

The Constitution gives us the power to reject Cabinet nominations specifically so we can prevent fundamentally ill-equipped nominees like Betsy DeVos from assuming positions of power for which they are not qualified. Let's do our job. For the sake of our children, let's do our job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I wish to add a few Rhode Island voices to the voice of the Senator from Minnesota. By the way, I am not cherry-picking my correspondence to find the rare letters in opposition to this nominee. We have had an unprecedented avalanche of opposition to this nominee. It is running well more than 100 to 1 against her, and it is people from all walks of life.

Here is a letter from William, a 12th grader in Pawtucket, RI. William took the trouble to write to me. Let me start with the topic line: ''Concern over Betsy DeVos.''

Hello, Senator Whitehouse!

My name is William and I am a senior at Blackstone Academy Charter School, a public charter school in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. I am contacting you today due to my concern about educational equality, specifically Betsy DeVos' ability to commit to practices that ensure that the children who need the most help aren't forgotten about and brushed under the rug. These children are our kids of color, as well as our low-income kids attending urban public schools with limited resources.

Having attended a Pawtucket public school, I can confidently say that there are some genuinely brilliant minds here in this very city, in the areas where somebody like Mrs. DeVos would least expect. Yet it also cannot be denied that the students here begin their journey on ground that is unequal to that of other kids who are not people of color, or are not part of the public school system, etc. These bright young saplings are being crushed before they are given the chance to blossom, and that is a systemic problem that DeVos, given her various shortcomings, will only serve to perpetuate and make worse.

DeVos, given her support of the privatization of public schools and her open disdain towards the LGBTQIA community, has established that she will not improve the experiences of marginalized communities. Her interest is not the betterment of education for people, but the monetization of education to put money in her pockets and the pockets of people like her. DeVos will never spearhead movements that promote equity in education and will continuously disappoint us all throughout her term which will not be defined by deviating from the status quo and creating a system that our troubled but gifted youth can thrive in. In fact, she will do the opposite.

With this in mind I ask that you, Senator Whitehouse, openly speak out against Betsy DeVos, and do everything in your power to keep her out of the Secretary of Education office. I also ask that you continue to remember me and children like me; public school youth who could be incredible if they are just given the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your time!

William.

Now let's hear from Da-naijah, a 10th grader from Central Falls, RI.

Dear Senator Sheldon Whitehouse,

My name is Da-naijah, and I am in 10th grade at Blackstone Academy School which is a public charter school. I live in Central Falls, RI. I'm writing today because I'm concerned about kids being able to afford college, regardless of background. I care about this because I have plenty of family members and friends who go to public school, and they either want or are trying to go to college. I know they will need help with paying for college because they don't come from a very wealthy background. Fair and equal education is so important to me because I think everyone should be treated fairly regardless of how they look because we are humans. I am concerned about Betsy DeVos being nominated for Secretary of Education because she doesn't have any experience with classrooms. Also because she basically doesn't like public schools since she is trying to make public school private and is trying to take resources away from public schools. With that being said, I hope that you do everything you can to help the kids in public school get equal education and fair education as much as private schools do. Please read my email when you can and I would like to thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Da-Naijah

Next is Sara. She also lives in the city of Central Falls.

I am writing today because I'm concerned about the education in the public schools in my city. The students in Central Falls are not given the education they deserve in the environment of Central Falls as of schools in other districts. This is important to me because my younger brother is a disabled boy, and it worries me that he won't continue to get the education he deserves. I'm very concerned about the nominee Betsy DeVos because she has 0 experience in the role of Secretary of Education and there are videos on almost any social media as well as YouTube to prove it and it clearly shows she has no experience and will put our education, or I'll say ''future'' at risk. Please Senator I hope you can do everything you can to prevent her nomination. . . . Thank you!

Sincerely,

Sara

The last one I will read is from Jennyfer, 10th grade at Blackstone Academy Charter School, from Pawtucket.

I'm writing today because I'm concerned about students in public schools not receiving the same and fair education students in charter and private schools have. I care about students in public schools because I want every student to have the privilege of receiving fair and equal education as I have the chance too.

Fair and equal education is so important to me because I'm a Latina and a woman of color, I deserve the same equal and fair education as every other individual. I want my siblings who go to a public school to receive the same education and resources I get.

I am concerned about Betsy DeVos [that she] will take that privilege away from students in public schools.

I hope you do everything you can to prevent Betsy DeVos from taking this privilege away from students in public schools.

Thank you for your time!

There are more letters that I could read, but one point I would like to make is that these are students writing from charter schools. In the flood of opposition from Rhode Island that we have seen to this nominee, it has included teachers, managers, and students in charter schools. There has been a notion developed that this is a battle between public schools and charter schools and that public schools aren't good, but they want to trap children in them; that charter schools are the way out; and that Mrs. DeVos will lead us off into that charter school happy land.

The fact is, it is not that simple. We have great charter schools in Rhode Island, and we have some great public schools in Rhode Island. We have both. The charter school leaders are opposed to her nomination. Why is that? It is in part because the transition from charter to public schools can be done fairly or it can be done unfairly. In all of her work, Mrs. DeVos has shown that she would do it unfairly.

There is an obvious—what demographers would call—selection bias between the kids who turn up in a charter school that they have to select to go into and the kids who are still in the public school that is left behind.

The selection bias is based on all sorts of different reasons. It could be as simple as they have more engaged parents. The parents are interested enough in their education to take the trouble to sign them up for the charter school, and that creates a slightly different demographic than the ones who are left behind. It helps the charter school population, and it makes it easier for the charter school.

Charter schools have authority that public schools don't have with respect to discipline; indeed, the ability to remove children and return them to the public schools. They are able to force students to sign contracts and agreements regarding their behavior. Public schools can't do that. Again, that confers an advantage on the charter school that a public school doesn't have.

Children with disabilities often get immense support through the public school system. When they try to go to the charter school, they see that the supports for the children with disabilities aren't there, and so it doesn't make sense to move to a charter school. The charter schools tend to get a smaller population of children with disabilities. They don't have that additional expense of dealing with and meeting a child wherever their abilities and disabilities are. The public school keeps that expense.

In Rhode Island, we have people flooding into Providence. We teach kids who speak something like 70 original languages in our Providence public schools. A new immigrant is going to go to the public school. That is where they go. It is going to take them time to get settled and to learn about America and to pick up enough language to understand that a charter school exists, to make the choice to move their child there, and by the time they do, fine, if they make the choice. But, again, the public school had to be there for them; again, it is an advantage to the charter school.

It is all great for charter schools, but the idea that they are outperforming public schools and there is no recognition of that selection bias is just unfair to the public schools. It gets worse when you move from the selection bias on students to the funding because the way it often works and the way it works in Rhode Island is that the money follows the student. If you are

in the public school and you are selected for a charter school, then a certain stipend of money goes with you to support that charter school.

The problem is that as that money gets taken out of the public schools' budget, the costs in the public school didn't follow you to the charter school. The money followed you to the charter school, but many of the costs remained. If one child leaves a public school classroom and goes to a charter school, you still have to turn the lights on, you still have to hire the teacher, you still have to heat the building, you have maybe one less pencil and one less piece of paper in the room, but those are tiny costs. The fixed costs remain.

That is a very serious threat to public schools. Anybody who truly supports the charter school movement, as our charter schools do, has to understand, first, the selection bias problem and understand that the testing and accountability has to be fair between public and charter schools and, second, this funding problem—that if you are simply pulling the money out of the public schools into charter schools and the costs are staying behind, what you are doing is crashing the revenues but leaving the expenses of public schools.

The public school students are going to suffer from that. If you don't adjust for it, you are being unfair to the public schools, and you are being unfair to the students. This is a serious enough problem that our Providence City Council is debating the issue right now and, as students move to charter schools, trying to figure out: How do you provide adequate funding so you are not stripping the public schools of what they need to continue to teach the other students? Not only are they serious about trying to figure out this budget equation at the city council level, but Moody's, the service that looks at municipal budgets and determines how sound they are and rates municipalities, has looked at this problem of charter school movement and the remaining costs in public schools and identified it as a fiscal threat to municipalities.

These are both real problems, and the refusal of Mrs. DeVos to grapple with them suggests to our charter school leaders and to me that this is not just an effort to enhance students in being able to go to a good charter school; this is actually an attack on public schools.

There are all sorts of reasons somebody might want to knock down public schools. One is that they simply don't like teachers unions. Teachers unions tend to vote Democratic, let's face it. If you want to cripple teachers unions, destroy the schools they work in. That is a really nasty reason to get into this charter school fight, but it is real, and it is out there.

A second is, if you want to bring for-profit investment into this space, a lot of money gets spent on education. People who could figure out how to make money in this space want to get their noses in and to get a chunk of that money. When they come in, they may or may not do a good job, but they are highly profit motivated. If you are interested in trying to facilitate them and to give them a money making opportunity, then you may well want to damage public schools in order to support their move to for-profits.

This creates a fairly significant problem when you connect it to the next piece of Mrs. DeVos's application. That is conflict of interest. One of the basic elements that we are here to look at in our advice and consent process is conflict of interest. Will the nominee be able to do a fair job? Will she be looking at things fair and square or will she have conflicts of interest that impede the fair exercise of her judgment?

One place that we need to look for conflict of interest is when we have nominees who have run political dark money operations. This is a new thing for us. Not too long ago we swore in a new President—President Barack Obama. When we did, we had ethics rules, government ethics offices, filing requirements, and all of that in place. That was 2008. Then came the Citizens United decision—one of the worst decisions that five Justices on the Supreme Court have ever made, and it opened up the floodgates of dark money.

This nominee is a practitioner of the dark arts of dark money. We know nothing about what she has done, but the conflicts of interest ought to be pretty obvious. If you raised millions of dollars from people in your dark money operation, then there is an indebtedness there that somebody might think could be an appearance of impropriety or conflict.

We should know so that evaluation can be made. Or if you spent dark money in support of certain things, we should know so that we can connect the dots and evaluate the linkages and see whether it is a conflict of interest.

We wrote to Mrs. DeVos about this. The first letter was January 5, 2017. We got an answer, and the answer was spectacularly incomplete and unhelpful. So we wrote a second letter on January 27. I wish to take a minute and read this letter because I think it explains our predicament.

Elisabeth DeVos
Trump-Pence Transition Team
Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC
Dear Mrs. DeVos,
Thank you for your response of January 17, 2017, to our January 5, 2017 letter—

Mr. President, let me ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter at the end of my remarks.

Thank you for your response of January 17, 2017, to our January 5, 2017 letter requesting additional information on your vast political fundraising and spending network. Along with various responses and objections to our request, you produced a series of already public campaign finance reports related to the American Federation for Children Action Fund, a 527 organization, and its various State affiliates. For the reasons that follow, we view your response as, while sizable, nonresponsive.

We requested you provide information about two 501(c)(4) organizations with which you have been associated: the American Federation for Children and the Great Lakes Education Fund. You acknowledged your association with these entities in your disclosures to the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). You also acknowledged in your letter to us that ''[e]ach organization with which [you] have been involved is independent.'' It is not clear what you mean by ''independent'' since you have already acknowledged your association with these organizations. I hope you can appreciate how both fundraising and spending of these organizations (from whom? to whom? in what amounts? your personal role?) might produce conflicts of interests in potential decisions if you are confirmed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Education.

Our concerns are not hypothetical as known contributors to your political organizations have had business before Department of Education. For example:

Vahan Gureghian: In 2010, Gureghian donated $100,000 to the American Federation for Children Action Fund. Mr. Gureghian founded and is the CEO of CSMI LLC, a Pennsylvania charter school management company and helped found the Chester Community Charter School. He has been a major donor in promoting charter schools in Pennsylvania.

I will interrupt reading the letter for a moment to point out how obvious it is that somebody involved in the charter school movement could very easily have business before the Department of Education. Who knows how much he gave? We know of about $100,000, but it could be a lot more. He knows. She knows, but the public won't know. When bids or competitions are up, that is simply not fair.

On to the next one and back to the text of the letter:

J.C. Huizenga: Between 2005 and 2007, Huizenga donated $25,000 to All Children Matter, and in 2010 he donated $30,000 to the American Federation for Children Action Fund. Mr. Huizenga founded the National Heritage Academies, a for-profit charter network that has 80 schools in 9 States and has received over $43 million in federal funding. According to a 2012 review by the Michigan Department of Education of the schools in the ''focus'' category, due to significant gaps in achievement, more than half were managed by National Heritage Academies. It has been reported that Mr. Huizenga said that his involvement with charter schools was due to realizing that ''privatizing public education was not only practical but also desperately needed.''

Again, to step back out from the letter, here is somebody who is in the for-profit charter school business, whose charter schools are more than half of the troubled charter schools reviewed by the Michigan Department of Education and who wants to privatize public education. He is linked with her through the dark money operation. We don't know anything about the dark money side.

David L. Brennan: Brennan donated a total of $200,000 to All Children Matter from 2004 to 2007, prior to AMC's wind down due to campaign finance violations.

This is a series of campaign violations, finance violations, that led to the $5 million fine that neither the entity nor Mrs. DeVos have ever paid.

In 2010, he donated $39,000 to the American Federation for Children Action Fund. He is the founder of White Hat Management LLC, a for-profit charter school management company that operates 15 schools in three states with over 12,000 students. Since 2008, Whitehat and its affiliates have received $3.6 million in federal funds including IDEA funds.

How are we ever going to know if people like this—who are making big, dark money contributions into the dark money operation that she runs—will not be rewarded in a pay-to-play fashion with grants and favors and an advantage in competition at the Department of Education? You would ordinarily evaluate that by knowing that the conflict of interest existed. But because it is dark money, we will never know.

They will know. She will know, but the public will never know. The Senate will never know. The press will never know.

While you may not have a direct financial interest in the for-profit education enterprises headed by those listed above, your political fundraising relationship with them, and perhaps others, could cause a reasonable person concern over your impartiality in matters involving them.

Let me step out of the letter again. Doesn't that make sense? If you were applying for a grant before the Department of Education and your competitor was somebody who had given $1 million to Mrs. DeVos's Action Fund, wouldn't you want to know that? Don't you think the public should know that? If you were to find out later that had taken place, and they were awarded the grant and you were not, wouldn't that rankle you a bit? Wouldn't that suggest to you that perhaps we are not being treated fairly because of that big contribution that was made? But we will never know. We are disabled from doing our constitutional job of reviewing these nominees for conflict of interest when it is dark money that is at stake.

The OGE process does not capture conflicts that arise through political activity. . . .

This is the first transition of Presidents since the Citizens United decision. This is the first one; so there is no history. We have to do it now, but we are not—not for this nominee, not for other nominees. We are leaving a black hole of secrecy around this enormous conflict of interest potential.

The OGE process does not capture conflicts that arise through political activity so it is incumbent upon us to assure the Senate record is complete as to such conflicts and how they will be resolved.

These are just the publically known examples of potential conflicts. Our original request asked you for information to assess potential conflicts with 501(c)(4) organizations that are not required to publicly disclose donor information. Accordingly, we reiterate our request that you provide:

A list of all donors, their total donations, and affiliations, who have contributed to the American Federation for Children 501(c)(4), and the Great Lakes Fund 501(c)(4) since their inception.

A list of donations made by you, members of your family, and foundations or organizations with which you are affiliated, to other 501(c)(4) organizations over the past five years.

That seems like a perfectly reasonable request.

According to the American Federation for Children's IRS Form 990 filed for the year 2014, it spent nearly $1.1 million on political activities, including a $315,000 transfer to the American Federation for Children Action Fund, Wisconsin IE Committee.

I think most people here know how this works, but to make it clear for people listening, many political organizations require that the donors be disclosed. So if you want to engage in the dark money game and hide your political influence-seeking, what you do is you take your money and you give it to a 501(c)(4), a dark money operation. Then they in turn give it to the political action group. That is what happened here. $1.1 million into the American Federation for Children, $315,000 transferred to the American Federation for Children Action Fund in Wisconsin. The only function that provides is to launder the identity of who the donor was. So that all you see is the money emerging from the dark money organization, with no transparency as to who put it in.

Because donations to a 501(c)(4) are anonymous, they effectively launder the identities of donors to the other parts of the political apparatus. But you know, and the donors know, and therein lies the potential for conflict of interest. Additionally, you refused to disclose donations to 501(c)(4) organizations that you, your family and your foundation have made. You explained, ''(t)he information request requested has no bearing on the office to which I have been nominated nor the duties of the Department of Education.''

That was her answer to the first letter. Our letter here continues:

Your donations to 501(c)(4) organizations are indeed relevant to your nomination, just as your donations to political candidates, parties and causes are. One obvious instance would be where groups to which you have made political contributions are before the Department as advocates or grant seekers. Again, you know and the donors know, and therein lies the potential for conflict of interest. Senators have a Constitutional duty to provide advice and consent on Presidential nominees, and understanding the scope and nature of potential conflicts of interest is at the heart of that duty.

I do hope that we can agree on that in this Body: That part of our advice and consent role is to understand the potential for conflicts of interest. If we can't agree on that, then we have a real problem here, because that is the purpose or at least one purpose of what we do.

Your role in raising and distributing ''dark money'' clearly raises the possibility of such conflicts. As a result, we renew our request for information related to your 501(c)(4) organizations as outlined above.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding this request. We look forward to your additional information and disclosures and timely and responsive answers.

Well, as of today, what we have is no answer at all—no answer at all. This is a recurring problem here. This business of dark money not being caught by the rather obsolete, in that respect, government ethics reporting conventions that have been carried forward from the Obama transition before all of this became a problem doesn't just apply to Mrs. DeVos.

Secretary of State Tillerson, as CEO of ExxonMobil, ran a massive dark money operation. ExxonMobil has money all over front groups that deny climate change, all over political groups to try to discourage action on climate change, and a lot of it is dark money. There has been reporting that traces it back to Exxon, but we never know how much because it is dark money, and Mr. Tillerson hasn't told us one thing about it in his hearing.

We will be considering shortly the nomination of Scott Pruitt as the EPA Administrator. Scott Pruitt ran a dark money operation as the attorney general of Oklahoma. Why would an attorney general want to run a dark money operation in the first place? That is a whole separate question—but he did. It was called the Rule of Law Defense Fund, and what it did was it took in money, prevented the donors from having their identities revealed, and then funneled the money publicly to the Republican Attorneys General Association. It was an identity laundering machine for the Republican Attorneys General Association for big donors who didn't want anybody to know who the source was of the money that was being funneled into the Republican Attorneys General Association. That is fine, I guess. I would like to be rid of all of it. We should pass the DISCLOSE Act and clean this mess up. But for sure, when somebody who has run a dark money operation comes before the Senate seeking to be nominated to a Cabinet office, we hold a constitutional duty to protect that office from improper conflicts of interest. Surely, then, their role in the dark money operation should be disclosed.

It only makes sense. But, no, like Mrs. DeVos, absolute stonewall on any information related to the Rule of Law Defense Fund and Mr. Pruitt's dark money operation, a black hole of secrecy and enormous opportunity for conflict, because obviously, given his background and given where the rest of his fundraising went, you can draw a reasonable conclusion about where the dark money came from: Devon Energy, ExxonMobil, American Petroleum Institute, Murray Coal—the usual suspects. That is where a lot of his other money came from. You have to believe it went here. But do we know that? No. He could have taken $1 million from one of those groups and then, as EPA Administrator, be ruling on an application of theirs and we would not know. Please don't anyone tell me that is not a potential conflict of interest. I mean, we can deal with alternate facts around here, but that is just crazy.

We don't know about Mrs. DeVos's dark money. We don't know about Tillerson's dark money. We don't know about Pruitt's dark money. It is as if

there has been an understanding—some secret handshake around here—that nobody will allow dark money information into the nomination process. That is just wrong. That is just wrong. It infects this nomination of Mrs. DeVos. We have to get answers to these questions.

Let me move on to one other point: student college debt. I had a meeting recently. I think all of us had the same experience. From our home States, groups come to visit us and to get our time and to bring our attention to problems that concern them. I think we all get visits from the same groups. We get visits from our community bankers from our home States. We get visits from our credit unions in our home States. We get visits from the automobile dealers in our home States. We get visits from the insurance brokers in our home States. We get visits from the Realtors in our home States.

When the Realtors of Rhode Island came in to visit me the last time, they raised a new issue that I had not heard before from them. The issue that they raised was this: You know, we are starting to have a real problem financing houses for the next generation of home buyers, the young home buyers who are coming into the market and who would ordinarily be buying their starter homes. The problem we are finding with them is that they are so loaded up with college debt that we can't finance the purchase of a home for them.

That is how enormous the student loan debt problem is in this country. It is now preventing so many young people from buying a home that the Realtors have noticed and put it on their problem list as something for us to take action on.

If the Realtors have noticed this, I don't think it is asking too much for a nominee for Secretary of Education to have noticed this. If, in fact, she has noticed this, I don't think it is asking too much for her to have thoughts and a plan, because we are well over $1 trillion in debt for these kids. I think it is about $1.3 trillion now. It has been a known problem for some time. Over and over again, Democrats have tried to find and propose solutions here in the Senate. Over and over again, we have been shot down. But it remains a very considerable issue.

You would think that a new Secretary of Education coming in would want to hit the ground running on this issue. She would have something she wanted to get done to solve it. There would be a plan or an outline. We may not agree with it, it may be something that we have to work together to find a way to get it to the floor, but at least there would be a starting point. All I got was, well, I would be interested in your views on that issue. How is it possible that with over $1 trillion in student debt piled up, with the student debt problem so severe that even Realtors have put it on their to-do list to get something done about it, that a nominee for the Secretary of Education has nothing? Pockets out. Nothing to get started on this problem. Is she ever going to take an interest? I don't know.

But it would seem to me, particularly when you look at where we are in the HELP Committee—our ranking member, Senator MURRAY, is here. Senator MURRAY and Chairman ALEXANDER helped lead us together through the ESSA, the reform of No Child Left Behind, the Every Student Succeeds Act. It passed roaring through the Senate. The House even picked it up and took it. It came out of committee unanimously. States are still working on implementation of it because it freed them up to do a lot more things, and so they have to go through the process of deciding how they are going to take advantage of its new freedoms. So with respect to elementary and secondary education, we are actually in pretty good shape. All we have to do is implement the bipartisan popular law that we passed. So where is the attention going to be? Well, what we have not passed is the Higher Education Reform Act.

So if you know at all that has been going on in education in the Congress, which is not asking too much of a Secretary of Education nominee, you know that we have just implemented a major reform of elementary and secondary education, that our next order of business is higher education, and that an elemental part of that is going to be college debt.

So the fact that this nominee has nothing on that issue and is in the traditional deer-in-the-headlights-nominee mode of, well, I look forward to working with you on that Senator. Oh, yes, I understand that is a serious problem, Senator, but actually I don't have any ideas; I don't have any plans; I don't have any strategy; I have nothing. Let's just work together on it. That is not very convincing to me.

I see the Senator from New Jersey here. The night is going on, so I will yield the floor to him, but I will close by saying that this recurring question about nominees who are involved in dark money operations and then refuse to disclose anything about their dark money operations so that it remains a black hole of secrecy and potential conflict of interest is wrong. It is just wrong.

I know there are forces in this building that love the dark money, and there are huge special interests behind the dark money. There are a lot of people who benefit from the dark money who don't want any light on it ever. But once a nominee has had their name put in for a Cabinet position of the Government of the United States, by God, they ought to disclose their dark money connections because otherwise it is an avenue toward conflict of interest. Where there is conflict of interest, there comes scandal. It is our job to head that off by getting the information before the public so everybody can evaluate it, and we have been knee-capped in that effort by an absolutely positive shutdown from the other side of the aisle on any information about any dark money from any nominee.

They don't have to be nominees. If they don't want to cough up their dark money information, they can turn the papers back in and tell President Trump: Find someone else. I would rather keep my secrets.

But you should not keep your secrets and get the job.

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

JANUARY 27, 2017.

ELISABETH DEVOS,
Trump-Pence Transition Team,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MRS. DEVOS, Thank you for your response of January 17, 2017, to our January 5, 2017 letter requesting additional information on your vast political fundraising and spending network. Along with various responses and objections to our request, you produced a series of already public campaign finance reports related to the American Federation for Children Action Fund, a 527 organization, and its various state affiliates. For the reasons that follow, we view your response as, while sizeable, non-responsive.

We requested you provide information about two 501(c)(4) organizations with which you have been associated: the American Federation for Children and the Great Lakes Education Fund. You acknowledged your association with these entities in your disclosures to the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). You also acknowledged in your letter to us that ''[e]ach organization with which [you] have been involved is independent.'' It is not clear what you mean by ''independent'' since you have already acknowledged your association with these organizations. I hope you can appreciate how both fundraising and spending of these organizations (from whom? to whom? in what amounts? your personal role?) might produce conflicts of interest in potential decisions before you if you are confirmed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Education.

Our concerns are not hypothetical as known contributors to your political organizations have had business before Department of Education. For example:

Vahan Gureghian: In 2010, Gureghian donated $100,000 to the American Federation for Children Action Fund. Mr. Gureghian founded and is the CEO of CSMI LLC, a Pennsylvania charter school management company and helped found the Chester Community Charter School. (he has been a major donor in promoting charter schools in Pennsylvania.

J.C. Huizenga: Between 2005 and 2007, Huizenga donated $25,000 to All Children Matter, and in 2010 he donated $30,000 to the American Federation for Children Action Fund. Mr. Huizenga founded the National Heritage Academies, a for-profit charter network that has 80 schools in 9 states and has received over $43 million in federal funding. According to a 2012 review by the Michigan Department of Education, of the schools in the ''focus'' category, due to significant gaps in achievement, more than half were managed by National Heritage Academies. It has been reported that Mr. Huizenga said that his involvement with charter schools was due to realizing that ''privatizing public education was not only practical but also desperately needed.''

David L. Brennan: Brennan donated a total of $200,000 to All Children Matter, from 2004

to 2007, prior to AMC's wind down due to campaign finance violations. In 2010, he donated $39,000 to the American Federation for Children Action Fund. He is the founder of White Hat Management LLC, a for-profit charter school management company that operates 15 schools in three states with over 12,000 students. Since 2008, White Hat and its affiliates have received $3.6 million in federal funds including IDEA funds.

While you may not have a direct financial interest in the for-profit education enterprises headed by those listed above, your political fundraising relationship with them, and perhaps others, could cause a reasonable person concern over your impartiality in matters involving them. The OGE process does not, capture conflicts that arise through political activity so it is incumbent upon us to assure the Senate record is complete as to such conflicts and how they will be resolved.

These are just the publicly known examples of potential conflicts. Our original request asked you for information to assess potential conflicts with 501(c)(4) organizations that are not required to publicly disclose donor information. Accordingly, we reiterate our request that you provide:

A list of all donors, their total donations, and affiliations, who have contributed to the American Federation for Children 501(c)(4) and the Great Lakes Education Fund 501(c)(4) since their inception.

A list of donations made by you, members of your family, and foundations or organizations with which you are affiliated, to other 501(c)(4) organizations over the past five years.

According to the American Federation for Children's IRS Form 990 filed for the year 2014, it spent nearly $1.1 million on political activities, including a $315,000 transfer to the American Federation for Children Action Fund—Wisconsin IE Committee. Because donations to a 501(c)(4) are anonymous, they effectively launder the identities of donors to the other parts of your political apparatus. But you know, and the donors know, and therein lies the potential for conflict of interest.

Additionally, you refused to disclose donations to 501(c)(4) organizations that you, your family, and your foundation have made. You explained, ''[t]he information requested has no bearing on the office to which I have been nominated nor the duties of the Department of Education.'' Your donations to 501(c)(4) organizations are indeed relevant to your nomination, just as your donations to political candidates, parties, and causes are. One obvious instance would be where groups to which you have made political contributions are before the Department as advocates or grant seekers. Again, you know, and the donors know, and therein lies the potential for conflict of interest. Senators have a Constitutional duty to provide advice and consent on presidential nominees, and understanding the scope and nature of potential conflicts of interest is at the heart of that duty. Your role in raising and distributing ''dark money'' clearly raises the possibility of such conflicts. As a result, we renew our request for information related to your 501(c)(4) organizations as outlined above.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding this request. We look forward to your additional information and disclosures and timely and responsive answers.

Sincerely,

SHELDON WHITEHOUSE.
ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
TAMMY BALDWIN.
BERNARD SANDERS.
AL FRANKEN.
ELIZABETH WARREN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I know the night is going on. I just want to take a moment to express my appreciation to all the staff members and Senators who remain here on the floor. A lot of folks who work here, from the gentleman typing very quickly, all the way to a lot of the folks working, I just want to express my gratitude for the long night, particularly to the pages. It is their second week here, and they suddenly are being forced to grapple with not just school but the long nights of the Senate. I really do respect them and am grateful for their, how should I say, endurance tonight as well.

I rise today, as many of my colleagues have, to speak to the nomination of Betsy DeVos and to speak specifically in opposition to her nomination to serve as Secretary of Education. I have listened to as many of my colleagues' words as I can. I want to say that particularly those on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee have and will and continue to expand upon many of the concerning elements of Mrs. DeVos's record, concerns that I share about her lack of support for critical accountability measures, her lack of familiarity with many of the basic financial aid policies and programs which are so essential for people to have access to higher education, her inability to say that guns should not be in school, and her seeming lack of understanding of many of the fundamental yet critical education policy perspectives that I think are necessary for a job of this magnitude.

I know there has been much said and there will be many more issues brought up of concern to many of the Democrats who spoke tonight, but tonight I would like to focus on an area that is very personal to me and also very personal to millions of Americans, that is essential to this role but one that may not be immediately understood when you talk about a Secretary of Education, but it is absolutely critical to that Department. In fact, I think it is one of the more critical roles of that Department when it comes to fulfilling the ideals of our Nation.

Within the Department of Education is the Office for Civil Rights. That office is profoundly important, but it is one that many people don't have a full understanding of. What I would like to do right now is highlight four areas in which the Office for Civil Rights functions and also talk as it relates to my concerns about and my opposition to Betsy DeVos to serve as Secretary of Education.

First, I would like to talk about what is at stake for children with disabilities and their families and their parents. About 13 to 14 percent of our American school-age children—about 6.5 million kids and young adults in America—are students with a disability.

Here in the United States, I am so proud that we have a deep belief and, in fact, our laws, passed by people of both Houses, both parties, dictate that all children be treated with dignity and respect and that they will get the educational opportunities all children deserve. Indeed, our laws reflect that, but the spirit of America is to see that in this Nation all of our children have unique gifts, all of our children have beauty, and we as a nation collectively believe they all deserve a strong pathway to the fundamental American ideal. They deserve pathways to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that when we say ''justice for all,'' we really do mean all children.

But unfortunately, as the work of the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights demonstrates, the Federal Government is often at odds with some school districts that do not properly enforce protections granted to students with disabilities under the Federal law, again passed by both Houses, passed by both parties. Within our country, thousands of parents do not believe their children are receiving justice in their local school systems for their children with disabilities. They reach out to the Federal Government for help, for relief, for that justice.

Take the example of one child, the case of a 9-year-old child in California whose name is withheld for privacy. This child—and let's call her Jane—is a student like so many others. She has the same dreams and aspirations, has hopes, has promise, and has untapped, unlimited potential.

At the age of 9, this child, ''Jane,'' had been physically restrained in her school more than 92 times during an 11-month period by her school because of her disability. As a part of that restraint, she had been held facedown for a total of 2,200 minutes.

The Office for Civil Rights at the Federal level, the Federal Government, it took them to investigate this case, and they found that the district was in violation of the Federal law and required the school district to stop using these kinds of restraints on students and to actually take the time and energy to invest the resources in training the staff on alternative intervention methods, methods that recognize the dignity of that child and show that we have the potential and power to elevate that child, not to so savagely restrain them.

This was not only unconscionable treatment that the Federal Government intervened in, but clearly it was illegal within the bounds of Federal law. This is not the way that anyone here, anyone in this body with a child with a disability, any of us would want our children to be treated.

If I had a child, I know it is not the way I would want them treated. Frankly, when it comes to the children of America, they are our children. Whether Republican or Democrat, we know that our children, our kids, American children—all children, frankly—deserve better than this kind of physical abuse. It is for these kinds of reasons

that I believe we need to have an aggressive Office for Civil Rights because the story of Jane, of a 9-year-old, is not an anomaly. It is not something that is rare.

Unfortunately, as we are seeing, there are many violations of Federal law that go on when it comes to our children with disabilities. There is tremendous evidence that this kind of abuse still goes on in our country, and there needs to be an ultimate authority that can investigate this abuse and, if necessary, hold those people accountable who are the abusers. And the additional step that the Office for Civil Rights does is it gives advisement, gives instruction on how to make sure the abuse does not happen in the future.

We need our Office for Civil Rights to work with school districts to establish those policies and procedures to prevent that abuse.

When Mrs. DeVos, during her testimony, was given the opportunity to speak to the millions of parents who have real, legitimate concerns about their children with disabilities and the treatment they receive in school—she was given the opportunity to speak to the vital role of the Federal Government in protecting our children and affirming those rights, about the role of the Office for Civil Rights, and instead of taking that opportunity, instead of seizing the moment to talk about what she would be doing to lead, she actually denied a role for the Federal Government. When asked about protecting students with disabilities, she simply said: ''It should be left up to the States.''

Well, I will tell you right now, for that 9-year-old child physically restrained more than 92 times, held facedown for hours, the Federal Government clearly had an important role to play for that mom, for that family, for that child in making sure this kind of atrocity doesn't happen and will not happen for more children.

Secondly, I would like to talk about what is at stake with the Office for Civil Rights as it relates to children who are different, whether that be the color of their skin, whether they wear a hijab to school as an expression of their faith or if they are a minority or, again, a child with a disability.

For example, I have spoken much as a Senator about the school-to-prison pipeline and often how certain categories of children experience different types of discipline for the same act in school just because of how they look.

School disciplinary policies, we know, play a big role in a child's success, and those disciplinary policies are clearly treating different children in different ways. There will be different outcomes for those categories of kids.

We know that children who have out-of-school suspensions often graduate at significantly lower rates, have significantly higher run-ins with the law. I am one who believes we cannot allow discrimination to happen in that manner in our school.

These are the facts. This is the data. Take, for example, the fact that Black students are 3.8 times more likely than their White peers to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions, while students with disabilities actually are twice as likely as those without to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions.

Let me give you the specific case of Tunette Powell, who wrote about her son who is Black. His name is Joah. He was suspended five times in 2014. He was 3 years old.

She said: ''One after another, White mothers confessed the trouble their children had gotten into. Some of the behavior was similar to JJ's,'' her son's. ''Some was much worse. Most startling'' to her was that ''none of their children had been suspended.''

She continues to write. ''After that party,'' where she had heard this from other White parents, ''I read a study reflecting everything I was living. Black children represent 18 percent of preschool enrollment but make up 48 percent of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension, according to the study released by the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights in March,'' she writes.

One of the critical things about the Office for Civil Rights is that they have been proactively collecting data about differences in treatment in our schools.

Now there are many people who actively assert that the role of the Office for Civil Rights has grown too large, that they are poking around in local matters too much, that even collecting such data, as was relied on by this mother, is an intrusion into States' rights. I believe, when it comes to civil rights, when it comes to religious freedom and the treatment of our children, I do not believe that the Office for Civil Rights has grown too large. I believe they are offering critical transparency into the workings of our schools; that they are collecting data that parents and policymakers and civil rights groups can use to see who is being left behind, who might be facing discrimination, who is not receiving justice.

What do we have to be afraid of even on just the collection of data to allow ourselves to have that transparency, to create an environment of accountability?

I worry that if this is not a priority for the next Secretary of Education, then closing the achievement gap, shutting down the school-to-prison pipeline, and empowering all children to have an equal opportunity to learn will be undermined.

These are real problems in our country, and they aren't just going to go away. The Federal Government, especially when they insist upon data transparency, is an active partner in helping us to receive the justice that we deserve and need and pledge allegiance to as a country.

I had hoped during the hearings of Mrs. DeVos that I would hear more; that even if I had the opportunity to talk to the nominee myself, I would have asked for more information around these issues, but I didn't have that opportunity, and in the very rushed hearing, the issue wasn't raised.

I believe, though, that based on the testimony that was given, that the nominee may not see this as a vital function of the Office for Civil Rights and, in fact, may shrink that office and the ongoing proactive investigations that we see right now into such matters.

We know that the school-to-prison pipeline, particularly for young people of color, isn't just real; it is actually pervasive. But during Mrs. DeVos's confirmation hearing, when asked about the Office for Civil Rights within the Department of Education that is responsible for rectifying such unjust situations, she refused to comment. She refused to comment. She refused to commit herself even to directing the Office for Civil Rights to investigate such civil rights violations. I don't understand why it is difficult to even commit the Department to continuing such investigations, but that commitment was denied.

I want to next talk about the serious problem we have in America with sexual assault and sexual violence in schools and on college campuses. Mr. President, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted in their college years, but only 1 percent of assailants on college campuses are arrested, charged, or convicted.

We still know that too many people on college campuses who have been sexually assaulted, who are survivors, are routinely denied justice and are forced to even live or even go to class with their attackers.

The Office for Civil Rights has risen to this challenge and this crisis. They have opened investigations in over 200 schools in America. There is a crisis of campus sexual assault in America, and now the Office for Civil Rights is expanding their work. They have stepped up to that challenge. In addition to that, they have issued guidance to all college campuses on preventing and combating sexual assault.

Mrs. DeVos, again, during her testimony—many of us were hoping she would rise to the occasion, that she would speak to this issue. She was given a chance, given a chance not just to speak to the issue but to talk to the Federal role in meeting this crisis, to acknowledge that this is an issue our Nation must grapple with and must end, but she did not speak to the concerns of parents. She did not speak to the concerns of survivors. She did not speak to America about the urgent need for all of us to be engaged in dealing with the crisis for which there has been silence for too long.

More than this, she did not speak to the role of the Office for Civil Rights, to the expanding role they have been taking, to the expanding investigations on college campuses all across the country, giving no confidence to me or

to others that this will be a role that will continue—in fact, a role that I believe should be expanded.

Again, even when she was specifically asked about upholding guidance within the Department of Education on combating and preventing sexual assault—not asked to commit on the investigations, not asked to commit to expanding the efforts but just asked about upholding the guidance within the Department of Education on combating and preventing sexual assault, she refused to commit to maintaining that guidance.

I would like to speak to another area. Before I do, I do believe in this idea of transparency that my previous colleague talked about when it comes to donations. Some of the charities that have received donations from Mrs. DeVos have a history of fighting against efforts to combat sexual assault, and some of these organizations worked to make it more difficult for sexual assault victims to seek justice.

That brings me to an area in which I have a deep level of concern. I hope Mrs. DeVos will take the opportunity to set the record straight because much has been written even before the hearings involving an area where there is a clear crisis in our country. It is the crisis involving the safety and security of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in America.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth face a stunning level of discrimination inside and outside of schools starting at a very young age. We know that LGBT youth are two times more likely than their heterosexual peers to be physically assaulted in schools. LGBT youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide. According to youth risk behavior surveys, 34 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students were assaulted on school property. More than one-third of LGBT school students were bullied on school property, and 13 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students did not go to school because of concerns for their safety. We know in America that this kind of harassment has no place in our classrooms, no place in our schools, and it has no place anywhere in our country, but it is all too common and all too often unaddressed.

I would like to talk about a parent. Her name is Wendy Walsh. The harassment against Wendy's son Seth began for him in the fourth grade when his classmates suspected he was gay. By the time he reached the seventh grade, the bullying, the verbal and physical abuse in person and online was so bad that he was afraid to walk home from school. This child lived in terror of just going to class. After one bullying incident in a local park, his mom says that 13-year-old Seth came home from school. She talked to him. He asked to borrow a pen from his mom. That conversation will be the last time she would see her son alive. The next time Wendy saw her son Seth, he had hanged himself on a tree in their backyard.

After Seth's death, Wendy, experiencing a level of grief and agony I cannot imagine, decided to file a complaint with the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. When the Office for Civil Rights came in and investigated, they found that Seth's school district was in violation of several Federal laws, that they failed to intervene and stop the bullying and harassment and torment that this child endured from a precious age until his death, that their actions could have potentially prevented the death of one of our children, an American child, a child of beauty and of worth and of dignity and protection.

Wendy went to the Federal Government to the Office for Civil Rights, and they took her concerns seriously. They aggressively investigated. Because of their investigation and because of Wendy's courage in her time of grief, the school district, in violation of Federal law, was required to take steps—though not there to prevent her child's death—they were required to take steps to prevent the kind of harassment, tormenting, and bullying from happening to other students. I am not sure if any of that is solace to a mother who lost her child. I am not sure if it gave her comfort, but I am hopeful that with an active Office for Civil Rights at the Federal Department of Education, at a time where more than 10 percent of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are missing school because of that kind of fear, when one-third are reporting bullying and harassing in person or online, at this level of unconscionable treatment for any child, there is a role for the Federal Government to protect our children. I believe if we take these matters seriously that we can insure that this kind of bullying and harassment will come to an end in America. It is unacceptable in a country this great. There are laws against this, and there are folks who have an obligation to enforce those laws; that is, the Office of Civil Rights.

I believe things will get better, but they will not get better automatically because we hope for them, because we pray for them; they will get better because we are a country that loves our children, and love is not a being verb. It demands action. We see time and time again that children aren't seeing the kind of action where they are, and thank God right now there is a place for parents to go. They can appeal to the Federal Government. The Department of Education, the Office for Civil Rights, has to be led by someone who takes this seriously, who sees the calls for justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth as valid, that sees the crisis, that sees the problem.

It was widely reported, when Mrs. DeVos's nomination was made—widely reported—that her family had given support, significant support, and that she herself gave significant support to discriminatory extremists, dangerous and hateful groups that promote ideas that say a child who is gay is somehow lesser than a child that is not; groups that have supported things like conversion therapy, something that has been resoundingly condemned—dangerous ideas that are hurtful to children. With all of that, with all the articles that have been written, this was a chance for Mrs. DeVos to sit before the American public knowing that these concerns are out there, and it is understandable, even if she doesn't hold them, it is understandable that this was a moment for her to allay the fears of the thousands and thousands of children who are being isolated and hurt by bullies, the people who are assaulting their dignity—these children have suicide rates that are unconscionably high—for the parents mourning their kids, with all that swirl, the hearing was her chance to set the record straight to say: I will uphold the value and dignity of these children, but more than that, I recognize there is a crisis in our country, and I will work with the Office for Civil Rights to do something to address this evil in our country. We have so many kids being hurt and harmed. This was her chance to go beyond just denying that she believed in conversion therapy, to go beyond just words in asserting that she values equality. This was her chance. It should have been understood that because of the record and the charitable donations that there was a degree of suspicion; that there was an understandable degree of legitimate fear that she would not continue the courageous work of the Office for Civil Rights in combating discrimination, harassment, and physical abuse of children across our country. She had the opportunity.

Given the fears and concerns that have been expressed, I would have hoped she would have spoken directly to the work of the Office for Civil Rights to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender teens who are factually experiencing some of the highest levels of hate crimes and violence and bullying of any children in America; that she would have made some affirmation that she would be a champion for their equality, for their dignity, and the Office for Civil Rights would continue its needed work, but she didn't.

I hoped she would stand up and say: We have violence on our college campuses; that right now silence is allowing insidious realities to exist. We have a problem with reporting rates. We have a problem with reports being made and not being taken seriously; that she could have used that as an opportunity to speak against what is happening to an unconscionable level of young women on college campuses—something that we would never want to have happen to any of our daughters; to make a pledge that the Office for Civil Rights would not just continue campus advisories but would fight to hold those college campuses accountable, but she didn't.

For students and families across the country, this may not be a celebrated

part. We may not all know in America that the Department of Education has an Office of Civil Rights, but for so many families with children on college campuses and preschools, grade schools, high schools, the Office for Civil Rights has been the difference—the difference makers between injustice and justice, the difference makers between violence and security, the difference makers between who we say we are as a nation, liberty and justice for all, and experiencing a terrible, awful lie.

I feel compelled to speak out on the vital importance of the Education Secretary, regardless of party, regardless of background. I feel a personal responsibility to assure that if I cast my vote as a Senator, that whoever takes that office will be tireless in the defense of all the rights, privileges, and liberties of our students because I personally stand here today because of the role of the Federal Government in enforcing civil rights laws. I stand here today because of the courageous Federal laws that were put in place—bipartisanship, Republicans and Democrats, great battles on this floor for civil rights and disability rights, for title IX protections for women. I am a product of these kinds of fights over the Federal role when it comes to civil rights. I stand here today because of our collective history. I stand here today because of our dramatic history. I believe in States' rights. It is enshrined in our Constitution, but I cannot ignore the role of the Federal Government. Brown v. Board of Education is perhaps one of the most famous Supreme Court cases affirming the Federal role.

I hung a picture in the front of my office. I come out of my office into where my assistant sits, and the first thing I see on the wall in front of me is a Norman Rockwell painting. There is this young girl in that painting, and she is striding proudly to school, and behind her are racial epithets, a tomato smashed against that wall. She is a little girl—God, her courage—named Ruby Bridges. There are these White men surrounding her walking just as tall, and they are escorting that girl to school. There is clearly hate swirling around. You can look at that picture, and you can feel it. But I don't care what your background or religion is, you look at Norman Rockwell's painting—as I make sure I do every day as I leave my office as a U.S. Senator and I see that picture—and I am reminded that sometimes when there is hate, sometimes when there is violence, sometimes the State doesn't get the job done. Sometimes, the most vulnerable child needs a little help—not just from a loving teacher or a loving parent but from a government that stands behind her and says: You matter.

I can't stand here today without recognizing that this is my history, that this is your history, that it is all of our history, and that our Federal Government has a role to play. I drink deeply from the wells of the freedom and the struggles and the sacrifice. I reap the harvest from Ruby Bridges and her courage.

Our country has come so far. There is so much love, so much more recognition of the dignity of all children. But, come on, we are not there yet. Children are often harassed because they wear a head scarf. I recently heard about a Sikh child wearing a turban who was still harassed; a mother concerned that her kid, no worse than another but seems to get suspended more for the same behavior. As to children with disabilities, parents are still concerned that even though we have affirmed their rights and dignities in law, those laws aren't being carried out like they should.

God, there are young women on a college campus today who rightfully question whether their campus is committed to eradicating sexual violence.

With all of these things going on, we have to have champions here. We have to have people who understand that public education is a right for everyone. Some of the most profound battles in our country have been fought to get equal access for children to school, so that they can stride toward that school door knowing that they will get a quality education, free from bullying, free from harassment, free from the binds of hatred or discrimination that might hold them back in their lives.

Now, I have faith in who we are as a Nation. I know we are a loving country and a good country, but we haven't got it perfect yet. So I stand here today in opposition to this nomination because I believe we need a champion. I wish I had a chance to meet with the nominee. I wish the hearings had been longer. I have never seen them so rushed. But there is too much at stake right now. There are too many problems that still exist.

Sadly, there still is a need for an Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education that is aggressive when it comes to the defense of freedom and our rights. I did not hear such a commitment from this nominee. There are millions of parents who didn't hear her speak to the concerns they have about their gay child, the concerns they have about their child with a disability, their concerns about their children going off to college. We did not hear that commitment. In fact, what we heard was a belief that States can figure it out. There was a failure to commit to even the most basic continuance of the Office of Civil Rights.

I am glad I hung that picture in front of my office. I may not be able to get what I consider an open hearing and answers to these questions because I walk by Ruby Bridges. I feel I owe her a duty to not vote for someone who has been silent on the issues that are so critical to this country being who we say we are.

There is a child, I think, who wonders right now. Somewhere in America, that child is wondering if this country will prove itself true to them. They are probably enduring some things I never had to endure. They are probably worried about their safety. They are probably being put in a situation where they are questioning their worth. They probably feel alone and isolated. My prayer is that this child knows that, even though it isn't perfect and it won't be easy, that child somehow knows that they are not alone, that there will be people fighting for them. I was taught, in the words of a great poet, that there is a dream in this land with its back against the wall; to save the dream for one, we must save it for all.

May the Office of Civil Rights in the years to come remain vigilant, remain strong, and remain expansive in their efforts. I have no confidence it will do so under this person and, therefore, I oppose this nomination. Thank you very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from New Jersey, who has given us such a compelling reason to remind all of us why we are here at almost midnight and why we all intend to keep talking and keep working and keep trying to convince one more Senator to say no to this nominee. He reminds us of the basic principle in this country that our forefathers dreamed of and that they put into our Constitution and that we have fought for, which is that every child should have dignity and every child should have a public education. That is why it is so important that we have someone who leads this agency who shares that conviction. I really want to thank Senator BOOKER for his tremendous words tonight.

As the ranking member on this committee, who has been here throughout the Friday debate and through the 12 hours of debate we have had tonight and we will continue to have up until the vote tomorrow, I have had the opportunity to hear many Senators speak passionately. Senator TESTER was here on Friday. He is from a very rural State, and he was speaking about how important it is to not have funds robbed away from the public education systems in those small little school districts to go to students with vouchers for private schools that don't exist in those rural communities. He talked about the importance of our public schools and our public school institutions in a slightly different way than the Senator from New Jersey did. He talked about how, when his grandparents settled in Montana, instead of being ranchers like those before them, they were wheat farmers. There were cattlemen and wheat farmers who were fighting and at odds with each other in the community, and where they came together was in their schools, because both cattlemen's kids and ranchers' kids were in the same school, and they played basketball together, and it healed the wounds of that community.

The Senator from New Jersey just talked about the Office of Civil Rights and why it is so important—that no matter what we look like or what this country stands for, this country says you have a right to an education. It is in our public schools where kids from all strata and all economic lives, with different backgrounds and different colors and different religions and different thoughts come together and heal our communities.

That is what is at risk with this nominee, and that is why so many Senators on our side have said: To one more Republican Senator, send this nomination back to the President who campaigned saying: Let's heal this Nation; let's bring people together; send us a nominee who actually does that.

Again, I want to thank the Senator from New Jersey and all of the Senators who have been here to speak about how important it is to have a public education.

I wouldn't be in the Senate tonight without a public education. I come from a family of nine, and my father, who was a World War II veteran, got sick when I was in junior high. He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. My mom had been at home taking care of seven kids. She didn't have a job. She didn't have skills. We didn't know what was going to happen to us. But we had a public education system that was there for us. Our country was there for us with a public education system—not with a voucher that said you can go to a private school that we couldn't afford even with it or to be able to get one, but a public education school in our community that gave the education to each one of those kids in my family—all seven of us. Then it allowed us to go on to college with Pell grants and student loans, because our government was there for us, even though my dad was sick and my mom had to stay home and take care of him. We had food stamps for a while, and it was tough, but we made it because this country had a commitment to public education for every student, no matter where you lived or where you came from or what challenges you had at home.

That is why I am here in the Senate, and that is why many of us are here in the Senate. It is why this nominee has sparked such an interest across this country. Like many Senators—I think, like all Senators—my office has been inundated with mail and phone calls and emails and rallies and people saying: Please, stop this nominee, and send us someone who can actually work for all of us, because education is a critical piece for each one of us. It is across the country.

I want to share some of the letters that I have received about this nominee. I have received 48,000 pieces of mail opposed to Mrs. DeVos; the number of pro-DeVos emails and letters is in the teens. I have 48,000 pieces, and they are all personal. These aren't rote emails and letters; these are personal pleas. Why and how? Because these people saw this nominee at this hearing, and their expectations for our education system in this country are high. They want someone leading the Department of Education who knows the issues, who believes in public education. They were appalled at what they heard, and they said no.

Mrs. Mary Ann Whittaker, a woman from Longview, WA, a small rural community:

> Dear Senator Murray,
>
> As an educator of 30 years and a mother who has helped to raise and educate five children, I was shocked and dismayed by the lack of knowledge and depth of understanding that Ms. DeVos has about education. Our education system needs a leader who can be a true leader in this arena, with the background and backbone to do what is in the best interest of the children of this great country—please do everything in your power to make sure this woman is not allowed to gain this position. Thank you—on behalf of thousands of children and educators in the state of Washington!!

I heard from Joel Puchtler of Seattle, WA. He said:

> Please do everything in your power to stop DeVos from becoming Secretary of Education. She is transparently incompetent, and will be destructive to the nation's education system through both intent and ineptitude. Demand a competent appointee from the president-elect.
>
> I am an educator. My wife is an educator. My grandfather was the first Commissioner of Education (so called at the time) under the Johnson administration. He would be thrilled to see a competent woman in this appointment, but categorically horrified at the possibility of DeVos, just as I am.

These are the kinds of reactions I am hearing from my constituents. Why? Because we had this nominee come before our committee. We were allowed 5 minutes each to ask her questions. She has a very complex financial background. We were not allowed to look at those financial background papers before we had a chance to talk to her, so we only had some information. The only thing we could do was ask her questions about what she believed in. Her answers were astounding, and many people saw them, whether it was about IDEA and the ability of children with disabilities in this country to get an education, whether it was about policy debates we are having on education, or what she saw as her drive and her ambition. People in this country want someone who feels passionate about public education, not someone who has used her vast amounts of wealth and her experience to go after what she calls an education system that is incompetent and, in her opinion, needs to go away. Her drive has been to take the funds out of public education and go for private, for-profit education.

I can understand that a woman who is a billionaire with a lot of money invested in companies wanting companies to succeed, but our public education system is not a company. Our public education system is something that is derived from the communities that it is in, from the teachers who are there, from the parents who participate as school board members and teacher volunteers. It is the driving passion of our communities. It is not something people want ripped away, torn apart, or degraded. That is why this nominee has touched a nerve across the country.

I heard from Mrs. Rebecca Blankenship. She lives in Gig Harbor. She said:

> Dear Senator Murray,
>
> I am writing to urge you to oppose the nomination of Betsy DeVos as the Secretary of Education. As a certified teacher who has taught for many years in Public schools and as a parent of two young girls in the Peninsula School District, I find DeVos to be completely unqualified for the position as she has no public school experience, has actively funneled money away from schools in need and lacks the fundamental educational background to make decisions that impact millions of students.
>
> There is no issue more important to me than our education system.

I heard from Ms. Carol Pelander, a former teacher, from Tacoma, WA:

> As a retired public school teacher, who continues to work part-time training new teachers, I am extremely concerned about the potential damage that will be done to public education if Betsy DeVos is confirmed as the Secretary of Education. Our mission as educators includes teaching our kids how to live and work together effectively in a diverse community, and the proposals brought to the table by Ms. DeVos to privatize education will further divide us as a community and significantly reduce our already limited resources. She is not qualified for this important leadership position.

I have been in the Senate for a long time. I have gotten a lot of emails, a lot of phone calls, talked to a lot of constituents, and been to a lot of community meetings. These thousands of letters that we are getting are not form letters. These are letters of people telling stories. They are passionate about their public schools. They have spoken louder about this nominee than any other, saying: This is not what I want for my country.

I have heard from many people in our rural communities who are so concerned about privatizing our public education system because they don't have a private school to send their kids to, even if the voucher that she espouses were enough to put them into one.

I grew up in a rural community. I grew up in the small town of Bothell. Coming in to town, I remember the sign that said 998 people, and I remember the day it said that 1,000 people lived in Bothell. Our schools were the heart and soul of our community. It is where your met your neighbors. It is where you sent your kids to play basketball. Everybody showed up for the football games and the music concerts. It was our community. We loved it, and we owned it. Did we say it was perfect? Did my parents say it was perfect? No. But it was the heart and soul of that community, and they did not want to lose it, just as so many other parents in this country want a Secretary of

Education who wants all kids to have a good education.

I have so many letters here. I have one from Adam Brickett, from McClure Middle School in Seattle. He says:

Thank you for your years of service representing our state. I have never contacted an elected official before—

By the way, many of my letters start with that.

I have never contacted an elected official before but with the changes happening in our country I feel the need to now. I'm writing specifically to you today about the nominee for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos.

As a middle school teacher for Seattle Public Schools I work hard every day to ensure that my students get the best education possible to be successful in their future careers and lives. I am concerned that Ms. DeVos does not have the experience necessary nor the best intentions for our nation's students and schools to be our Secretary of Education. I believe she would put profits and money ahead of students, schools and teachers. I felt this way before her nomination hearing and feel even more strongly after her hearing. I am worried about the damage she could do to an already fragile public education system. I know I am not alone as virtually all the colleagues I have spoken with have expressed similar dismay with her nomination.

Her record of attacking public schools and funneling money to charter and parochial schools with little to no oversight is troubling. Her lack of experience whatsoever with public education is also very disturbing. Not only has she never been an educator or administrator but she has never even attended or enrolled her children in public education.

A high quality, public education is one of the most powerful tools a society has. Please don't allow someone with no experience and who is fundamentally against public education to become the person in charge of it. I respectfully ask you and your colleagues in the senate to do what is right by our nation's students and reject Ms. DeVos as Secretary of Education.

Thank you again for your tireless service to the residents of Washington.

I have 48,000 letters. My staff handed me a pile of them. They are all very similar. They are very heartfelt. They are not just writing a rote letter to us. They watched the hearings, they listened, they care about our public schools, and some of them are Trump supporters. They want this President to support our public schools.

They did not in this past election have a debate about whether we should privatize public schools. We talked about the debate—and I know my candidate didn't win. But in this country, I never heard a debate about taking public education away, about voucherizing our public schools, about having someone who is the top person—the Secretary of Education—espouse positions that are so fundamentally opposed to what I grew up with and obviously to so many parents, teachers, students, family members, superintendents, people involved in schools, and business leaders. They are writing to us now because they saw the same thing we did in this hearing.

Let me read a letter from Trina Whitaker from Mukilteo Schools. She says:

This is my 16th year of being a teacher in our public school system in WA State. I am an advocate of public schools as I feel strongly that all our students deserve the right to free and quality education.

I am opposed to the nomination of Betsy DeVos for the Secretary of Education system. Her past actions and beliefs clearly demonstrate that she is not an advocate for our public schools. It would be so damaging if we move in the direction of privatizing public education.

Please consider opposing the nomination of Betsy DeVos in the best interest for our public school system.

Let me read another letter from Rachel Guim of Seattle. She says:

As a committed public school teacher, I believe in our neighborhood public schools, which open their doors to all children, because unlike Betsy DeVos, I see them work for children and their families every single day. We as a community are being undermined by charters, vouchers, for-profit schools and online schools. Precious tax dollars are being wasted creating a parallel school system (when we're already underfunded and not meeting the legal requirements)! Our democratically governed schools—we, the people you have vowed to represent—need your commitment and support. Choice is a disguise for school privatization, nothing more. Stop the takeover of our democratically governed schools. . . . Do not vote to confirm Betsy DeVos.

And she goes on. Again, there are so many letters from so many people from so many different walks of life, all concerned about having a Secretary of Education who doesn't represent the best values and the best beliefs of our country.

Ms. Amanda Smith, a Kindergarten teacher, wrote to me and said:

Hello,

I am a kindergarten teacher in a public elementary school. I am very concerned about Betsy DeVos' potential nomination as secretary of education. As someone who never attended public school, didn't send her kids to public school, does not have an education degree and has never taught, she hardly seems like a fitting candidate for secretary of education. Can anything be done to stop this nomination?

From Gina McMather, a teacher in Port Townsend, WA:

Dear Patty Murray,

As a recently retired public school teacher, I especially urge you to fight against Betsy DeVos's nomination for education secretary. She is not in any way qualified for the job. Her commitment to charter schools combined with a lack of experience with public schools could destroy our nation's educational system.

Public school teachers provide an education for all of our students. Teachers need more respect and remuneration. We need the very best college graduates to be attracted to the profession. I have known so many dedicated and effective public school teachers during my 25-year career and those of us retiring baby boomers need the best successors possible. They need your support. Don't let this undermine our efforts.

Thank you again for all your [work].

What I hear from people over and over again is that they want somebody leading our public school system in this country who actually believes in public schools, who has the education, the experience, the compassion, the willingness to understand what our forefathers did when they created this country and said: We are going to have a country—a democracy—that has a public education system paid for by all taxpayers to assure that everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, is not denied a public education. They can learn to read and write and communicate and get the skills they need to be successful. They can dream who they want to dream to be and be there.

We do not want to go backward, and we are one vote away from changing where we are on this nomination, sending this back to the President, and asking him to please send us a Secretary of Education who can get the votes in the Senate, who will be an Education Secretary for all people, from all walks of life, from our rural communities and our urban communities, no matter who they are or where they come from. That, I think, is a great possibility and would be a great outcome.

I know that my colleague is on the floor and is ready to speak as well. Again, I have so many letters from so many people—48,000—who have voiced their opinion on this, more than I have ever had with any other nominee in my memory or any other issue in my memory. I thank all those who have written in and spoken out and stood up for public education. It is the foundation of our democracy, and it is our responsibility, our goal to continue that for them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, the Committee on Finance has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 115th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying rules for the Senate Committee on Finance be printed in the RECORD.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

I. RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 1. *Regular Meeting Days.*—The regular meeting day of the committee shall be the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, except that if there be no business before the committee the regular meeting shall be omitted.

Rule 2. *Committee Meetings.*—(a) Except as provided by paragraph 3 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate (relating to special meetings called by a majority of the committee) and subsection (b) of this rule, committee meetings, for the conduct of business, for the purpose of holding hearings, or for any other purpose, shall be called by the chairman after consultation with the ranking minority member. Members will be notified of committee meetings at least 48 hours

in advance, unless the chairman determines that an emergency situation requires a meeting on shorter notice. The notification will include a written agenda together with materials prepared by the staff relating to that agenda. After the agenda for a committee meeting is published and distributed, no nongermane items may be brought up during that meeting unless at least two-thirds of the members present agree to consider those items.

(b) In the absence of the chairman, meetings of the committee may be called by the ranking majority member of the committee who is present, provided authority to call meetings has been delegated to such member by the chairman.

Rule 3. *Presiding Officer*.—(a) The chairman shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the committee except that in his absence the ranking majority member who is present at the meeting shall preside.

(b) Notwithstanding the rule prescribed by subsection (a) any member of the committee may preside over the conduct of a hearing.

Rule 4. *Quorums*.—(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) one-third of the membership of the committee, including not less than one member of the majority party and one member of the minority party, shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.

(b) Notwithstanding the rule prescribed by subsection (a), one member shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

Rule 5. *Reporting of Measures or Recommendations*.—No measure or recommendation shall be reported from the committee unless a majority of the committee is actually present and a majority of those present concur.

Rule 6. *Proxy Voting; Polling*.—(a) Except as provided by paragraph 7(a)(3) of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate (relating to limitation on use of proxy voting to report a measure or matter), members who are unable to be present may have their vote recorded by proxy.

(b) At the discretion of the committee, members who are unable to be present and whose vote has not been cast by proxy may be polled for the purpose of recording their vote on any rollcall taken by the committee.

Rule 7. *Order of Motions*.—When several motions are before the committee dealing with related or overlapping matters, the chairman may specify the order in which the motions shall be voted upon.

Rule 8. *Bringing a Matter to a Vote*.—If the chairman determines that a motion or amendment has been adequately debated, he may call for a vote on such motion or amendment, and the vote shall then be taken, unless the committee votes to continue debate on such motion or amendment, as the case may be. The vote on a motion to continue debate on any motion or amendment shall be taken without debate.

Rule 9. *Public Announcement of Committee Votes*.—Pursuant to paragraph 7(b) of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate (relating to public announcement of votes), the results of rollcall votes taken by the committee on any measure (or amendment thereto) or matter shall be announced publicly not later than the day on which such measure or matter is ordered reported from the committee.

Rule 10. *Subpoenas*.—Witnesses and memoranda, documents, and records may be subpoenaed by the chairman of the committee with the agreement of the ranking minority member or by a majority vote of the committee. Subpoenas for attendance of witnesses and the production of memoranda, documents, and records shall be issued by the chairman, or by any other member of the committee designated by him.

Rule 11. *Nominations*.—In considering a nomination, the committee may conduct an investigation or review of the nominee's experience, qualifications, and suitability, to serve in the position to which he or she has been nominated. To aid in such investigation or review, each nominee may be required to submit a sworn detailed statement including biographical, financial, policy, and other information which the committee may request. The committee may specify which items in such statement are to be received on a confidential basis. Witnesses called to testify on the nomination may be required to testify under oath.

Rule 12. *Open Committee Hearings*.—To the extent required by paragraph 5 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate (relating to limitations on open hearings), each hearing conducted by the committee shall be open to the public.

Rule 13. *Announcement of Hearings*.—The committee shall undertake consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4(a) of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate (relating to public notice of committee hearings) to issue public announcements of hearings it intends to hold at least one week prior to the commencement of such hearings.

Rule 14. *Witnesses at Hearings*.—(a) Each witness who is scheduled to testify at any hearing must submit his written testimony to the staff director not later than noon of the business day immediately before the last business day preceding the day on which he is scheduled to appear. Such written testimony shall be accompanied by a brief summary of the principal points covered in the written testimony. Having submitted his written testimony, the witness shall be allowed not more than ten minutes for oral presentation of his statement.

(b) Witnesses may not read their entire written testimony, but must confine their oral presentation to a summarization of their arguments.

(c) Witnesses shall observe proper standards of dignity, decorum, and propriety while presenting their views to the committee. Any witness who violates this rule shall be dismissed, and his testimony (both oral and written) shall not appear in the record of the hearing.

(d) In scheduling witnesses for hearings, the staff shall attempt to schedule witnesses so as to attain a balance of views early in the hearings. Every member of the committee may designate witnesses who will appear before the committee to testify. To the extent that a witness designated by a member cannot be scheduled to testify during the time set aside for the hearing, a special time will be set aside for the witness to testify if the member designating that witness is available at that time to chair the hearing.

Rule 15. *Audiences*.—Persons admitted into the audience for open hearings of the committee shall conduct themselves with the dignity, decorum, courtesy, and propriety traditionally observed by the Senate. Demonstrations of approval or disapproval of any statement or act by any member or witness are not allowed. Persons creating confusion or distractions or otherwise disrupting the orderly proceeding of the hearing shall be expelled from the hearing.

Rule 16. *Broadcasting of Hearings*.—(a) Broadcasting of open hearings by television or radio coverage shall be allowed upon approval by the chairman of a request filed with the staff director not later than noon of the day before the day on which such coverage is desired.

(b) If such approval is granted, broadcasting coverage of the hearing shall be conducted unobtrusively and in accordance with the standards of dignity, propriety, courtesy, and decorum traditionally observed by the Senate.

(c) Equipment necessary for coverage by television and radio media shall not be installed in, or removed from, the hearing room while the committee is in session.

(d) Additional lighting may be installed in the hearing room by the media in order to raise the ambient lighting level to the lowest level necessary to provide adequate television coverage of the hearing at the then current state of the art of television coverage.

(e) The additional lighting authorized by subsection (d) of this rule shall not be directed into the eyes of any members of the committee or of any witness, and at the request of any such member or witness, offending lighting shall be extinguished.

Rule 17. *Subcommittees*.—(a) The chairman, subject to the approval of the committee, shall appoint legislative subcommittees. The ranking minority member shall recommend to the chairman appointment of minority members to the subcommittees. All legislation shall be kept on the full committee calendar unless a majority of the members present and voting agree to refer specific legislation to an appropriate subcommittee.

(b) The chairman may limit the period during which House-passed legislation referred to a subcommittee under paragraph (a) will remain in that subcommittee. At the end of that period, the legislation will be restored to the full committee calendar. The period referred to in the preceding sentences should be 6 weeks, but may be extended in the event that adjournment or a long recess is imminent.

(c) All decisions of the chairman are subject to approval or modification by a majority vote of the committee.

(d) The full committee may at any time by majority vote of those members present discharge a subcommittee from further consideration of a specific piece of legislation.

(e) The chairman and ranking minority members shall serve as nonvoting *ex officio* members of the subcommittees on which they do not serve as voting members.

(f) Any member of the committee may attend hearings held by any subcommittee and question witnesses testifying before that subcommittee.

(g) Subcommittee meeting times shall be coordinated by the staff director to ensure that—

(1) no subcommittee meeting will be held when the committee is in executive session, except by unanimous consent;

(2) no more than one subcommittee will meet when the full committee is holding hearings; and

(3) not more than two subcommittees will meet at the same time.

Notwithstanding paragraphs (2) and (3), a subcommittee may meet when the full committee is holding hearings and two subcommittees may meet at the same time only upon the approval of the chairman and the ranking minority member of the committee and subcommittees involved.

(h) All nominations shall be considered by the full committee.

(i) The chairman will attempt to schedule reasonably frequent meetings of the full committee to permit consideration of legislation reported favorably to the committee by the subcommittees.

Rule 18. *Transcripts of Committee Meetings*.—An accurate record shall be kept of all markups of the committee, whether they be open or closed to the public. A transcript, marked as ''uncorrected,'' shall be available for inspection by Members of the Senate, or members of the committee together with their staffs, at any time. Not later than 21 business days after the meeting occurs, the committee shall make publicly available through the Internet—

(a) a video recording;

(b) an audio recording; or

(c) after all members of the committee have had a reasonable opportunity to correct their remarks for grammatical errors or to accurately reflect statements, a corrected transcript.

Notwithstanding the above, in the case of the record of an executive session of the committee that is closed to the public pursuant to Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the record shall not be published or made public in any way except by majority vote of the committee after all members of the committee have had a reasonable opportunity to correct their remarks for grammatical errors or to accurately reflect statements made.

Rule 19. *Amendment of Rules.*—The foregoing rules may be added to, modified, amended, or suspended at any time.

II. EXCERPTS FROM THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE RELATING TO STANDING COMMITTEES

RULE XXV

STANDING COMMITTEES

1. The following standing committees shall be appointed at the commencement of each Congress, and shall continue and have the power to act until their successors are appointed, with leave to report by bill or otherwise on matters within their respective jurisdictions:

* * *

(i) Committee on Finance, to which committee shall be referred all proposed legislation, messages, petitions, memorials, and other matters relating to the following subjects:

1. Bonded debt of the United States, except as provided in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

2. Customs, collection districts, and ports of entry and delivery.

3. Deposit of public moneys.

4. General revenue sharing.

5. Health programs under the Social Security Act and health programs financed by a specific tax or trust fund.

6. National social security.

7. Reciprocal trade agreements.

8. Revenue measures generally, except as provided in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

9. Revenue measures relating to the insular possessions.

10. Tariffs and import quotas, and matters related thereto.

11. Transportation of dutiable goods.

* * *

RULE XXVI

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

* * *

2. Each committee shall adopt rules (not inconsistent with the Rules of the Senate) governing the procedure of such committee. The rules of each committee shall be published in the Congressional Record not later than March 1 of the first year of each Congress, except that if any such committee is established on or after February 1 of a year, the rules of that committee during the year of establishment shall be published in the Congressional Record not later than sixty days after such establishment. Any amendment to the rules of a committee shall not take effect until the amendment is published in the Congressional Record.

* * *

5. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of the rules, when the Senate is in session, no committee of the Senate or any subcommittee thereof may meet, without special leave, after the conclusion of the first two hours after the meeting of the Senate commenced and in no case after two o'clock post meridian unless consent therefor has been obtained from the majority leader and the minority leader (or in the event of the absence of either of such leaders, from his designee). The prohibition contained in the preceding sentence shall not apply to the Committee on Appropriations or the Committee on the Budget. The majority leader or his designee shall announce to the Senate whenever consent has been given under this subparagraph and shall state the time and place of such meeting. The right to make such announcement of consent shall have the same priority as the filing of a cloture motion.

(b) Each meeting of a committee, or any subcommittee thereof, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by a committee or a subcommittee thereof on the same subject for a period of no more than fourteen calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated in clauses (1) through (6) would require the meeting to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote in open session by a majority of the members of the committee or subcommittee when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings—

(1) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(2) will relate solely to matters of committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(3) will tend to charge an individual with crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy, or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(4) will disclose the identity of any informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interests of effective law enforcement;

(5) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets of financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if—

(A) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(B) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(6) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government regulations.

(c) Whenever any hearing conducted by any such committee or subcommittee is open to the public, that hearing may be broadcast by radio or television, or both, under such rules as the committee or subcommittee may adopt.

(d) Whenever disorder arises during a committee meeting that is open to the public, or any demonstration of approval or disapproval is indulged in by any person in attendance at any such meeting, it shall be the duty of the Chair to enforce order on his own initiative and without any point of order being made by a Senator. When the Chair finds it necessary to maintain order, he shall have the power to clear the room, and the committee may act in closed session for so long as there is doubt of the assurance of order.

(e) Each committee shall prepare and keep a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to fully record the proceeding of each meeting or conference whether or not such meeting or any part thereof is closed under this paragraph, unless a majority of its members vote to forgo such a record.

* * *

H.J. RES. 41

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I strongly opposed the Republicans' efforts to gut the SEC rule regarding transparency for oil and mining industry payments to foreign governments.

I hope the American people are paying attention. One of the first substantive legislative matters that Republicans are trying to send to the President is a measure that makes it easier for oil companies to corrupt foreign governments and undermine U.S. foreign policy goals.

This bill seeks to unravel human rights and transparency protections implemented by the Obama administration. The rule requires oil and mining companies to tell the SEC how much money they pay to foreign governments to extract natural resources. It is a simple, common-sense requirement to improve transparency and combat corruption in some of the most corrupt and dysfunctional countries in the world. In fact, dozens of other countries require that their companies report payments to foreign governments.

Time and again, we have seen oil and mining companies go into other nations that are poor and lack basic democratic institutions and pay huge sums of money to autocratic corrupt regimes. According to a recent article in Foreign Affairs, when Rex Tillerson led Exxon as its chairman and CEO, Exxon ''cut lucrative deals with dictators in oil-rich pockets of Africa, extending the lifespans of autocratic regimes in places such as Angola, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Equatorial Guinea.'' Thanks to their countries' oil reserves, the leaders of these poor countries have been able to remain in power for decades.

Yet the rule is dogged by many myths and falsehoods spurred by the fossil fuels lobby. More than $200 million was spent by opponents of the rule—the oil and gas industry and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—on political lobbying and campaign contributions. According to a report in POLITICO, when our newly confirmed Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, was the CEO of Exxon Mobil, he personally lobbied vigorously against transparency and disclosure, saying that if other people knew how much his company paid foreign governments, it would be bad for his business. In fact, Rex Tillerson said that there was one country in particular where this rule would be hard for Exxon—Russia.

Another Republican myth is that U.S. companies are at a competitive

disadvantage because non-U.S. companies do not have to make the same disclosures and the rule applies only to public companies—not true. The U.S. law covers all oil, gas, and mining companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges—not simply companies based in the United States. This includes BP, Shell, and Total, as well as leading state-owned oil companies from China and Brazil, such as PetroChina and Petrobras.

Republicans also claim that this rule increases prices at the pump—again, not true. Corruption costs oil and mining companies millions of dollars every year from instability and fragility in resource-rich countries, which contributes to increased operating risks, waste, inefficiency, and delays.

When leaders tap a country's oil revenues to keep themselves in power, it is called petro-authoritarianism. When the United States allows companies to secretly pay authoritarian governments for rights to their petroleum and mineral resources, we become implicit in the resulting human poverty and rights abuses. We cannot let that stand, which is why we have this SEC reporting requirement.

I urged my colleagues to vote no on this effort to kill the important protections provided by the SEC rule regarding transparency for extractive industry payments to foreign governments. We should be putting human rights interests ahead of the financial interests of a few powerful oil companies. That is why I urged my colleagues to vote against putting the profits of industry above the interests of our Nation and lesser developed nations all over the world.

CONFIRMATION OF MICHAEL POMPEO

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, the Senate recently voted to confirm Representative Mike Pompeo to be the Director of the CIA. While I do not agree with many of the views that Congressman Pompeo has expressed in the past, I have worked with him on legislation, and I know that he is a dedicated and experienced public servant. I believe he is qualified to lead the CIA at a critical time in our country's history. I was also extremely concerned about the nature of the President's press conference in front of the CIA memorial wall that honors those who lost their lives while in service. This press conference occurred before Representative Pompeo was confirmed by the Senate, and it provided an additional reason for putting seasoned leadership at the Agency without delay.

Like many of my colleagues, I was concerned about Congressman Pompeo's past views on torture. That is why I personally asked Representative Pompeo about the use of torture, and as he did at his hearing, he stated unequivocally that he would not use illegal enhanced interrogation techniques at the CIA. Senator FEINSTEIN and I have requested and received written confirmation to reinforce the commitment he made at his hearing to uphold laws that ban torture. As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I intend to exercise robust oversight to ensure that these laws are upheld.

I am opposed to torture. In 2007, I voted against Michael Mukasey for Attorney General because of his views on waterboarding. In 2015, I voted to strengthen the legal prohibition on torture by limiting interrogation techniques and requiring that the Red Cross has access to all detainees. I have also introduced bipartisan legislation, the Torture Victims Relief Act, to support torture treatment programs in the United States and abroad to help torture survivors recover from their trauma and rebuild productive lives.

The 1984 United Nations Convention Against Torture has been ratified by 157 countries, including the United States. The world continues to look to America for its steadfast leadership and we must continue to fight against the practice of torture and other cruel and inhuman treatments.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM ''BILL'' CANTY

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and commend William ''Bill'' Canty of Oxford, MS, on the occasion of his retirement after a distinguished 27-year career as a staff member for the U.S. Senate.

Bill has earned my respect and that of the thousands of people in north Mississippi who know him as a dedicated field representative on my staff.

I am confident that the tenacity, loyalty, and work ethic that characterized Bill's work for me were forged early in life with the lessons he learned as an outstanding student athlete.

Bill grew up in the shipbuilding town of Pascagoula, MS, where he earned letters in basketball, baseball, and football. As a college freshman at Furman University, he started at quarterback for the Paladins and set school records throughout his college football career, completing 215 passes for 2,460 yards and 24 touchdowns. He was elected unanimously in 1988 for induction into the Furman University Hall of Fame.

Bill played professional football for the Toronto Argonauts, a Canadian Football League organization, but was soon called to serve his country. After serving as an Army combat training officer, he began an extensive coaching career during which he earned a reputation for developing quarterbacks and strong passing offenses—first at Furman, then at Florida State University and the University of New Mexico.

In 1978, Bill returned home to Mississippi to coach at the University of Mississippi. He is one of the only coaches in the SEC to ever have been both the offensive and defensive coordinator in back to back seasons. Bill left coaching in 1987 and settled in Oxford.

Following his coaching career, Bill turned his leadership talents in a new direction. Fellow Pascagoula native and former U.S. Senator Trent Lott first hired Bill as a field representative, and I was fortunate to bring him on my staff in 2008.

Bill has served my office and the people of Mississippi honorably and with great dedication.

I am deeply grateful for having the benefit of his excellent service to our State and Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO TOM BURAK

• Ms. HASSAN. Mr President, today I wish to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Tom Burack and honoring his more than a decade of service to the State of New Hampshire. As commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, he has been a strong advocate for our State and our environment.

Our economic vitality as a State hinges on our pristine lakes and rivers, our clean air, and our strong protection of these natural resources. Under Tom's leadership, the department has focused on combating the serious challenge of climate change and ensuring that New Hampshire citizens and visitors have access to clean air, water, and land while providing excellent customer service—all of which is critical to our State's economy and future success. This includes the development of the 2009 Climate Action Plan, New Hampshire's entrance into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, RGGI, the creation of the MtBE Remediation Bureau, and the formation of the State Government Energy Committee, among many others.

Tom has also led and facilitated a voluntary, informal network of State agency commissioners for 8 years, helping to bring agencies together to improve the operations of and drive innovation and efficiency in State government. He is a leader on the regional and national levels as well, including envisioning and coleading an overall modernization of how environmental protection services are delivered nationwide through a joint State-tribal-Federal initiative known as E-Enterprise for the Environment. All of these actions and the many others that are too numerous to list have helped to strengthen our environment, protect public health, and combat climate change.

New Hampshire's natural resources and scenic beauty must be protected, and doing so requires strong collaboration. As commissioner, Tom embodied New Hampshire's ''all-hands-on-deck'' spirit, working collaboratively with our neighboring States on issues like RGGI, local communities on issues like water quality and contamination, other State agencies on issues like State government energy efficiency, and partners at the Federal level.

New Hampshire and our country have benefitted enormously from Tom's vision, energy, and leadership, and I thank Tom for his tireless dedication to protecting our environment and his immense contributions that have helped make New Hampshire a special place to live, work, visit, and raise a family.●

REMEMBERING BOB BOALDIN

● Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, throughout his life, Bob Boaldin was dedicated to serving God, his family, his friends, and his community in Elkhart. As a stalwart figure of southwest Kansas who worked in the communication industry for many years, he was in many ways responsible for connecting the Big First to the world.

Bob was born on November 3, 1939, in Oklahoma City. He grew up in Elkhart, KS, and graduated from the local high school. While attending one semester at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, he met his wife of 58 years, Dian Whitecotton. He and Dian raised two sons and a daughter: Travis, Trenton, and Roxanna. Bob was a wheat and milo farmer who worked part time at the Elkhart Phone Company until 1964, when he began his lifelong career in communications.

In the 1970s, he purchased Elkhart Telephone Company and became the owner of Elkhart TV cable system. He also served as president of the State of Kansas Telephone Association and on the board of directors at the OPASTCO, Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telephone Companies. He was a founding member of the organization's Foundation for Rural Education and Development, which continues to help graduating high school seniors succeed by offering them academic scholarships. In 1986, Bob also began serving on the board of the U.S. Telecom Association.

His service to Elkhart and to Morton County will not be forgotten—he was a city councilman, mayor, and county commissioner for many years. He also worked as a local EMT for 13 years. He was an avid supporter of the county fair and always sought opportunities to serve his city and his State.

Bob's leadership abilities and desire to help his community led him to a number of roles advising members of the local and State levels of government, joining the Kansas Supreme Court Blue Ribbon Commission, helping to found WEKANDO, Western Kansas County Commissioners Organization, participating in the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council, and serving as president of the State of Kansas Legislative Policy Group.

He loved his cow-calf operation and worked hard to keep his cattle well fed. He was an active member of the Hillcrest Baptist Church community and gave his time during his younger years as a Sunday School teacher, nursery worker, school superintendent, and deacon.

Bob was an exemplary neighbor, friend, and leader. His lifelong efforts to improve the quality of life for those around him will impact generations of Kansans to come. I am thankful for my friendship with him and for his service to so many. Our prayers are with his wife and family. May he rest in peace.●

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communication was laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and was referred as indicated:

EC–668. A communication from the Acting Director, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Direct Investment Surveys: BE–13, Survey of New Foreign Direct Investment in the United States, and Changes to Private Fund Reporting on Direct Investment Surveys'' (RIN0691–AA85) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BURR, from the Select Committee on Intelligence, without amendment:

S. Res. 48. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Select Committee on Intelligence.

By Mr. HATCH, from the Committee on Finance, without amendment:

S. Res. 52. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Finance.

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. ISAKSON (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 306. A bill to provide for a biennial budget process and a biennial appropriations process and to enhance oversight and the performance of the Federal Government; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. COONS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 307. A bill to enhance the database of emergency response capabilities of the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Armed Services.

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

S. 308. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to require applicable manufacturers to include information regarding payments made to physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other advance practice nurses in transparency reports submitted under section 1128G of such Act; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 309. A bill to establish a Community-Based Institutional Special Needs Plan demonstration program to target home and community-based care to eligible Medicare beneficiaries; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 310. A bill to clarify that nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity may accept donated mortgage appraisals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 311. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants for training and support services for families and caregivers of people living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 312. A bill to redesignate the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site as the ''Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park'' , and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON):

S. 313. A bill to clarify that volunteers at a children's consignment event are not employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 314. A bill to enhance consumer rights relating to consumer report disputes by requiring provision of documentation provided by consumers; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. KING, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 315. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Army to place in Arlington National Cemetery a monument honoring the helicopter pilots and crewmembers who were killed while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 316. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to recognize the authority of States to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. MCCAIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. DAINES, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 317. A bill to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 318. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 319. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health

conditions relating to exposure to burn pits; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 320. A bill to require the Federal Aviation Administration to establish annual performance objectives and to hold the Chief NextGen Officer accountable for meeting such objectives; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BURR:

S. Res. 48. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Select Committee on Intelligence; from the Select Committee on Intelligence; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 49. A resolution declaring that achieving the primary goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease of the Department of Health and Human Services to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025 is an urgent national priority; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. Res. 50. A resolution reaffirming a strong commitment to the United States-Australia alliance relationship; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. Res. 51. A resolution recognizing the contributions of Federal employees and pledging to oppose efforts to reduce Federal workforce pay and benefits, eliminate civil service employment protections, undermine collective bargaining, and increase the use of non-Federal contractors for inherently governmental activities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. Res. 52. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Finance; from the Committee on Finance; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 26

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 26, a bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require the disclosure of certain tax returns by Presidents and certain candidates for the office of the President, and for other purposes.

S. 120

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 120, a bill to provide for the creation of the Missing Armed Forces Personnel Records Collection at the National Archives, to require the expeditious public transmission to the Archivist and public disclosure of Missing Armed Forces Personnel records, and for other purposes.

S. 223

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 223, 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. 224

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 224, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

S. 240

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 240, a bill to nullify the effect of the recent executive order that temporarily restricted individuals from certain countries from entering the United States.

S. 247

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 247, a bill to provide an incentive for businesses to bring jobs back to America.

S. 272

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 272, a bill to enhance the security operations of the Transportation Security Administration and the stability of the transportation security workforce by applying a unified personnel system under title 5, United States Code, to employees of the Transportation Security Administration who are responsible for screening passengers and property, and for other purposes.

S. 274

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 274, a bill to nullify the effect of the recent executive order that temporarily restricted individuals from certain countries from entering the United States.

S. 291

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 291, a bill to amend the National Security Act of 1947 to modify the requirements for membership in the National Security Council and cabinet-level policy forum, and for other purposes.

S. 301

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 301, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against providers of health services that are not involved in abortion.

S.J. RES. 1

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 1, a joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

S.J. RES. 2

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 2, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

S.J. RES. 19

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to prepaid accounts under the Electronic Fund Transfer Act and the Truth in Lending Act.

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 38

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 38, a resolution recognizing January 30, 2017, as ''Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 320. A bill to require the Federal Aviation Administration to establish annual performance objectives and to hold the Chief NextGen Officer accountable for meeting such objectives; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, in 2003, Congress mandated the Next Generation Air Transportation System known as NextGen, transitioning our radar-based system with radio communication to a satellite-based one, to increase safety and efficiency. NextGen deployment has been bogged with delays and cost overruns, highlighted by Government Accountability Office reports. Final implementation is to be completed by 2025. This legislation

would simply create measurable annual performance goals and hold Federal officials accountable to meeting these goals through the remainder of implementation.

I want to thank Senator Booker for being an original cosponsor of this bill, and I ask my other Senate colleagues to join us in support of this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

S. 320

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 ''NextGen Accountability Act''.

SEC. 2. NEXTGEN ANNUAL PERFORMANCE GOALS.

Section 214 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–95; 49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (c) the following:

''(d) ANNUAL PERFORMANCE GOALS.—The Administrator shall establish annual NextGen performance goals for each of the performance metrics set forth in subsection (a) to meet the performance metric baselines identified under subsection (b). Such goals shall be established in consultation with public and private NextGen stakeholders, including the NextGen Advisory Committee.''.

SEC. 3. NEXTGEN METRICS REPORT.

Section 710(e)(2) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (Public Law 108–176; 49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) a description of the progress made in meeting the annual NextGen performance goals relative to the performance metrics established under section 214 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–95; 49 U.S.C. 40101 note).''.

SEC. 4. CHIEF NEXTGEN OFFICER.

Section 106(s) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(B), by adding at the end the following: ''In evaluating the performance of the Chief NextGen Officer for the purpose of awarding a bonus under this subparagraph, the Administrator shall consider the progress toward meeting the NextGen performance goals established pursuant to section 214(d) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–95; 49 U.S.C. 40101 note)''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end the following: ''The annual performance goals set forth in the agreement shall include quantifiable NextGen airspace performance objectives regarding efficiency, productivity, capacity, and safety, which shall be established in consultation with public and private NextGen stakeholders, including the NextGen Advisory Committee.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 48—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BURR submitted the following resolution; from the Select Committee on Intelligence; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 48

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under S. Res. 400, agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress), as amended by S. Res. 445, agreed to October 9, 2004 (108th Congress), in accordance with its jurisdiction under sections 3(a) and 17 of such S. Res. 400, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by section 5 of such S. Res. 400, the Select Committee on Intelligence (in this resolution referred to as the ''committee'') is authorized from March 1, 2017, through February 28, 2019, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, under this resolution shall not exceed $3,217,448, of which amount not to exceed $10,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, under this section shall not exceed $5,515,626, of which amount not to exceed $17,144 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, under this resolution shall not exceed $2,298,177, of which amount not to exceed $7,143.00 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

SEC. 3. REPORTING LEGISLATION.

The committee shall report its findings, together with such recommendations for legislation as it deems advisable, to the Senate at the earliest practicable date, but not later than February 28, 2019.

SEC. 4. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for ''Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations'' of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017;

(2) for the period October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019.

SENATE RESOLUTION 49—DECLARING THAT ACHIEVING THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE NATIONAL PLAN TO ADDRESS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO PREVENT AND EFFECTIVELY TREAT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE BY 2025 IS AN URGENT NATIONAL PRIORITY

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 49

Whereas the number of individuals in the United States with Alzheimer's and related dementias (referred to in this preamble as ''Alzheimer's'') is as high as 5,400,000, which is more than double the number in 1980;

Whereas based on the trajectory of Alzheimer's, as many as 16,000,000 individuals in the United States may have Alzheimer's by 2050;

Whereas the increasing prevalence of Alzheimer's and other dementias is a global health crisis that afflicts an estimated 46,780,000 individuals worldwide as of August, 2015 and may afflict more than 131,000,000 individuals by 2050;

Whereas Alzheimer's is a leading cause of death in the United States with data indicating that more than 500,000 deaths each year are attributable to the disease;

Whereas Alzheimer's is the only disease among the top 10 causes of death in the United States without an effective means to prevent, slow, or stop;

Whereas Alzheimer's places an enormous financial strain on families, the health care system, and State and Federal budgets;

Whereas the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) and the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) are estimated to bear more than two-thirds of the total costs of this care in 2016;

Whereas a RAND Corporation study published in 2013 and commissioned by the National Institute on Aging found that Alzheimer's is the costliest disease in the United States, costing more than cancer and heart disease;

Whereas in 2015, an estimated 15,800,000 family members and friends of individuals with Alzheimer's provided those individuals with 18,100,000,000 hours of unpaid care, an amount valued at more than $221,300,000;

Whereas Alzheimer's disease has a disproportionate impact on many populations including women, African Americans, and Latinos;

Whereas the global cost of Alzheimer's exceeds $818,000,000,000 each year, an amount equal to approximately 1 percent of the world's gross domestic product;

Whereas in December 2013, the G-8 nations met and adopted a political declaration supporting the goal of a cure or disease-modifying therapy for dementia by 2025 as well as collectively and significantly increasing resources committed to dementia research;

Whereas Alzheimer's takes an emotional and physical toll on caregivers that results in a higher incidence of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and depression among caregivers;

Whereas the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease of the Department of Health and Human Services makes recommendations relating to family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's to provide care while maintaining personal health and well-being;

Whereas the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease supports informal caregivers by—

(1) identifying the support needs of caregivers;

(2) developing and disseminating modes for intervention;

(3) providing information that caregivers need, particularly in crisis situations; and

(4) assisting caregivers in maintaining personal health and well-being;

Whereas a strong and sustained research effort is the best tool to slow the progression and ultimately prevent the onset of Alzheimer's;

Whereas while the cost to the Medicare and Medicaid programs of caring for individuals with Alzheimer's is estimated to be $160,000,000,000 in 2016, the United States, through the National Institutes of Health, will spend about $991,000,000 on Alzheimer's research in 2016;

Whereas the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services created by the National Alzheimer's Project Act (42 U.S.C. 11225) has testified before Congress that the United States must devote at least $2,000,000,000 each year to Alzheimer's research to reach the goal of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's by 2025; and

Whereas the public members of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services unanimously agree with the testimony of the Chairman regarding the amount of money required to reach the goal for 2025: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) is committed to strengthening the quality of care and expanding support for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (referred to in this resolution as ''Alzheimer's'') and family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's;

(2) declares that achieving the primary goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's by 2025 is an urgent national priority;

(3) recognizes that bold action and considerable increases in funding are necessary to meet that goal;

(4) encourages greater collaboration between the United States and other global governments, particularly the G-7 nations, to advance a global Alzheimer's and dementia research plan;

(5) supports innovative public-private partnership and the pursuit of innovative financing tools, incentives and other mechanisms to accelerate the pursuit of disease-modifying therapies; and

(6) strives to—

(A) double the amount of funding the United States spends on Alzheimer's research in fiscal year 2017; and

(B) develop a plan for fiscal years 2018 through 2021 to meet the target of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services for the United States to spend $2,000,000,000 each year on Alzheimer's research.

SENATE RESOLUTION 50—REAFFIRMING A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE UNITED STATES-AUSTRALIA ALLIANCE RELATIONSHIP

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 50

Whereas Australia is a fellow democracy and vital partner of the United States;

Whereas the United States and Australia share core values as well as deep cultural, security, and people-to-people ties;

Whereas Australia has been a treaty ally of the United States since the signing of the Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) Treaty in 1951;

Whereas an alliance bond is a sacred vow of friendship and trust, and Australia has always been a faithful and reliable partner to the United States;

Whereas United States-Australia defense and intelligence ties and cooperation are exceptionally close, and Australian forces have fought together with the United States military in every significant conflict since World War I and over 100,000 Australian service members have paid the highest price in the course of their service alongside United States allies;

Whereas Australia was one of the first countries to commit troops to United States military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq after September 11, 2001;

Whereas Australia is a close partner of the United States, sharing information essential to the defense and security of the two countries, including through the Five Eyes intelligence community;

Whereas the United States-Australia alliance is an anchor for peace and stability in the Indo-Asia Pacific region and around the world;

Whereas, United States and Australia signed the U.S.-Australia Force Posture Agreement at the annual Australia-United States Ministerial consultations (AUSMIN) in August 2014, paving the way for even closer defense and security cooperation;

Whereas, on October 2015, United States and Australia defense agencies signed a Joint Statement on Defense Cooperation to serve as a guide for future cooperation;

Whereas Australia has welcomed proposals to reposition United States Marines to maintain Marine forces in the western Pacific and improve the United States strategic posture in the Indo-Asia Pacific region;

Whereas Australia has led peacekeeping efforts in the Indo-Asia Pacific, including in Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands;

Whereas Australia and the United States share strategic interests in the Indo-Asia Pacific region and globally, and have worked together to promote these shared goals and objectives;

Whereas the United States and Australia have been free trade agreement partners since 2005, and the United States has a positive trade balance with Australia;

Whereas robust United States-Australia defense cooperation contributes not only to the mutual defense of the two countries but also to American jobs;

Whereas more than 300,000 United States jobs are supported by United States exports to Australia and nearly 9,000 Australian companies sell or operate in the United States;

Whereas the United States and Australia work closely in the numerous global and regional fora, including the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum;

Whereas Australia shares many of the United States' concerns in the struggle against Islamist militancy in Southeast Asia and beyond, and is part of the global coalition to defeat the ''so-called Islamic State (IS)''; and

Whereas the United States and Australia have enjoyed a close relationship over many successive Republican and Democratic administrations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the strong alliance relationship between Australia and the United States;

(2) supports continued diplomatic, military, and economic cooperation between Australia and the United States; and

(3) reaffirms the importance of a United States-Australia relationship based on mutual respect and befitting a close and longstanding United States alliance partner crucial to the preservation of United States national interests in the Indo-Asia Pacific region and around the world.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, tonight the Senator from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN, and I and a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators, have submitted a resolution reaffirming the strong alliance between the United States and Australia. I wish to speak about that for a few minutes.

I don't know what happened during last week's telephone call between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Australia, but I do know this: The people of the United States do not have better friends than the people of Australia.

We are more than friends. As one Australian told me when our family lived there thirty years ago, ''Well, we're mates all right. The English may be our ancestors but you Americans are our cousins. First cousins. We started out the same kind of people. Underprivileged, a long way from home, doing the same kind of thing, looking for a new life. Found a hard life. Hoped it would be a better one for our children. Each wave of new ones lifted up the last ones. A pioneering spirit in the countryside here. In America, too.''

Even though they live down under on the other side of the world, for a century Australians have stood with us every time we are at war, and we have stood with them. During World War II, when Australian troops were fighting in North Africa and Europe, and the Japanese were bombing Darwin four times a day, the United States came to the rescue. In 1992, Dick Cheney and I, as members of President George H.W. Bush's Cabinet, traveled to Australia to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, when the U.S. Navy stopped Japan's advance. Today, no two countries trust one another and cooperate in security arrangements more than Australia and America. We trade, we visit one another, and our

students study in each other's universities.

Thirty years ago, our family lived an American dream and we moved to Australia. We arrived on Australia Day, January 26, 1987, 199 years after the first fleet of English settlers sailed into Sydney Harbor. After 8 years of swiveling in the Governor's chair, on the very day I was sworn out of office, my wife Honey and I and our four children flew to Sydney for Six Months Off in the ''Land Down Under.'' It was my wife's idea: an opportunity for a retreat from the merry-go-round of power and to discover what really was important.

We rented a home in view of the most beautiful harbor in the world, bought an Australian car, and I learned to drive on the wrong side of the road. Our four children walked to Australian schools, and we all sank deeply into the culture of America's favorite cousins. I attended Chester A. Arthur Society meetings, where Australian Parliament members competed to show that they know more about American history than United States Senators do. We spent the night in the South Wales bush. We saw 9-foot crocodiles in the Northwest Territory. We traveled by train to see the Melbourne Zoo and took a horseback trip across the Snowy Mountains. It didn't take long for us to understand what Mark Twain meant when he wrote: ''When a stranger from America steps ashore in Sydney . . . the thing that strikes him is that it is an English City with American trimmings.''

We made friends then that exist to this day. Last year, four of those friends, the Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr and the Australian Ambassador to the United States Kim Beazley and their wives, spent the weekend with us at our home outside the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee. We cherish those friendships and our country's relationship with Australia. It is always appropriate for the U.S. Senate to reaffirm the importance of that relationship, and I am glad to join Senator CARDIN and a long list of bipartisan U.S. Senators to do that again today.

To offer a more complete understanding of what makes the Australians our favorite cousins, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD chapter 30 from my book ''Six Months Off,'' written after our time in Australia.

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

CHAPTER 30—FIRST COUSINS

''When a stranger from America steps ashore in Sydney . . . the thing that strikes him is that it is an English city with American trimmings.''—Mark Twain, Following the Equator

You would have thought the Sydney taxi driver, who was English, was speaking of his barely grown-up stepchildren.

''They hate the English, the Australians. Why? Because they realize we're superior. Minute they find out you're from England they've got a chip on their shoulder. It's the convict thing—you know they came from convicts. It's the darndest thing I've ever gotten myself into. I've been here four years and now I've got a superiority complex.''

The taxi paused at the entrance to the harbor bridge, but no one was waiting to take the toll. I had read in the morning Herald how toll-takers were striking in support of the postal workers, who had stopped carrying mail while they bargained for a pay increase. We sped on across without paying and the genealogy lesson continued. ''Master the little quirks of living here and you know it's not a bad place, but the Aussies still need convincing of the fact. They'll find their own identity one day. Then they won't have to come on so strong. Over the years England ruled a bit too heavily here, but the Aussies are their own people now. They don't have to always prove themselves to anybody, but they do.''

The Grand Ballroom of the Sheraton Wentworth Hotel was crowded with guests, black-tied and long-gowned for the Australian-American Bicentennial Dinner. Honey and I found our places and introduced ourselves and found that the other ten who were dining with us at large round table number 27 were all Australian. We sat down and then were immediately invited to rise so that the American ambassador could toast the queen of Australia. The governor-general of Australia responded with a toast to the president of the United States, and we sat again.

''He is the only man in Australia for whom everyone will always stand,'' explained the lady on my right, as the governor-general began speaking so gently that the raucous table talk in the ballroom quieted.

''It is a happy accident of fate that the Constitution of the United States was being signed in 1787 just as our first fleet was sailing eastward across the Atlantic from Rio to Cape Town on the third leg of its ten-months long voyage. The fleet carried a cargo of convicts who would have been on their way to Georgia had not the American Revolution succeeded and denied the British the opportunity to send their prisoners to America.''

The lady on my right, who wore a white dress and dangling gold earrings, whispered, ''It's the 'in' thing now, you know, to trace back to see if your ancestors were on the first fleet. A lot of people have always known they were descended from lawbreakers, but very few had been willing to spend money to prove it.''

The governor-general was proceeding toward a triumphant conclusion. ''The links between our two nations have evolved from earliest times. Out pioneers, like yours, were as unlikely a band as one could conceive. Your gold rush spilled into ours. Our constitution has been built on yours. Our soldiers have died together and we have shared freedoms of speech and of associations and of laws and of humanities and of civil liberties—and now both of us are a melting pot. We read your prose, we speak your poetry and watch your plays and films. We even watch your terrible TV dramas!''

Applause and generous expressions of affection erupted all around, and the governor-general smiled, cautiously retreated, and sat, and Dame Leonie Kramer of the University of Sydney rose and strode to the microphone and spoke bluntly.

''We are profoundly interested in one another, but we are more profoundly ignorant. Americans, for example, are enchanted that this is the land of the crocodiles but they don't seem to have enough sense to stay out of the water when they are here.''

Dame Leonie Kramer then sat, and our table plunged into grilled fresh fish and boiled asparagus tips and hot conversation.

The car dealer on my left said, ''When I was in America, they thought we had roos hopping in the streets and crocs in the swimming pools and abos behind the fences.'' His short-cropped hair and narrow tie and innocent eagerness would have made him a perfect candidate for the role of father in a 1950s American family television series.

His plumpish wife agreed. ''Most Americans can't find Australia on the map, and even when they do you always have to prove to them that it's as bi as the United States.''

Her husband laughed. ''One bloke coming to the America's Cup almost went back when he found out Perth is as far from Sydney as L.A. is from New York.''

A tanned young blond woman, sitting between the car dealer and me, said, ''I was skiing in Denver once, was on the lift, and an American man was in the next seat and he was trying to come on to me, and so he asks me, 'In Australia it's summer, isn't it?,' and I say 'Right.' And then in a minute he says, 'And what month is it in Australia?'''

The Australians especially enjoyed that, which encouraged the blonde, who turned to me and asked, ''How do you like Australia?'' She asked this in the same worried way Californians used to question visiting New Yorkers.

I said, ''It's beautiful and friendly, but what surprises me is how much like America it is. Sometimes I think I'm at a family on another planet.''

The blonde said, ''It is another planet, orbiting in sight of the big ones but never to be one.''

The plumpish wife of the car dealer agreed. ''We always seem to be missing something.''

I said, ''But, for an American, coming to Australia is almost better than going home again. When you try to go home again it's a disappointment. It's only nearly perfect. But when you come to Australia it's such a pleasant surprise how nearly perfect it is.''

The car dealer said, ''I reckon everyone in America must have heard about your family reunion. Three hundred thousand of 'em coming this year. That's what the telly said.''

The lady in the white dress and earrings on my right asked, ''Isn't Australia just the flavor-of-the-month in America? Couldn't we just as well be Timbuktu?''

''It's more than that,'' her thin and red-faced husband said. He was a member of Parliament.

Honey, who was sitting on the right of the member of Parliament, suggested, ''Some Americans come here looking for 'The America that Was.' ''

The M.P. said, ''Some of us hope America is the ''Australia the Might Be.' ''

The car dealer leaned across the table and said to them, ''And you'll both be disappointed. Australia's the land of bushmen and sheepshearers and croc hunters in about the same way America's the land of Hopalong Cassidy and the cowboys.''

His plumpish wife supported him. ''Crocodile Dundee's a fairy tale, isn't that right? And America's not really like Miami Vice.'' She didn't seem entirely sure.

I said, ''Sometimes we don't know so much about ourselves. Sometimes we're visitors in our own countries.''

Waiters arrived with plates of an Australian dessert called a Pavlova—whipped cream and fresh papaya in meringue shell—and exclamations over its fluffiness only temporarily diminished the conversation.

''Well, we're mates, all right.'' The car dealer could not tolerate a lull. ''The English may be our ancestors, but you Americans are our cousins''.

''First cousins,'' said the thin, red-faced member of Parliament, whom I sensed correctly was preparing to make a statement. ''We started out the same kind of people, underprivileged, a long way from home, doing

the same sort of thing, looking for a new life. Found a hard life. Hoped it would be better for the children. Each wave of new ones lifted up the last ones. A pioneering spirit in the countryside here. In America, too.''

''I love America!'' exclaimed the wife of the Australian bicentennial chairman who was sitting across the table. Her cheerful face had been hidden behind an enormous centerpiece of flowers. ''When they sing 'New York, New York' I get excited with the best of 'em. It's our second home. It opens your eyes a bit, doesn't it, to get out of your own country.''

''When you do, we look awfully small.'' The speaker was a dour bald gentleman sitting next to her, who might have been seventy, a plywood manufacturer who was rather obstructed by the centerpiece. For the moment, he held the floor. ''Our GNP is about the size of the GNP of Los Angeles.''

The blond woman said, ''Australia's a village, same names always popping up.''

The plywood man said, ''Americans have got a head start and size and location and better education, and they have more self-confidence.''

This resonated with the blond woman's male guest, whose name I never got in all the din and who now decided to talk to me. ''We follow America. You regulate the stock market, so we do it, too. You change school curriculum. We do it, too. Don't think about it. Just do it.''

''We'd have been better off to start with pilgrims and a revolution, instead of convicts,'' said the plywood manufacturer.

''We could have used an Alamo,'' suggested the car dealer. ''We had Gallipoli,'' said the blonde's friend.

''Wouldn't it have been nice to have something in the center besides a red desert?'' sighed the plywood man's wife.

The last of the fluffy Pavlova had been scraped from the plates, and the coffee and mints arrived.

The young blond woman suddenly turned to me and insisted, ''I reckon I ought to have a quarter of a vote every time you elect a president. I should. After all, we sit here half our time waiting for American to do something. Our prime minister can't make a deal with Gorbachev. No one's wondering what Australia's trade policy will be. We have to depend on you.''

''We already do,'' said the member of Parliament. ''Do what?'' asked the blonde.

''Depend on America. For defense. For things we really enjoy. Ask any of our school kids. I've done it. 'Where would you like to go on this planet?' and nine out of ten say, 'Disneyland.' The script for every Australian Tonight show was prepared by an American until recently.''

The car dealer was saying to Honey, ''We never can have anything like the things that you have in America. There're not enough of us Aussies. Disneyland and interstate highways—things that are ordinary to you—are a wonder to us. Space stations. All the museums in Washington, D.C.''

''Another reason we can't is what's happening on Pitt Street,'' intoned the plywood manufacturer.

''The esplanade work?''

''The lack of it. Did you hear the workers complained about passersby harassing them for leaning on their shovels? And that yesterday the arbitration board awarded them a twenty-seven-cent wage increase because of the harassment!''

The blond woman's date said, ''Watch them on MacQuarie Street, at the restoration, the workers smearing suntan oil. It would make a good frame for 'still life.' I watched them from my club window yesterday at lunch.''

The car dealer said, ''Sunday's Herald said United stewards works twice as much as Qantas stewards.''

I said, ''You see that on flights to Tokyo. The same Qantas crews going up on Monday and coming back on Thursday. And last month the Bridgestone Tire Company president told me his tire plants work three hundred forty-five days in Japan and America, and the Bridgestone plant in Adelaide works only two hundred ten.''

The plywood man looked positively funereal. ''We're unusual, all right. We pay double time for afternoon work, for overtime, for vacation. We pay for days off on a butchers' picnic and a bakers' picnic—everybody has a picnic and we pay for that. How are we going to compete with the rest of the world when we're on a picnic?''

Now the men were enjoying long cigars and the ladies were doing their best to survive the haze, and my watch said the dinner had already lasted three hours.

Honey said. ''I see a lot of Japanese cars and American fast foods, but I don't hear much proper English. Is it because I'm American and just don't notice it?''

''It's because we've changed,'' said a lady across the table who up till now had been mostly listening. ''We moved here in 1978. We decided Sydney winters were better than English summers, so we sold our house in London. Then, Australians still spoke of 'going home' to England. Now, no one talks about 'going home.' Australianness is coming out all round. We're more American, too, but mainly we're prouder of being Australian.''

The wife of the member of Parliament said to Honey, ''Read our children's books. I'll send you some for your children. Instead of stories about English hobgoblins, there are more about aborigine spirits and stories full of the sounds of frogs croaking and of the didgeridoo, hostile and growling like the bely of the earth.''

Honey said, ''The new Sheraton in Yulara was lovely, brown like the desert and built like sails.''

The wife of the M.P. said, ''Our Australianness came out all right when they tried to kill the brumbies in the Snowy Mountains. Put a stop to that.''

Honey said, ''We've seen a lot of Australia in David Williamson's plays and Mary Gilmore's poetry and Ken Done's bright splashy painting . . .''

''. . . and Fred Elliot's old marine watercolors even if he was drunk a lot,'' I added.

The wife of the plywood manufacturer said, ''And I believe we're learning that our harsh vast spaces and distance from everyone sometimes can be a wonderful advantage.'' Those were the first words she had uttered in nearly two hours.

From behind the centerpiece of flowers came the cheerful contribution of the wife of the bicentennial chairman. ''Eight hundred ten of our eight hundred thirty shires have bicentennial committees.''

The member of Parliament added, ''At least now we toast the queen of Australia instead of the empire.'' His wife, on my right with white dress and earrings, asked me, ''Have you tried the wichety grubs, the moth larvae the abos used to eat? They're all the rage. Large and crispy and in all the best restaurants.''

''No,'' I said, ''but I have been to the beaches and I have thought about those convicts who were laughing at the aborigines standing there sandy and naked and greasy. Now, the descendants of some of those first-fleet convicts are on the same beaches, sandy and naked and greasy.''

The member of Parliament had arranged himself into speaking position. ''Remember. The English left us. We didn't leave them. They joined the Common Market. Gave us five years to adjust our exports.''

This roused the car dealer, who said, ''It goes back to the last war. Churchill said, 'Let them have Australia. We'll win it back.' Our boys were on the other side, fighting in North Africa and in Europe and the Japanese were bombing Darwin four times a day. The Americans saved us.''

His wife, who was finishing off his mints, too, agreed. ''Two Christmases ago there were ten thousand American sailors in Perth and some family took every one of 'em home for the holidays.''

The lights dimmed and the official bicentennial film began. Trumpets heralded the arrival of the first fleet of ''settlers'' on Australia's Identity Day, January 26, 1788, and violins moved the story quickly along into the nineteenth century, and then lingered amid the excitement of the gold rush at Ballarat.

I whispered to the wife of the member of Parliament, ''It didn't mention that the 'settlers' were convicts.''

''No worries,'' she said. ''The first bicentennial logo forgot Tasmania. Had to make a new one. But it's a good thing, our bicentennial. Helps us remember important things.''

SENATE RESOLUTION 51—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AND PLEDGING TO OPPOSE EFFORTS TO REDUCE FEDERAL WORKFORCE PAY AND BENEFITS, ELIMINATE CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS, UNDERMINE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND INCREASE THE USE OF NON-FEDERAL CONTRACTORS FOR INHERENTLY GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. CANTWELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. RES. 51

Whereas Federal agencies are tasked with the fundamental responsibility of serving to protect, promote, and preserve the rights and interests of the people of the United States;

Whereas the activities of the Federal Government encompass a broad range of activities, including—

(1) conducting and supporting military operations;

(2) protecting the homeland, including transportation, communications, financial, and other systems;

(3) preserving and enhancing public health;

(4) supporting the least fortunate;

(5) defending the rights and interests of individuals and consumers;

(6) enhancing and preserving the environment of the United States; and

(7) promoting and facilitating commerce;

Whereas, to achieve these objectives, many Federal agencies conduct operations 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and 365 days per year;

Whereas, according to the Office of Personnel Management, the Federal Government directly employs approximately 2,100,000 individuals to carry out the functions of the Federal Government;

Whereas, in the past 50 years, the population of the United States increased from approximately 198,000,000 individuals to more than 321,400,000 individuals, while the Federal workforce actually decreased from approximately 2,200,000 employees to approximately 2,100,000 employees;

Whereas the Federal Government functions most effectively, and the interest of the public is served, when the Federal Government offers fair compensation, including pay, health, retirement, and other benefits, to attract and retain qualified, diverse, and dedicated Federal employees;

Whereas, to ensure the integrity of the Federal civil service, it is essential that Federal employees have access to constitutionally protected due process rights and the ability to bargain collectively;

Whereas full- or part-time Federal employees should primarily be responsible for the activities and functions of the Federal Government;

Whereas the effective functioning of the Federal Government and the integrity of the civil service have been undermined by efforts to decrease pay and benefits and reduce rights with respect to due process and collective bargaining;

Whereas, through these efforts, Federal employees have already contributed more than $180,000,000,000 to the reduction of the Federal deficit, primarily in the form of higher retirement contributions and foregone wages;

Whereas reductions to pay and benefits, the removal of collective bargaining rights, and the elimination or degradation of civil service due process rights would make it harder for the Federal Government to attract the best and brightest to public service;

Whereas reinstatement of the ''Holman Rule'' by the House of Representatives as part of the Resolution entitled ''Resolution adopting rules for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress'', approved January 3, 2017, presents a direct threat to the employment and compensation of Federal employees, will not result in substantial savings to the Federal Government, and serves primarily to undermine the morale of the Federal workforce;

Whereas the Federal hiring freeze ordered by the President on January 23, 2017, will impact the ability of the Federal Government to provide services across the United States, including the ability to process the payment of Social Security and other benefits and conduct workplace, food, and product safety inspections; and

Whereas it is in the interest of Congress and the United States for the Federal Government to be able to attract a diverse, dynamic, and dedicated workforce in order to serve the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate will deny the passage of any legislation, and challenge any action of the executive branch, that—

(1) erodes fair compensation for Federal employees, including by reducing wages, unjustifiably raising health insurance premiums, and unnecessarily or irresponsibly reducing the overall Federal workforce, such as an appropriations bill passed by the House of Representatives that contains a provision adopted by the House of Representatives under section 3(a) of the Resolution entitled ''Resolution adopting rules for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress'', approved January 3, 2017;

(2) undermines the value of employee retirement programs, including by reducing earnings on retirement savings, unjustly increasing employee contribution levels, or seeking to transition fully to a private-sector styled plan consisting solely of cash or deferred arrangements described in section 401(k) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(3) diminishes the ability of Federal employee unions to effectively represent and protect the rights of employees;

(4) reduces fundamental protections for civil servants, including the right to due process; or

(5) increases the use of non-governmental contractors to perform inherently governmental functions.

SENATE RESOLUTION 52—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. HATCH submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Finance; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 52

Resolved, That, in carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Finance is authorized from March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017; October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018; and October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, in its discretion (1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate, (2) to employ personnel, and (3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2a. The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, under this resolution shall not exceed $4,710,670, of which amount (1) not to exceed $17,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended), and (2) not to exceed $5,833 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

(b) For the period October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, expenses of the committee under this resolution shall not exceed $8,075,434, of which amount (1) not to exceed $30,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended), and (2) not to exceed $10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

(c) For the period October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, expenses of the committee under this resolution shall not exceed $3,364,764, of which amount (1) not to exceed $12,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended), and (2) not to exceed $4,166 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

SEC. 3. The committee shall report its findings, together with such recommendations for legislation as it deems advisable, to the Senate at the earliest practicable date, but not later than February 28, 2017.

SEC. 4. Expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee, except that vouchers shall not be required (1) for the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate, or (2) for the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate, or (3) for the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery, United States Senate, or (4) for payments to the Postmaster, United States Senate, or (5) for the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate, or (6) for the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services, or (7) for payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate.

SEC. 5. There are authorized such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee from March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017; October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018; and October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, to be paid from the Appropriations account for Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEE TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have one request for a committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, February 6, 2017, in S–216, the President's Room of the U.S. Capitol, during a vote on the Senate floor, currently expected to occur circa 6 p.m.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my defense fellow, Captain James Hart, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this calendar year.

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

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the privileges of the floor be granted to the following member of my staff: Erin Robinson.

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

FOREIGN TRAVEL FINANCIAL REPORTS

In accordance with the appropriate provisions of law, the Secretary of the Senate herewith submits the following reports of standing committees of the Senate, certain joint committees of the Congress, delegations and groups, and select and special committees of the Senate, relating to expenses incurred in the performance of authorized foreign travel:

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator Lamar Alexander:									
France	Euro		1,693.00						1,693.00
Egypt	Pound		534.00						534.00
Austria	Euro		366.00						366.00
Sarah Fairchild:									
France	Euro		1,693.00						1,693.00
Egypt	Pound		534.00						534.00
Austria	Euro		366.00						366.00
Patrick Magnuson:									
Korea	Won		1,062.00						1,062.00
Japan	Yen		1,403.00						1,403.00
United States	Dollar				20,598.16				20,598.16
Michael Bain:									
Korea	Won		1,062.00						1,062.00
Japan	Yen		1,403.00						1,403.00
United States	Dollar				19,111.56				19,111.56
Robert Henke:									
Korea	Won		1,062.00						1,062.00
Japan	Yen		1,403.00						1,403.00
United States	Dollar				19,111.56				19,111.56
Carlisle Clarke:									
Cuba	CUC		813.00						813.00
United States	Dollar				469.00				469.00
Heideh Shahmoradi:									
Cuba	CUC		813.00						813.00
United States	Dollar				469.00				469.00
Jessica Schulken:									
Cuba	CUC		813.00						813.00
United States	Dollar				469.00				469.00
Laura Friedel:									
Cuba	CUC		813.00						813.00
United States	Dollar				469.00				469.00
Dianne Nellor:									
Cuba	CUC		813.00						813.00
United States	Dollar				469.00				469.00
Rachel Santos:									
Cuba	CUC		813.00						813.00
United States	Dollar				469.00				469.00
Patrick Carroll:									
Cuba	CUC		813.00						813.00
United States	Dollar				469.00				469.00
Paul Grove:									
Ukraine	Hryvnia		1,487.41		195.50				1,682.91
United States	Dollar				1,669.56				1,669.56
Tim Rieser:									
Switzerland	Franc		2,210.00						2,210.00
United States	Dollar				2,054.00				2,054.00
Jason Wheelock:									
Norway	Krone		384.00						384.00
Finland	Euro		310.80						310.80
United States	Dollar				4,244.77				4,244.77
Paul Grove:									
Afghanistan	Afghani		99.00						99.00
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		453.00						453.00
United States	Dollar				8,530.16				8,530.16
Jason Wheelock:									
Afghanistan	Afghani		99.00						99.00
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		453.00						453.00
United States	Dollar				8,530.16				8,530.16
Adam Yezerski:									
Belarus	Ruble		482.00						482.00
Moldova	Leu		218.00						218.00
United States	Dollar				4,896.66				4,896.66
* Delegation Expenses:									
United Arab Emirates	Dirham						234.58		234.58
Japan	Yen				3,023.84				3,023.84
Korea	Won				827.50		369.43		1,196.93
Cuba	CUC				2,592.00				2,592.00
France	Euro				1,121.54		2,085.70		3,207.24
Egypt	Pound						2,141.60		2,141.60
Ukraine	Hryvnia						822.82		822.82
Belarus	Ruble						95.60		95.60
Total			24,468.21		99,789.97		5,749.73		130,007.91

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR THAD COCHRAN,
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, Jan. 13, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Ozge Guzelsu:									
United States	Dollar				8,052.26				8,052.26
Vietnam	Dong		932.45						932.45
Malaysia	Ringgit		873.46						873.46
* Delegation Expenses:									
Vietnam	Dong						300.00		300.00

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Malaysia	Ringgit						277.05		277.05
Mariah McNamara:									
United States	Dollar				20,367.60				20,367.60
Argentina	Peso		607.42						607.42
Colombia	Peso		897.09						897.09
* Delegation Expenses:									
Argentina	Peso				437.36				437.36
Colombia	Peso						154.33		154.33
Senator Deb Fischer:									
France	Euro		1,400.91						1,400.91
Egypt	Pound		416.07						416.07
Austria	Euro		866.86						866.86
Joe Hack:									
France	Euro		1,400.91						1,400.91
Egypt	Pound		492.51						492.51
Austria	Euro		926.89						926.89
* Delegation Expenses:									
France	Euro				1,115.54		2,078.92		3,194.46
Egypt	Pound						2,141.61		2,141.61
Austria	Euro				1,864.46		725.06		2,589.52
William Greenwalt:									
United States	Dollar				9,967.56				9,967.56
United Kingdom	Pound		1,859.00						1,859.00
Cord Sterling:									
United States	Dollar				9,967.56				9,967.56
United Kingdom	Pound		1,910.00						1,910.00
Samantha Clark:									
United States	Dollar				9,967.56				9,967.56
United Kingdom	Pound		1,887.00						1,887.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
United Kingdom	Pound				2,267.80				2,267.80
Kathryn Wheelbarger:									
United States	Dollar				14,898.86				14,898.86
Oman	Rial		656.93						656.93
Turkey	Lira		204.89						204.89
Thomas Goffus:									
United States	Dollar				15,524.58				15,524.58
Oman	Rial		656.93						656.93
Turkey	Lira		192.30						192.30
Michael Kuiken:									
United States	Dollar				14,898.86				14,898.86
Oman	Rial		656.93						656.93
Turkey	Lira		204.89						204.89
* Delegation Expenses:									
Oman	Rial						175.90		175.90
Turkey	Lira				28.66				28.66
Senator Joe Donnelly:									
United States	Dollar				24,402.48				24,402.48
Georgia	Lari		405.00						405.00
Slovakia	Euro		325.58						325.58
Rachel Lipsey:									
United States	Dollar				14,587.66				14,587.66
Georgia	Lari		634.50						634.50
Slovakia	Euro		326.83						326.83
Jonathan Epstein:									
United States	Dollar				12,564.98				12,564.98
Georgia	Lari		630.05						630.05
* Delegation Expenses:									
Georgia	Lari				1,716.32				1,716.32
Slovakia	Euro				807.41				807.41
Austria	Euro						278.79		278.79
Senator Joe Manchin:									
Japan	Yen		341.07						341.07
South Korea	Won		471.48						471.48
Ricky Nussio:									
Japan	Yen		341.07						341.07
South Korea	Won		471.48						471.48
Emily Farnell:									
Japan	Yen		378.29						378.29
South Korea	Won		480.54						480.54
Senator Angus King:									
Japan	Yen		343.00						343.00
South Korea	Won		476.60						476.60
Stephen Smith:									
Japan	Yen		343.00						343.00
South Korea	Won		476.60						476.60
Senator Claire McCaskill:									
Japan	Yen		317.28						317.28
South Korea	Won		491.76						491.76
Nick Rawls:									
Japan	Yen		317.28						317.28
South Korea	Won		491.76						491.76
* Delegation Expenses:									
Japan	Yen				3,813.72				3,813.72
South Korea	Won						2,886.74		2,886.74
Anish Goel:									
United States	Dollar				4,719.76				4,719.76
Sri Lanka	Rupee		934.72						934.72
Maldives	Rufiyaa		356.15						356.15
Ozge Guzelsu:									
United States	Dollar				11,426.40				11,426.40
Sri Lanka	Rupee		556.22						556.22
Maldives	Rufiyaa		435.00						435.00
Thomas Goffus:									
United States	Dollar				17,902.39				17,902.39
Afghanistan	Afghani		35.33						35.33
Germany	Euro		415.92						415.92
Slovakia	Euro		564.34						564.34
Hungary	Forint		261.52						261.52
Croatia	Kuna		285.47						285.47
Slovenia	Euro		233.60						233.60
Kathryn Wheelbarger:									
United States	Dollar				16,236.86				16,236.86
Afghanistan	Afghani		29.33						29.33
Germany	Euro		369.19						369.19

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
* Delegation Expenses:									
Germany	Euro				349.73				349.73
Slovakia	Euro				89.87				89.87
Hungary	Forint						43.00		43.00
Croatia	Kuna						35.00		35.00
Cord Sterling:									
United States	Dollar				17,841.28				17,841.28
Singapore	Dollar		409.65						409.65
Diego Garcia	Dollar		131.00						131.00
Djibouti	Franc		450.00						450.00
United Kingdom	Pound		463.00						463.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
United Kingdom	Pound				872.52				872.52
Jacqueline Kerber:									
United States	Dollar				13,668.76				13,668.87
South Korea	Won		2,077.87						2,077.87
Daniel Lerner:									
United States	Dollar				13,568.76				13,568.76
South Korea	Won		1,771.12						1,771.12
Adam Barker:									
United States	Dollar				13,568.76				13,568.76
South Korea	Won		1,892.87						1,892.87
Jonathan Epstein:									
United States	Dollar				14,820.13				14,820.13
South Korea	Won		1,605.44						1,605.44
* Delegation Expenses:									
South Korea	Won				3,051.56		982.48		4,034.04
Senator Jack Reed:									
United States	Dollar				16,529.36				16,529.36
Afghanistan	Afghani		80.00						80.00
Elizabeth King:									
United States	Dollar				16,629.36				16,629.36
Afghanistan	Afghani		48.00						48.00
Iraq	Dinar		50.00						50.00
Michael Noblet:									
United States	Dollar				16,583.73				16,583.73
Afghanistan	Afghani		18.00						18.00
Iraq	Dinar		50.00						50.00
Michael Kuiken:									
United States	Dollar				16,654.38				16,654.38
Afghanistan	Afghani		83.00						83.00
Iraq	Dinar		27.00						27.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
Afghanistan	Afghani				996.00				996.00
Iraq	Dinar				13,800.00				13,800.00
Thomas Goffus:									
United States	Dollar				11,824.08				11,824.08
Romania	Leu		184.03						184.03
Bulgaria	Lev		291.35						291.35
Poland	Zloty		198.41						198.41
Mariah McNamara:									
United States	Dollar				11,544.24				11,544.24
Romania	Leu		184.03						184.03
Bulgaria	Lev		295.21						295.21
Poland	Zloty		179.15						179.15
* Delegation Expenses:									
Romania	Leu				278.36				278.36
Senator John McCain:									
Canada	Dollar		550.00						550.00
Christian Brose:									
Canada	Dollar		550.00						550.00
Elizabeth O'Bagy:									
Canada	Dollar		576.30						576.30
Senator Deb Fischer:									
Canada	Dollar		547.00						547.00
Senator Dan Sullivan:									
Canada	Dollar		565.84						565.84
Senator Jeanne Shaheen:									
Canada	Dollar		532.80						532.80
Bryan Maxwell:									
Canada	Dollar		575.23						575.23
Joshua Lucas:									
Canada	Dollar		532.80						532.80
Senator Tim Kaine:									
Canada	Dollar		444.00						444.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
Canada	Dollar						8,491.50		8,491.50
Senator Joni Ernst:									
United States	Dollar				14,364.36				14,364.36
Afghanistan	Afghani		83.00						83.00
Kurt Freshley:									
United States	Dollar				14,867.86				14,867.86
Afghanistan	Afghani		83.00						83.00
Cord Sterling:									
United States	Dollar				25,787.28				25,787.28
Myanmar	Kyat		463.00						463.00
Thailand	Baht		387.00						387.00
Anish Goel:									
United States	Dollar				11,229.11				11,229.11
Myanmar	Kyat		336.00						336.00
Thailand	Baht		193.00						193.00
Ozge Guzelsu:									
United States	Dollar				15,750.44				15,750.44
Myanmar	Kyat		631.00						631.00
Thailand	Baht		323.00						323.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
Myanmar	Kyat				1,405.00				1,405.00
Thailand	Baht						214.95		214.95
Adam Barker:									
United States	Dollar				12,991.88				12,991.88
Uganda	Shilling		438.00						438.00
South Africa	Rand		200.00						200.00
Jonathan Epstein:									
United States	Dollar				11,360.96				11,360.96
Turkey	Lira		74.00						74.00

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Germany	Euro		260.98						260.98
Netherlands	Euro		200.77						200.77
* Delegation Expenses:									
Turkey	Lira						663.19		663.19
Netherlands	Euro						336.63		336.63
Thomas Goffus:									
United States	Dollar				10,047.06				10,047.06
Norway	Krone		100.54						100.54
Denmark	Krone		410.70						410.70
Finland	Euro		667.03						667.03
Iceland	Króna		346.45						346.45
Kathryn Wheelbarger:									
United States	Dollar				11,368.22				11,368.22
Norway	Krone		157.00						157.00
Denmark	Krone		374.08						374.08
Finland	Euro		687.45						687.45
Mathew Donovan:									
United States	Dollar				10,259.06				10,259.06
Norway	Krone		63.56						63.56
Denmark	Krone		390.04						390.04
Finland	Euro		656.51						656.51
Iceland	Króna		346.45						346.45
* Delegation Expenses:									
Denmark	Krone				1,173.80				1,173.80
Finland	Euro				1,409.71				1,409.71
Iceland	Króna				477.00				477.00
Senator John McCain:									
United States	Dollar				3,197.43				3,197.43
Mexico	Peso		553.90						553.90
Stephanie Hall:									
United States	Dollar				2,734.43				2,734.43
Mexico	Peso		550.72						550.72
Mikayla Mowzoon:									
United States	Dollar				2,976.76				2,976.76
Mexico	Peso		592.73						592.73
Steven Barney:									
United States	Dollar				15,433.66				15,433.66
South Korea	Won		1,096.23						1,096.23
Japan	Yen		371.53						371.53
Allen Edwards:									
United States	Dollar				15,433.66				15,433.66
South Korea	Won		980.95						980.95
Japan	Yen		391.84						391.84
James B. Hickey:									
United States	Dollar				15,433.66				15,433.66
South Korea	Won		1,174.69						1,174.69
Samantha Clark:									
United States	Dollar				15,433.66				15,433.66
South Korea	Won		1,029.60						1,029.60
Japan	Yen		397.49						397.49
Gerald Leeling:									
United States	Dollar				15,433.66				15,433.66
South Korea	Won		1,019.53						1,019.53
Japan	Yen		379.53						379.53
Jonathan Clark:									
United States	Dollar				15,433.66				15,433.66
South Korea	Won		1,022.82						1,022.82
Japan	Yen		399.01						399.01
* Delegation Expenses:									
South Korea	Won				597.70				597.70
Japan	Yen				950.00				950.00
Total			62,779.63		645,757.54		19,785.15		728,322.32

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR JOHN McCAIN,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, Jan. 31, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Rachel Burkett:									
Austria	Euro		366.00						366.00
France	Euro		1,666.00						1,666.00
Egypt	Egyptian Pound		526.00						526.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
France	Euro						1,603.62		1,603.62
* Delegation Expenses:									
Egypt	Egyptain Pound						1,070.81		1,070.81
Senator Lisa Murkowski:									
United States	Dollar				1,217.92				1,217.92
Canada	Dollar		264.20						264.20
Isaac Edwards:									
United States	Dollar				814.42				814.42
Canada	Dollar		318.00						318.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
Canada	Dollar						360.00		360.00
Total			3,140.20		2,032.34		3,034.43		8,206.97

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Jan. 6, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Amanda Gunasekara:									
United States	Dollar				14,418.96				14,418.96
Morocco	Dirham		2,109,00						2,109.00
Adrian Deveny:									
United States	Dollar				2,146.06				2,146.06
Morocco	Dirham		4,062.00						4,062.00
Emily Enderle:									
United States	Dollar				4,316.06				4,316.06
Morocco	Dirham		5,504.83						5,504.83
Katie Thomas:									
United States	Dollar				10,066.36				10,066.36
Morocco	Dirham		2,109.00						2,109.00
Total			13,784.83		30,947.44				44,732.27

SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO,
Chairman, Committee on Environment & Public Works, Feb. 2, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FINANCE FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Everett Eissenstat:									
Japan	Yen		775.91						775.91
Brunei	Dollar		464.78						464.78
Malaysia	Dollar		709.67						709.67
United States	Dollar				17,769.02				17,769.02
Christopher Campbell:									
Japan	Yen		902.15						902.15
Brunei	Dollar		230.23						230.23
Malaysia	Dollar		539.39						539.39
France	Euro		50.00						50.00
United States	Dollar				16,029.36				16,029.36
Jay Khosla:									
Japan	Yen		766.83						766.83
Brunei	Dollar		475.00						475.00
Malaysia	Dollar		557.73						557.73
United States	Dollar				17,273.03				17,273.03
Shane Warren:									
Japan	Yen		957.10						957.10
Brunei	Dollar		433.41						433.41
Malaysia	Dollar		582.11						582.11
United States	Dollar				17,769.02				17,769.02
* Delegation Expenses:									
United States	Dollar						3,354.12		3,354.12
Douglas Petersen:									
Switzerland	Swiss Franc		951.82						951.82
United States	Dollar				12,108.26				12,108.26
Shane Warren:									
Peru	Sol		2,424.27						2,424.27
United States	Dollar				6,502.50				6,502.50
Everett Eissenstat									
Peru	Sol		2,439.76						2,439.76
United States	Dollar				8,145.50				8,145.50
Jayme White:									
Peru	Sol		2,519.20						2,519.20
United States	Dollar				5,678.50				5,678.50
* Delegation Expenses:									
United States	Dollar						3,412.59		3,412.59
Total			15,779.36		101,275.19		6,766.71		123,821.26

* Delegation Expenses include transportation, embassy overtime, as well as official expenses in accordance with the responsibilities of the host country.

SENATOR ORRIN HATCH,
Chairman, Committee on Finance, Jan. 13, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator John Barrasso:									
Canada	Dollar		651.30						651.30
Senator Christopher Coons:									
Canada	Dollar		543.05						543.05
* Delegation Expenses:									
Canada	Dollar				1,887.00				1,887.00
Senator John Barrasso:									
Afghanistan	Dollar								
United States	Dollar				15,185.36				15,185.36
Charles Ziegler:									
Afghanistan	Dollar								
United States	Dollar				14,797.86				14,797.86
Senator John Barrasso:									
France	Euro		1,489.50						1,489.50
Egypt	Egyptian Pound		684.00						684.00
Austria	Euro		667.51						667.51
Senator James Risch:									
France	Euro		1,952.00						1,952.00
Egypt	Egyptian Pound		675.00						675.00
Austria	Euro		1,173.00						1,173.00

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Chris Socha:									
France	Euro		1,946.00						1,946.00
Egypt	Egyptian Pound		661.00						661.00
Austria	Euro		1,154.00						1,154.00
Senator Jeff Flake:									
France	Euro		1,685.50						1,685.50
Egypt	Egyptian Pound		735.04						735.04
Austria	Euro		878.40						878.40
Colleen Donnelly:									
France	Euro		1,583.00						1,583.00
Egypt	Egyptian Pound		530.09						530.09
Austria	Euro		906.02						906.02
* Delegation Expenses:									
France	Euro						7,986.15		7,986.15
Egypt	Egyptian Pound						5,354.03		5,354.03
Austria	Euro						1,812.65		1,812.65
Senator Ben Cardin:									
Colombia	Colombian Peso		313.00						313.00
Senator Bob Corker:									
Cuba	Dollar		446.20						446.20
United States	Dollar				429.00				429.00
Todd Womack:									
Cuba	Dollar		511.00						511.00
United States	Dollar				429.00				429.00
Caleb McCarry:									
Cuba	Dollar		511.00						511.00
United States	Dollar				429.00				429.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
Cuba	Dollar						10.00		10.00
Senator Jeff Flake:									
Mexico	Dollar		503.21						503.21
United States	Dollar				3,143.45				3,143.45
Chandler Morse:									
Mexico	Dollar		595.24						595.24
United States	Dollar				2,877.25				2,877.25
* Delegation Expenses:									
Mexico	Dollar						228.00		228.00
Senator Edward Markey:									
Haiti	Dollar		532.00						532.00
United States	Dollar				2,167.36				2,167.36
Philip McGovern:									
Haiti	Dollar		532.00						532.00
United States	Dollar				2,053.36				2,053.36
* Delegation Expenses:									
Haiti	Dollar						601.60		601.60
Senator Robert Menendez:									
Austria	Euro		950.66						950.66
Cyprus	Euro		1,357.07						1,357.07
United States	Dollar				12,021.68				12,021.68
Fred Turner:									
Austria	Euro		1,197.38						1,197.38
Cyprus	Euro		1,436.63						1,436.63
United States	Dollar				12,027.26				12,027.26
* Delegation Expenses:									
Austria	Euro						2,071.40		2,071.40
Cyprus	Euro						4,010.93		4,010.93
Jaime Fly:									
Japan	Yen		981.19						981.19
Philippines	Peso		640.93						640.93
Korea	Won		708.18						708.18
United States	Dollar				4,028.86				4,028.86
Carolyn Leddy:									
Japan	Yen		609.64						609.64
Philippines	Peso		533.93						533.93
Korea	Won		657.36						657.36
United States	Dollar				3,422.46				3,422.46
* Delegation Expenses:									
Japan	Yen						1,234.45		1,234.45
Philippines	Peso						70.26		70.26
Korea	Won						401.38		401.38
Clyde Hicks:									
Philippines	Peso		282.00						282.00
Thailand	Baht		813.00						813.00
Burma	Kyat		482.00						482.00
United States	Dollar				3,735.00				3,735.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
Philippines	Peso						35.13		35.13
Thailand	Baht						521.72		521.72
Burma	Kyat						1,261.00		1,261.00
David Kinzler:									
Kuwait	Dinar		359.57						359.57
Saudi Arabia	Riyal		1,119.67						1,119.67
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		511.96						511.96
United States	Dollar				6,669.65				6,669.65
Dana Stroul:									
Kuwait	Dinar		415.57						415.57
Saudi Arabia	Riyal		1,119.23						1,119.23
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		561.87						561.87
* Delegation Expenses:									
Kuwait	Dinar						78.91		78.91
Saudi Arabia	Riyal						681.00		681.00
United Arab Emirates	Dirham						499.35		499.35
Joshua Klein:									
Morocco	Dirham		2,736.61						2,736.61
United States	Dollar				2,616.96				2,616.96
Michael Phelan:									
Oman	Rial		1,239.65						1,239.65
Sudan	Sudanese Pound		1,135.51						1,135.51
Ethiopia	Birr		528.92						528.92
United States	Dollar				4,842.36				4,842.36
* Delegation Expenses:									
Oman	Rial						316.78		316.78
Sudan	Sudanese Pound						406.96		406.96
Lowell Schwartz:									
Austria	Euro		616.08						616.08

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Netherlands	Euro		134.00						134.00
United States	Dollar				2,157.06				2,157.06
* Delegation Expenses:									
Austria	Euro						174.86		174.86
Total			42,986.67		94,919.93		27,756.56		165,663.16

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR BOB CORKER, Chairman,
Committee on Foreign Relations, Jan. 27, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), AMENDED 3RD QUARTER, COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
* Delegation Expenses:									
Singapore	Dollar						1,188.00		1,188.00
Total							1,188.00		1,188.00

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR RON JOHNSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs,
Jan. 18, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator Heidi Heitkamp:									
Japan	Yen		341.07						341.07
South Korea	Won		455.21						455.21
Matthew Squeri:									
Japan	Yen		321.07						321.07
South Korea	Won		455.21						455.21
* Delegation Expenses:									
Mexico	Peso						540.00		540.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
El Salvador	Dollar						1,708.63		1,708.63
* Delegation Expenses:									
Guatemala	Quetzal						509.53		509.53
Senator Thomas R. Carper:									
United States	Dollar				2,192.25				2,192.25
Mexico	Peso		45.00						45.00
El Salvador	Dollar		106.00						106.00
Guatemala	Quetzal		379.88						379.88
Holly Idelson:									
United States	Dollar				2,192.25				2,192.25
Mexico	Peso		45.00						45.00
El Salvador	Dollar		106.00						106.00
Guatemala	Quetzal		379.88						379.88
Gabrielle Batkin:									
United States	Dollar				2,171.00				2,171.00
Guatemala	Quetzal		436.88						436.88
El Salvador	Dollar		186.00						186.00
Senator Ben Sasse:									
France	Euro		1,742.50						1,742.50
Egypt	Pound		313.82						313.82
Austria	Euro		786.50						786.50
* Delegation Expenses:									
Israel	Shekel								
Senator Ron Johnson:									
United States	Dollar				10,942.89				10,942.89
Israel	Shekel		556.00						556.00
Brooke Ericson:									
United States	Dollar				10,698.89				10,698.89
Israel	Shekel		956.00						956.00
Dan Lips:									
United States	Dollar				10,698.89				10,698.89
Israel	Shekel		956.00						956.00
Klon Kitchen:									
France	Euro		265.56						265.56
Egypt	Pound		140.44						140.44
Austria	Euro		286.22						286.22
Senator Ben Sasse:									
United States	Dollar				482.98				482.98
Canada	Dollar		572.80						572.80
Total			9,833.04		39,379.15		2,758.16		51,970.35

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR RON JOHNSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs,
Jan. 18, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Richard Perry:									
United States	Dollar				22,446.62				22,446.62
Ukraine	Hryvnia		148.77						148.77
Georgia	Lari		574.08						574.08
Lithuania	Euro		876.43						876.43
Matthew Rimkunas:									
United States	Dollar				22,446.62				22,446.62
Ukraine	Hryvnia		154.00						154.00
Georgia	Lari		594.00						594.00
Lithuania	Euro		829.00						829.00
* Delegation Expenses:									
Georgia	Lari						1,360.81		1360.81
Lithuania	Euro						768.86		768.86
Total			3,176.28		44,893.24		2,129.67		50,199.19

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Feb. 2, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 30, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator James Risch			684.00						684.00
	Dollar						1,693.00		1,693.00
			1,030.00						1,030.00
			591.00						591.00
	Dollar						1,099.00		1,099.00
			1,906.00						1,906.00
	Dollar						1,039.00		1,039.00
			1,918.00						1,918.00
	Dollar				561.00				561.00
Ryan White			536.00						536.00
	Dollar						1,693.00		1,693.00
			934.00						934.00
	Dollar						1,099.00		1,099.00
			560.00						560.00
	Dollar						1,693.00		1,693.00
			1,681.00						1,681.00
	Dollar						1,039.00		1,039.00
Chris Joyner			929.00						929.00
	Dollar						1,000.00		1,000.00
	Dollar						913.94		913.94
Senator Angus S. King, Jr.			808.00						808.00
	Dollar						289.00		289.00
			514.00						514.00
	Dollar						381.00		381.00
James Catella			808.00						808.00
	Dollar						289.00		289.00
			1,028.00						1,028.00
	Dollar						381.00		381.00
Paul Matulic			125.00						125.00
	Dollar				16,128.00				16,128.00
			400.00						400.00
Hayden Milberg			125.00						125.00
	Dollar				16,128.00				16,128.00
			400.00						400.00
James Catella			125.00						125.00
	Dollar				16,128.00				16,128.00
			400.00						400.00
Chad Tanner			125.00						125.00
	Dollar				16,128.00				16,128.00
			400.00						400.00
Senator Ron Wyden			327.00						327.00
			1,236.00						1,236.00
	Dollar				1,780.00				1,780.00
Isaiah Akin			327.00						327.00
			1,236.00						1,236.00
	Dollar				1,780.00				1,780.00
Senator James Lankford			1,188.00						1,188.00
	Dollar						108.00		108.00
			388.00						388.00
			304.00						304.00
			136.00						136.00
	Dollar						33.00		33.00
Emily Harding			1,188.00						1,188.00
	Dollar						108.00		108.00
			389.00						389.00
			304.00						304.00
			136.00						136.00
	Dollar						33.00		33.00
Adam Farris			389.00						389.00
			304.00						304.00
			136.00						136.00
	Dollar						33.00		33.00
			1,189.00						1,189.00
	Dollar						108.00		108.00
Total			25,204.00		68,633.00		13,031.94		106,868.94

SENATOR RICHARD BURR,
Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Jan. 31, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Phoebe Wong:									
United States	Dollar				1,085.86				1,085.86
France	Euro		1,879.00						1,879.00
Total			1,879.00		1,085.86				2,964.86

SENATOR DAN COATS,
Chairman, Joint Economic Committee, Dec. 14, 2016.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Ambassador David Killion:									
Austria	Euro		2,058.00						2,058.00
United States	Dollar				12,557.06				12,557.06
*Delegation Expenses:									
Austria	Euro		1,706.42						1,706.42
Germany	Euro		2,190.00						2,190.00
United States	Dollar				11,995.66				11,995.66
*Delegation Expenses:									
Germany	Euro		2,725.00						2,725.00
Total			8,679.42		24,552.72				33,232.14

*Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR ROGER WICKER,
Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe,
Jan. 12, 2017.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), STAFF DELEGATION HALPERN FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Julie Adams:									
United States	Dollar				2,443.46				2,443.46
France	Euro		226.50						226.50
United Kingdom	Pound		1,189.37						1,189.37
Laura Dove:									
United States	Dollar				2,443.46				2,443.46
France	Euro		208.47						208.47
United Kingdom	Pound		1,171.33						1,171.33
Elizabeth MacDonough:									
United States	Dollar				2,443.46				2,443.46
France	Euro		220.50						220.50
United Kingdom	Pound		1,183.37						1,183.37
Hazen Marshall:									
United States	Dollar				2,443.46				2,443.46
France	Euro		227.27						227.27
United Kingdom	Pound		1,190.15						1,190.15
Gary Myrick:									
United States	Dollar				2,443.46				2,443.46
France	Euro		283.50						283.50
United Kingdom	Pound		1,246.37						1,246.37
*Delegation Expenses:									
France	Euro				1,084.00				1,084.00
Total			7,146.83		12,217.30		1,084.00		20,448.13

*Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR MITCH McCONNELL,
Majority Leader, Jan. 27, 2017.
SENATOR HARRY REID,
Democratic Leader, Dec. 23, 2016.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22 U.S.C. 1754(b), MAJORITY LEADER FOR TRAVEL FROM OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2016

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Thomas Hawkins:									
United States	Dollar				12,712.16				12,712.16
United Kingdom	Pound		348.57						348.57
Total			348.57		12,712.16				13,060.73

SENATOR MITCH McCONNELL,
Majority Leader, Jan. 31, 2017.

N O T I C E

Incomplete record of Senate proceedings. Today's Senate proceedings will be continued in the next issue of the Record.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING BARRY S. GALE FOR 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Mr. Barry S. Gale from Gouverneur, New York. This month, Mr. Gale will be celebrating 50 years as a volunteer firefighter at the Gouverneur Fire Department.

He joined the Department in 1967 as a dedicated citizen and volunteer. Mr. Gale was assigned to Hose Company Number 1 and served in the position for eight years. His remarkable service gave him the opportunity to advance within the Fire Department, serving as 2nd Assistant Chief from 1975 to 1977. He then rose to 1st Assistant Chief and served in the position until 1979. From there, Mr. Gale served as Chief Engineer until 1981.

Mr. Gale has earned numerous awards for his devotion to the Fire Department. He received the Department's "Chiefs Award" in 2006 and then again in 2009. In 2011, he was named the Department's "Firefighter of the Year." These awards and Mr. Gale's years of dedicated service are a testament to his character and the community he has called home.

On this day, I want to take a moment to thank Mr. Barry Gale for his many years of public service to our district, especially to the town of Gouverneur. Congratulations on celebrating 50 years of volunteer service at the Gouverneur Fire Department.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF GARY ANDRES

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions Gary Andres has made to the House of Representatives.

Gary most recently served as the Staff Director for the Committee on Energy and Commerce under the leadership of Congressman FRED UPTON. In his last term as Chairman, Congressman UPTON partnered with me to author the 21st Century Cures Act. I got to know Gary very well over nearly three years as we worked to pass the bill into law.

It was a real pleasure working with Gary. Even at the darkest moments, when we couldn't seem to find a way to come to a bipartisan agreement on Cures, Gary's steady leadership and immutable resolve helped to light the way forward. His wise counsel is one of the reasons that bill was enacted into law. Although he is leaving Capitol Hill, the 21st Century Cures Act stands as a testament to his immeasurable contributions to this body.

Gary is a person of integrity and an incredibly effective staffer. The American people were lucky to have his service with the House of Representatives.

HONORING COLONEL BYRON P. DEEL

HON. SCOTT DesJARLAIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, today I want to honor Colonel Byron Deel, Chief of the Joint Staff, Tennessee National Guard. After 32 years of dedicated service to our state and country, Colonel Deel has announced his retirement, effective February 5, 2017.

Over the course of his career, Byron has held numerous leadership roles with a wide range of responsibilities. Whether it be his time as Company Commander of the 173rd Personnel Support Company, his command of the Joint Counterdrug Task Force or his current position as Chief of the Joint Staff, Byron has exemplified a work ethic and regard for others that is second-to-none. As such, he has more than earned the utmost admiration and respect that his colleagues and peers hold for him.

Colonel Deel's career includes two deployments: In 2001 to Bosnia, where he was responsible for supporting the State Department as military liaison and intelligence officer. In 2005, he deployed to Afghanistan as an Embedded Team Trainer as part of the 196th Field Artillery Brigade. There he served as a mentor in Intelligence and Operations to the Afghan National Army.

Byron's exemplary service to our nation is reflected in the numerous commendations and military decorations he has received, including: The Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Tennessee National Guard Distinguished Service Medal, among a long list of many others.

It is also important to mention that his wife, Mary Deel, whom Byron introduces as "the Better Deal", also serves in the National Guard as the Education Services Officer.

On a personal note, Byron has been an invaluable resource for me and my staff on issues impacting our guardsmen. While I am sorry that Tennessee is losing an officer of such high caliber, on behalf of the grateful citizens of Tennessee's Fourth District, I extend a heartfelt thanks for his outstanding service to this great country and wish him the very best in his retirement.

HONORING PHILLIP "RUSS" RIZZO ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the career and public service of Phillip "Russ" Rizzo, as he concludes his service on the Common Council of the city of North Tonawanda, New York.

A lifelong city resident and U.S. Army Veteran, prior to entering public service, Russ was the owner of Rizzo and Ricotta Office Products. While operating his business, Russ began his public service on the city's Zoning Board of Appeals, serving from 1994 to 1996. Russ joined the Common Council in 2000, working to alleviate flooding problems in the 1st Ward, and later spearheading efforts to revitalize the NT waterfront, culminating in the opening of a restaurant at Gratwick Riverside Park. In addition to his focus on neighborhoods and the waterfront, Russ put a great deal of time and energy into rejuvenating the city's downtown business district.

From 2010 through 2012, Russ served as a member of the Niagara County Legislature. Later in 2012, Russ returned to the Common Council where he continued to serve constituents, personally addressing their issues and making sure no calls went unanswered.

In his retirement, Russ and his wife Mary look forward to spending more time with their family. They are parents to four children, grandparents to seven and are blessed with one great-grandchild.

In 2012, I was given the honor of having the opportunity to represent North Tonawanda. Few public officials welcomed me with a greater degree of warmth than did Russ Rizzo. Russ is a true gentleman who only had the very best interests of his hometown at heart. His constituents were well-served by him, and I am honored both by his collegiality as well as his friendship.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to honor Russ and recognize all that he has done for the City of North Tonawanda. I know that you join me and all of our colleagues in wishing Russ, Mary and their entire family the very best of good health and happiness in the months and years to come.

HONORING LORETTA WEINBERG ON HER BIRTHDAY

HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on her birthday, to honor the tireless dedication of Senator Loretta Weinberg to the people of New Jersey. Senator Weinberg has

been a remarkable advocate for the people of Bergen County for decades, serving first as Assistant Administrator of Bergen County, on the Teaneck Council, then in the New Jersey Assembly and now in the New Jersey State Senate. She is currently the Senate Majority Leader.

Majority Leader Weinberg has used every post she's held to fight tenaciously on behalf of the people of New Jersey. She's advocated relentlessly for making the investments in our infrastructure that we need to keep our economy humming and create new jobs, for ethics and transparency in government, for strengthening our communities, and for women, and for all of those left out of the circle of opportunity.

I salute Weinberg for her strong and dogged voice, her countless accomplishments, and for her tireless advocacy on behalf of the people of New Jersey. I look forward to working with her to serve our mutual constituents in Bergen County.

HONORING STAN JONES

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend of mine—a policy leader who dedicated his life to providing better educational opportunities for Hoosier kids. His work spanned decades. I am speaking of Indiana's own, Stan Jones.

Most recently, Stan founded Complete College America in order to build a network of states committed to substantially increasing the number of Americans with a postsecondary credential.

Earlier in his career, Stan was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives at age 24. As a member of both the House Education and State Budget committees, he developed expertise in higher education and higher-education finance. All told, Stan served 16 years in the Indiana state legislature and more than five years as a senior advisor to Governor Evan Bayh.

His service as Indiana commissioner for higher education spanned 12 years and the tenure of four different governors from both political parties. As commissioner, he was credited as a primary architect of several landmark education policy initiatives in Indiana. These initiatives included the 21st Century Scholars program, an early promise scholarship program aimed at increasing the number of low-income students attending and completing a postsecondary education; the development of Indiana's new community college system; the creation of Indiana's Education Roundtable; and the implementation of Core 40, a college prep curriculum that has contributed to a significant increase in high school seniors going to college.

Stan was also instrumental in the high school drop-out reform legislation that I authored as a state legislator a decade ago. Those reforms helped drive Indiana's extraordinary progress with its statewide graduation rate improving to nearly 90 percent—an almost 20 percent increase from a decade before.

It is no exaggeration to say those reform ideas were hatched over cheeseburgers and fries at Loughmiller's Pub & Eatery right across from the Indiana State Capitol. Truth be told, Stan had the ideas, and I simply worked to implement them.

Another great Hoosier, former champion UCLA basketball head coach John Wooden once said, "it's amazing how much can be accomplished if no one cares who gets credit." At his very core, Stan Jones exemplified that ideal.

You will be missed, my friend.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 2, 2017

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.J. Res. 40, disapproving of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) rulemaking on the Implementation of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007. While I have reservations about the rule, I do not believe the Congressional Review Act is the way to fix it.

Under the rule, individuals with a severe, long-term mental disorder who SSA determines are unable to manage their benefits would be placed on the NICS list and prohibited from purchasing a firearm. That tens of thousands of Americans die each year due to gun violence is unconscionable, and I do believe that the government has a role to play in alleviating this public health crisis.

However, as Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus, I understand the concerns of many mental health and disability rights advocates that this rule also has the potential to perpetuate the stigma that people with psychiatric or intellectual disabilities are more prone to violence, when they are often more likely to be the victims of violence. I also believe the due process procedures in this rule can and should be strengthened. Nonetheless, I believe these concerns can be addressed without resorting to the Congressional Review Act, and I cannot support this resolution of disapproval.

This is particularly true as passage of the resolution of disapproval could limit SSA's future regulatory activity in this area and could discourage other ongoing efforts to improve gun safety laws. I look forward to working with both the disability community and the Administration to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities while maintaining the integrity of the rulemaking process.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBEN GALLEGO

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and was not present for two roll call votes on Monday, January 30, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted in this manner:

Roll Call Vote No. 66—Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended: To remove the sunset provision of section 203 of Public Law 105–384 and for other purposes—YES

Roll Call Vote No. 67—Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended: Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act of 2017—YES

HONORING THE CAREER OF MR. GEORGE MESKUS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and achievements of Mr. George Meskus, outgoing Claims Representative at the Merced Social Security branch, and lifelong resident of the San Joaquin Valley. In over 35 years of service to the Social Security Administration, Mr. Meskus has consistently shown his colleagues an exemplary degree of dedication and passion for his work, earning praise from his coworkers and the community he's served over the course of his tenure.

Mr. Meskus's long life of service to the United States began in 1975 with his enlistment in the U.S. Air Force, where he would remain until he began his career with the Modesto Social Security branch in 1981. Mr. Meskus was initially hired as a Service Representative, but was quickly promoted to become a Claims Representative, and eventually moved to the Merced Social Security branch to continue his services.

Throughout his time at the Modesto and Merced Social Security offices, Mr. Meskus has gone above and beyond the expectations of his peers. He has displayed a keen awareness of the sensitive nature which prefaces many of the cases he processes, and always does so with the well-being of his clientele in mind. He has proven to be a fast and efficient employee, and frequently offers his peers direction and historical perspectives on complicated technical issues that so often face members of the Social Security Administration. His willingness to take on more than his fair share of cases has been invaluable to the productivity of the branches that he has served. Such selflessness will be deeply missed by those who have been lucky enough to call Mr. Meskus their coworker.

Mr. Meskus's decision to retire has been bitter-sweet news to process for many of his peers. The Social Security Administration is losing an integral colleague with a wealth of knowledge that has been essential to the efficiency of the branches he has served. The hard work and determination that he has demonstrated throughout his career has earned his well-deserved retirement to become a world traveler and to renew his devotion as a father and grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the career and achievements of Mr. George Meskus. His stalwart commitment to the greater cause of the Social Security Administration has bettered the lives of countless people in Modesto and Merced. As he prepares to travel the world with his wife, Gloria, we wish him the best of luck, and hope his journeys bring him a fruitful life in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE NORTHEAST GEORGIA BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three hardworking and tremendously accomplished men in our community. Mr. Randall Frost, Mr. Jim Mathis, and Mr. Paul Maney will be inducted into the Northeast Georgia Business Hall of Fame for their exemplary public service, community involvement, and business accomplishments.

Mr. Randall Frost grew up in Baxley, GA where he learned the importance of hard work, responsibility, and service to his church as well as his community. He is a managing partner with Steward, Melvin & Frost, which offers a variety of services to their clients, from litigation to tax advice. Their firm prioritizes commitment to the Gainesville community.

Mr. Jim Mathis was the CEO of the North Georgia Community Foundation which ''supports nonprofit organizations by building, distributing and preserving philanthropic assets to enhance the quality of life in the region.'' They have awarded more than $50 million in grants and funding to high school students and college students through 26 scholarships.

Lastly, Mr. Paul Maney, a devoted community member and philanthropist, was an executive at IBM. Since his retirement, he has been investing in small business across North Georgia and supporting many nonprofit and civic organizations for hospitals and children groups.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize these three distinguished men for their service to their businesses and communities. They are shining examples of the hard work and dedication that comes out of northeast Georgia.

SECURING ACCESS TO NETWORKS IN DISASTER ACT OR SANDY ACT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 588, Securing Access to Networks in Disaster Act, which requires the Federal Communications Commission to submit to Congress and publish on the FCC website a study on the public safety benefits, technical feasibility, and cost of providing the public with access to 9–1–1 services during times of emergency when mobile service is unavailable.

As a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I am well aware of the importance of telephone service during disasters.

The Securing Access to Networks in Disasters (SANDy) Act seeks to ensure the resiliency of the nation's communications networks during emergencies.

Acquiring cellphone service during a massive natural or manmade disaster is often difficult, if not impossible, and this is why this piece of legislation is so essential.

During the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City, cellphone service was severely disrupted, forcing many callers to repeatedly dial to get through to 9–1–1 emergency services.

On that day, some of the most tragic, heart wrenching calls came from those trapped in the Twin Towers.

It is not only during terrorist attacks that cellphone services are severely disrupted, but also natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, which claimed the lives of over 1,800 people.

The SANDy Act would ensure that during an emergency, consumers' cell phones work on other carriers' networks if a consumer's own network goes down.

H.R. 588 would give priority to calls to 9–1–1 services and emergency alerts.

It also would increase coordination between wireless carriers, utilities, and public safety officials by creating a directory of the contact information for relevant disaster response officials.

The bill would require the FCC to report to Congress regarding whether additional outage data should be provided in times of emergency.

In addition, the bill requires the FCC to report to Congress on the viability of providing 9–1–1 services over Wi-Fi hotspots during emergencies.

H.R. 588 would be of immense benefit to the 18th Congressional District and the greater Houston area.

On April 17–18, 2016, Houston experienced a historic flood event that claimed the lives of eight people, damaged over 1,150 households, disrupted hundreds of businesses, closed community centers, schools, and places of worship due to flood waters.

On April 25, President Obama granted the request for federal Individual Assistance for Harris County residences and business owners who were affected by severe weather and flooding.

Unfortunately, that was not the end of the story of flooding in Houston for 2016—in early June another record setting rainfall led to catastrophic flooding throughout the Houston area.

I am grateful to President Obama and the great work of those at the Department of Homeland Security who worked tirelessly to help people after both 2016 flood events.

I spoke on the House Floor several times about the Floods and the suffering caused by the waters that came through our communities—damaging homes, our schools, places of business, and our places of worship.

The flooding problems in the Houston area are frequent, widespread, and severe, with projects to reduce flood risks in place that are valued at several billion dollars.

In 2015, the Houston and surrounding area experienced widespread historic flooding.

The importance of being able to contact emergency responders in the case of natural disasters is critical in order to save the lives of those directly affected by such events.

The SANDy Act would provide telecommunication access to victims of natural and manmade disasters.

The SANDy Act amends the Stafford Act to ensure that all communications providers:

1. Have the ability to access relevant disaster stricken areas during emergencies to restore service; and

2. Are included in the universal credentialing program for essential service providers

The SANDy Act would recognize the critical role that all communications providers—broadcasters, cable, and telecommunications—serve in emergencies, but most notably, the bill would ensure consumers have access to wireless service even if their cellphone service provider's wireless network goes down.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 588, the Securing Access to Networks in Disaster Act.

THANKING BERNARD E. BEIDEL FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. GREGG HARPER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and thank Mr. Bernard E. Beidel for his dedicated and unwavering support to the United States House of Representatives.

This month, Bern celebrates his twenty-sixth year of service to this great legislative body. For his entire time with this institution Bern has served as the Director of the Office of Employee Assistance (OEA).

Through his leadership and direction, Bern's office delivers comprehensive confidential assistance covering an array of personal and work-related issues that have the potential to impact an employee's performance, productivity and well-being.

The idea to create the Office of Employee Assistance in the House of Representatives was rooted in the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. This monumental legislation authorized Employee Assistance grant programs in the U.S. Department of Labor.

In February 1991, the Clerk of the House, Donnald K. Anderson, hired Bern to serve as the Director of OEA. Immediately upon assuming this mantle, Bern began to build one of the most recognized and respected employee assistance programs in our Nation. In 1995, OEA was transferred to the Chief Administrative Officer, where it resides today.

Over the course of his tenure with the House, Bern and his team have had a lasting impact on individual employees within Member offices and Committees. In addition, his team serves employees who work for the House Officers, the Congressional Budget Office, and the USCP. The confidential nature of OEA's services demand an individual who possesses integrity, character, and trust. Bern exemplifies the qualities and characteristics of his profession. But it is truly Bern's personality that serves as a beacon for all who know him.

Mr. Speaker, based on the kindness, compassion and love that Bern has for his work and the House of Representatives, it is no surprise that I am not the first Member of Congress to honor him with a statement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

First, on December 18, 2001, Bern and OEA were recognized when they received the EAP Excellence award which is jointly offered by the EAP Digest and Employee Assistance Professionals Association.

Then, on December 11, 2013, my friend and former colleague Congresswoman Candice Miller also had the distinct pleasure of recognizing Bern as the recipient of the 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award issued by the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

(EAPA). This illustrious award is given to an EAPA member who has made significant contributions to the employee assistance profession. In addition to this accolade, Bern was also the recipient of the EAPA Member of the Year in 2002.

Prior to his time in the House of Representatives, Bern served as a drug specialist in the United States Coast Guard, where he had the opportunity to hone his acute understanding of employee assistance. He continued his career in public service with the New Jersey State Police where he established the organization's employee assistance program.

Based on his background with the New Jersey State Police, it is no surprise that Bern was instrumental in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Capitol Police in 2000. Because of this important agreement, the men and women who guard our campus have access to the outstanding services provided by the CAO's Office of Employee Assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored and humbled to stand before you and recognize Bern for his outstanding contributions and overall impact to the House of Representatives. I also want to thank his current staff Lisbeth McBride, Jennifer Lavan, Paul Tewksbury, Margot Hawkins-Green and all of the other staff members who have served under Bern's tutelage during the past quarter century.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge Bern's family. As you know, public service is an honorable and noble calling requiring great sacrifices to our time. Therefore, I would like to thank Bern's family, including his wife Donna, their daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren Jessica and Mather Hinders (Lily and Emmett) and Cynthia and Jonn Aitken (Alexander) for their generous devotion, unwavering support, and unconditional love.

Mr. Speaker, this legislative body and our grateful Nation owe Bern and his entire family a debt of gratitude.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING FRAUD ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2017

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to reintroduce the Human Trafficking Fraud Enforcement Act of 2017 with my colleague Rep. TED POE.

In March 1931, the infamous gangster, Al Capone, was ultimately indicted for tax fraud. Today the IRS Criminal Investigations division continues to play a vital role in proving criminal activity and fraud. I believe that the IRS can play a similar role in cracking down on criminals profiting from human trafficking and prostitution.

This bill authorizes $4 million to establish an office within the IRS to prosecute sex traffickers for violations of tax laws. The office would focus on the willful failure of traffickers to file returns, supply information, or pay tax where the taxpayer is an ''aggravated'' nonfiler. In addition, the office would coordinate closely with existing task forces focused on sex trafficking offenders in the Department of Justice.

The bill also amends the Internal Revenue Code to increase criminal monetary and other penalties for attempts to: evade or defeat tax, willful failure to file a tax return, supply information, or pay tax, aggravated failure to file tax returns, fraud and false statements, and underpayment or overpayment of tax due to fraud. This offense will carry a maximum sentence of 10 years and a maximum fine of $50,000.

The Human Trafficking Fraud Enforcement Act of 2017 also establishes a new felony offense for an aggravated failure to file to include failure to file with respect to income or payments derived from activity which is criminal under Federal or State law. This will target those involved in the promotion of commercial sex acts—pimps and traffickers—and not conduct of exploited persons in prostitution.

Last, this bill directly benefits those who are victimized by the traffickers by revising current IRS Whistleblower provisions so that women and girls who choose to come forward to cooperate in an investigation will be eligible to participate in the whistleblower program and may ultimately be granted up to 15% of any fines levied against the trafficker.

We must use every tool possible to take down traffickers, who have often proven elusive to apprehend and prosecute. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation.

HONORING THE CAREER OF MR. LARRY PISTORESI, SR.

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and career of Mr. Larry Pistoresi, Sr., lifelong resident and deeply involved community member of Chowchilla. Mr. Pistoresi's unfailing drive to improve his community has been an inspiration to countless others who have crossed his path. His genuine character and love for the people of Chowchilla will be deeply missed by those fortunate enough to have known him.

Larry Pistoresi, Sr. was born in Berenda, California and raised in Chowchilla, where he spent his childhood and teenage years attending local schools. After graduating from Chowchilla High School in 1942, Mr. Pistoresi served in the United States Air Force for 3 years, and returned to Chowchilla to work as a car salesman with his father, Pete. After surmounting great success as a car salesman, Mr. Pistoresi eventually joined Pistoresi Chevrolet in partnership with his father, and brother Monte. After selling Pistoresi Chevrolet, Mr. Pistoresi continued working as a car salesman at Steve's Chevrolet until he celebrated his 92nd birthday.

As a public figure and role model for the people of Chowchilla, Mr. Pistoresi's track record has excelled above and beyond what most would consider as impressive. Mr. Pistoresi joined the Chowchilla Rotary Club in 1949 when he was 25 years old, and did not miss a single meeting for 68 years. He was a founder of the Board of Directors of the Chowchilla District Memorial Hospital, which was created in 1954, and has served under virtually every position on the Board, including Director, President, and permanent Chair of the Finance Committee. Mr. Pistoresi also served in the Chowchilla Chamber of Commerce since 1970, where he had perfect attendance for 46 years.

To list every accomplishment and public service provided by Mr. Pistoresi would require far more time than we have here today. However, it should be stated firmly that few people, if any, have served the community of Chowchilla in the same capacity, and with the same fervor as Mr. Pistoresi did throughout the course of his long, fruitful life. He is remembered by his family and friends, including his wife of 44 years, Velma, his sons Larry Pistoresi, Jr., Jerry Danieli, and Kent Danieli, his sisters Violet and Irene, his brother Monte, and many members of his extended family, 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and career of Mr. Larry Pistoresi, Sr., one of the most recognizable and hard-working figures in the community of Chowchilla. The level of devotion he has provided to the people around him has proven to be an unparalleled catalyst for the growth and advancement of Chowchilla.

RECOGNIZING DR. JOHN SMITH

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. John Smith for his work as the Senior Health Services Advisor for Gainesville's own Fieldale Farms—one of the largest independent poultry producers in the world.

Dr. Smith holds a degree in veterinary medicine from the University of Georgia, a master of science in medical microbiology, and a master of avian medicine in poultry. He joined Fieldale Farms in 1991 and has continuously dedicated himself to the poultry and egg industry since that time. In 2004, Dr. Smith received USPOULTRY's Lamplighter Award for exemplary service to the poultry and egg industry. He has been an active member of the USPOULTRY Foundation Research Advisory Committee for 16 years, and has taken many steps in order to foster the success of Georgia's poultry industry.

Each year, the Workhorse of the Year collar is awarded to an individual who has shown steadfast service and valuable leadership to USPOULTRY and the poultry industry.

Dr. Smith was awarded the Workhorse of the Year Award at the International Poultry Expo in Atlanta as a direct result of his loyalty, dedication, and leadership within the USPOULTRY organization and Fieldale Farms. The presentation of these awards to Dr. Smith shows that his service has benefitted the poultry industry in northeast Georgia and at a national level. I commend Dr. Smith for service that has strengthened a local community and respected industry.

TRIBUTE TO DARYL BUSCH

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to Riverside County, California, are exceptional. Last month, Daryl Busch completed his service on the Board of Directors of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority ("Metrolink"). He began his service on the Board in January of 2005 and served as Vice Chair between the years of 2015 and 2016.

Daryl Busch brought valuable expertise to the Board through his service as Mayor of the City of Perris and commissioner of the Riverside County Transportation Commission. Daryl ushered in a new era of service that included a fourteen percent service expansion, the introduction of express trains, bike cars, quiet cars, service to sporting events throughout the region, and increased coordination with other regional transit providers including airports. During Daryl's service at Metrolink, major capital projects were pursued including the procurement of the Guardian Fleet, the new Tier 4 locomotives, development of the Ground Power Plug-In program, Positive Train Control and Perris Valley Line Expansion.

Daryl brought a tremendous amount of passion and enthusiasm to the agency, as he helped increase ridership on Metrolink, resulting in reductions in traffic congestion and air emissions, and providing Southern California commuters with a safe, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective means to travel. Daryl also helped institute an enhanced safety culture at Metrolink; he was essential to the implementation of lifesaving equipment onboard Metrolink trains such as crash energy management technology and inward and outward facing cameras.

I have had the privilege of knowing Daryl Busch for many years. Daryl's contributions to the Metrolink system have generated an admirable legacy as well as many friends and colleagues that will miss him. I applaud Daryl's service and I will truly miss working with him. His service and his achievements will have a longstanding and truly positive impact on our community.

FAIR RATEPAYER ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND EFFICIENCY STANDARDS ACT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 587, the Fair Ratepayer Accountability, Transparency, and Efficiency Standards Act (Fair RATES Act), which amends the Federal Power Act to permit administrative and judicial review of any rate change filed by a public utility that takes effect without the approval of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The need for this change became evident in the wake of a New England Forward Capacity Market Auction in 2014, which occurred at a time when FERC only had 4 Commissioners.

When the New England Forward Capacity Market Auction issue was addressed by FERC, the Commissioners split evenly over the question of whether the auction results were just and reasonable.

Since FERC did not disapprove the auction results, wholesale electricity prices in New England increased dramatically.

So, while rates went up, none of the affected parties could challenge the decision or resulting rate increase, and, therefore, no rehearing or judicial review was possible.

H.R. 587 provides those who want to challenge a similar rulings or non-decisions by FERC the ability to challenge the decision administratively or in the courts.

The bill ensures that stakeholders have recourse when a non-decision by FERC has very real consequences for consumers, producers and others.

This bill would also improve the process by which FERC votes are reconsidered.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 587.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, on Friday February 3, 2017, I was unable to vote on roll call vote No. 78: Passage of H.J. Res. 36, Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation, Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

RECOGNIZING RAND ROWLAND

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hard work of a Georgia Tech basketball player. Rand Rowland started on the team as a walk-on, but recently received a scholarship to play basketball for his final semester.

Rand arrived at Georgia Tech from White County High School in Northeast Georgia in 2013, and spent most of his college career as a practice player with the Yellow Jackets. Recognized by head coach Josh Pastner as a "phenomenal young man," Rand worked constantly with the team to improve its overall performance in any way that he could—even as a practice partner. His commitment to the team did not go unnoticed.

Assistant coach Eric Reveno said in regards to the decision to award Rand the scholarship, "What we do as basketball coaches isn't always fair, the right guys don't get rewarded all the time, it's nice when the right things do happen."

Rand earned his business degree in December, and is now beginning a second degree in the School of History and Sociology, hoping to become a college basketball coach himself, one day.

Currently, Rand's main focus is working on the scouting team. During his college career, he has played in nine games, for a total of 19 minutes, and he's still working to score his first career points for the Jackets. On and off the court, Rand has been made a valuable asset to his team. I congratulate Rand on receiving this scholarship at Georgia Tech, which he has said encourages him to follow his dreams and become a coach.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the diligence and dedication this young man has shown to his team and to his dream. Rand is a role model for fellow students and team members, and a source of pride for Northeast Georgia.

RECOGNIZING THE PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF MR. VAL MCWHORTER

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my constituent, Val McWhorter, for his inclusion in the 23rd edition of The Best Lawyers in America in the practice areas of Arbitration, Construction Law, and Mediation, and for his designation as the 2017 Lawyer of the Year in the practice area of Construction Law in Washington, D.C. A testament to his standing in the field of Construction Law, these well-deserved honors were awarded to Mr. McWhorter on the basis of high praise and feedback from both his peers and clients alike. Such acclamations of Mr. McWhorter's work should come as no surprise, given the more than $500,000,000 he has recovered on behalf of his clients in state and federal court, mediations, and private negotiations.

Additionally, I want to congratulate Mr. McWhorter on the 25th anniversary of his induction into The Moles Organization, a national organization of individuals involved in the completion of heavy construction projects, including tunnels, bridges, highways, and dams. Founded in 1936, The Moles Organization is a respected institution whose members represent the best of American industry. First elected to membership in 1991, Mr. McWhorter's commitment to The Moles Organization led to his appointments last year to both the Publicity Committee and the Award Committee. Mr. McWhorter's longtime membership, and his recent leadership, in this esteemed organization deserve much recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Val McWhorter on his remarkable achievements, and in thanking him for his years of contribution to the practice of Construction Law in the Washington, D.C. region.

TRIBUTE TO NATASHA JOHNSON

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community

of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County, California are exceptional. On Saturday, February 11, 2017 Natasha Johnson will be honored as the Citizen of the Year by the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce.

Natasha is a manager of a local credit union and a strong advocate for Lake Elsinore. In 2012, Natasha was elected to the Lake Elsinore City Council, where she continues to serve after being re-elected in 2016. As an elected official, Natasha has worked tirelessly to establish a more sustainable economic development base in Lake Elsinore to create more jobs and demonstrate that our community is a great place for families to live, work and play.

Natasha has served our region through her participation in organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, H.O.P.E, Operation Homefront, and New Song. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Elsinore Woman's Club, Boy Scout Advisory, and United Way. Natasha is also a past President for the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce.

In light of all that Natasha has done for the community of Riverside County and the city of Lake Elsinore, it is only fitting to honor her as Citizen of the Year. Natasha has contributed immensely to the betterment of our region and I am proud to call her a fellow community member, American and a constituent of the 42nd Congressional District of California. I add my voice to the many who will be congratulating Natasha Johnson on being named Citizen of the Year by the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 423, ANTI-SPOOFING ACT OF 2017

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker I rise in support of H.R. 423, the Anti-Spoofing Act of 2017, which amends the Communications Act of 1934, to make it unlawful to cause a caller identification service to knowingly transmit inaccurate caller identification information with the intent to:

defraud,

cause harm, or

wrongfully obtain anything of value.

Spoofing is a practice in which a phone number shown on a phone or caller identification device deliberately is falsified.

Spoofing is a commonly used tool for a number of illegal practices, including "phishing" for personal information and "swatting"—calling in a fictitious crime in progress in order to generate a police response.

The Truth in Caller ID Act of 2009 prohibits spoofing of voice caller identification information. However, as communications methods and consumer habits continue to evolve, so do the attempts by third parties to gain personal information for criminal use.

Many Americans now rely on text messaging to stay connected.

According to CTIA, in 2015, Americans sent over 156 billion text messages per month.

H.R. 423, the Anti-Spoofing Act, will extend the provisions of the Truth in Caller ID Act to include text messaging and text messaging services.

The legislation adds a definition of "spoofing service" to the statute, addressing the growth of services that allows a user to knowingly transmit misleading or inaccurate caller identification information.

In addition, it extends the prohibitions to any person or service placing an international call to a recipient within the United States.

Additionally, H.R. 423 will revise the definitions of "caller identification information" and "caller identification service" to include text messages sent using a text messaging service.

It defines "text message" as real-time messages consisting of text, images, sounds, or other information transmitted from or received by a device identified by a telephone number.

It also includes in the definition both, real-time and two-way voice or video communications, addressing the emerging law enforcement issue of "swatting" by which people can purposefully misdirect valuable, police efforts and resources.

This bill takes the right approach targeting behavior, while protecting innovations that are important to the digital economy.

As the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, I understand the vital need to safeguard against caller identification spoofing.

For example, women's abuse shelters and law enforcement officers working undercover have a need to protect their clients' identities.

This bill seeks to target those who have the intent to cause harm or commit a crime.

I support this legislation because it protects the consumer from criminal behavior, while protecting our fundamental right to privacy.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, on the Legislative Day of January 30, 2017, a series of votes were held. Had I been present for the last of these roll call votes, I would have cast the following vote:

Roll Call 67—I vote YES.

RECOGNIZE ALONZO BRANTLEY SAILORS

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a respected member of the Gainesville, Georgia community, Alonzo Brantley Sailors, Jr., who passed away peacefully, surrounded by family on January 23. He chose to dedicate his life to service within his community and to our country.

A.B., as his friends and family called him, was born on December 29, 1933. He graduated from Gainesville High School in 1954, where he lettered in football, basketball, and track. After graduation, A.B. enlisted in the draft and served our country for two years in West Berlin, where he spent 21 months stationed as a medic for the United States Army.

After returning home from WWII, he pursued ways to invest in his local community.

In 1981, he graduated from the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. A.B. then returned to his hometown and joined the Gainesville Fire Department, where he worked for 34 years. This is especially significant to me, as I was honored to serve as chaplain of the Gainesville Fire Department.

In the community, A.B. enjoyed coaching the local junior football team and was a big supporter of Gainesville sports. He was known as a mentor to many young men within the community, and especially in the fire department. His friends and colleagues nicknamed him "Old Dad" and "The Storyteller" because of the presence he had in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the service that Alonzo Brantley Sailors has dedicated to his country and community. He was a loving husband, father, and friend and is a great representation of the people of northeast Georgia.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LOUISE B. GABRIEL

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of Louise B. Gabriel—mother, grandmother, wife, philanthropist, author, and visionary—who passed away on January 10, 2017.

Louise lived her life to the fullest with great passion, humor, love and dedication to community. Born in Detroit, Michigan, she was one of eleven children. At the age of five, her family lost their farm in a fire, taking with it all of her family's possessions and cherished mementos. It was this experience of loss that instilled in Louise a desire to preserve history.

In 1946, she married Bob Gabriel, an Officer in the United States Navy. Together, they moved to West Los Angeles, and eventually made their home in Santa Monica, a community with "the ocean and palm trees," that Louise loved. Together, the couple celebrated 60 years of marriage and worked to support the City of Santa Monica.

Louise Gabriel was a champion of local Santa Monica history, and dedicated her life to preserving the community's unique background. With her husband Bob, Louise helped bring the Santa Monica History Museum to life, an institution dedicated to the preservation of the history, art and culture of the Santa Monica Bay Area. For 27 years, Louise served as the museum's President and helped find the permanent home that it still resides in today. With the museum, Louise left a legacy that will live on for future generations to enjoy as they learn about the history of the Santa Monica Bay Area.

Louise overcame tremendous obstacles in her life without complaint by taking life one day at a time. As she was famous for saying, "I cried about having no shoes until I saw someone with no feet," a motto her family continues to live by. She is survived by her children Susan Gabriel Potter, Robb Gabriel, Sharyl Gabriel Szydlik, her sisters Josephine Van Buren and Elaine Bruner, her sons-in-law Pat Potter and Joseph Szydlik, her grandchildren, and her many nieces and nephews.

Though we have lost a champion and advocate for Santa Monica, I hope that her family and friends take comfort in the way Louise lived her life as an accomplished and astounding woman. May her memory be a blessing to us all.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF MICHELE Y. EVANS FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my constituent, Michele Y. Evans, for her recent retirement from the Government Publishing Office after 29 years of service. Ms. Evans began her career at GPO in October 1987 as a Supply Clerk in the Springbelt Warehouse in Springfield, Virginia. In 1991, she became a Micrographics Tech and in 1993 she was promoted to Supervisory Micrographics Tech before eventually assuming the position of Publications Manager Specialist.

In 2004, Michele joined the Apprenticeship Program, which trained her as Printer, Proofer, and Journey Person. In 2006, after graduating from the Apprenticeship program, Michele went to work in the proof room, where she worked in copy/mark-up and night side/bill end. In 2010, Michele was selected for the GPO detailee program, and was attached to the Office of the Clerk, Office of Legislative Operations, House Enrolling section. Her dedication and disposition made her a perfect fit for the section, and her attention to detail and years of experience made Michele an invaluable member of the enrolling team.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Evans on her retirement and in thanking her for her years of service to this chamber as she returns to her hometown of Jacksonville, North Carolina to start the next chapter of her life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and unable to attend session on Friday, February 3, due to personal reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted no on H.J. Res. 36, roll call No. 78, which provided for congressional disapproval of President Obama's Methane Waste Prevention Rule.

I am outraged by House Republican efforts to overturn substantial environmental policies of the Obama Administration, including and especially the Methane Waste Prevention Rule. This rule caps, for the first time, the amount of methane that oil and gas producers operating under federal leases are allowed to "flare," or burn as waste. It also prohibits operators from releasing or "venting" natural gas into the atmosphere, and requires them to replace equipment that allows large amounts of methane to "bleed" into the air. This rule would result in 175,000 to 180,000 fewer tons of methane emissions each year, which is equivalent to removing nearly 1 million vehicles from our roads.

As a leading member on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have long been a champion for a cleaner, healthier environment for all New Yorkers and the American people. I have relentlessly fought to close Indian Point, oppose the Spectra Algonquin Pipeline, and resist the plan to anchor barges carrying crude oil along the Hudson River.

I will continue fighting to stop Republicans in Congress from undermining our environmental regulations and turning back the clock to a time when corporations could pollute unchecked.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 582, KARI'S LAW ACT OF 2017

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 582, the Kari's Law Act of 2017, which amends the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a configuration that permits users to directly initiate a call 9–1–1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix.

As a senior member of the House Committees on Homeland Security and Judiciary, I am well aware of the importance of 9–1–1 services and some of the challenges of E–9–1–1 to ensure that those seeking emergency assistance receive the help they need.

H.R. 582 would create parity for landline 9–1–1 services and smartphone E9–1–1 services so that emergency assistance request from either is treated the same.

The bill requires that those engaged in the manufacturing, importation, sale, and lease of telecommunication service or devices pre-configured technology to dial 9–1–1.

The goal of H.R. 582 is to ensure that all emergency calls regardless of the source are routed properly to emergency services.

Kari's Law is not intended to alter the authority of State commissions or other State or local agencies with jurisdiction over emergency communications.

The establishment of the Kari's Law Act acknowledges the importance of the configuration of multi-line telephones systems for direct dialing for 9–1–1.

Over the past two decades, the personal communications of Americans have changed.

The Wireless Association reported that the penetration of cellular devices surpassed 100 percent in 2012, and as of the latest 2014 report, penetration is now at 110 percent.

According to the Pew Research Center, 68 percent of U.S. adults have a smartphone, up from 35 percent in 2011, and tablet computer ownership has edged up to 45 percent among adults, according to newly released survey data from the Pew Research Center.

Smartphone ownership is nearing the saturation point with some groups: 86 percent of those ages 18–29 have a smartphone, as do 83 percent of those ages 30–49 and 87 percent of those living in households earning $75,000 and up annually.

With so many mobile devices deployed the majority of calls to 9–1–1 emergency public safety answering points (PSAP) originate from them.

U.S. emergency dispatch agencies report that wireless callers are responsible for at least 80 percent of their emergency call volume.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to Support H.R. 582, Kari's Law Act of 2017.

WELCOME ANYA CHIRAG SHAH

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to congratulate Chirag Shah and his wife, Sejal, on the birth of their daughter. Anya Chirag Shah was born at 6:18 p.m. on Sunday, January 15, 2017, at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Anya weighed eight pounds and eleven ounces and measured 21 inches long. She is the first child for the happy couple and I look forward to watching her grow as she is raised by talented parents who will be dedicated to her well-being and bright future.

I would also like to congratulate Anya's grandparents, Kamal and Jagruti Shah of Mequon, Wisconsin, and Vikram and Kalpana Bavishi of Secaucus, New Jersey. Congratulations to the entire Shah and Bavishi families as they welcome their newest addition of pure pride and joy.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE MANOS

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County, California are exceptional. On Saturday, February 11, 2017 Steve Manos will be honored as the Citizen of the Year by the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce.

Born in Santa Monica and raised in Lake Elsinore, Steve is a 29-year Lake Elsinore resident. In 2012, Steve was elected to serve as a Council Member for the City of Lake Elsinore, for which he served as Mayor in 2015. As an elected official Steve serves on several regional organizations. He has served as Chair of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency, Commissioner on the Airport Land Use Commission, and represents all of the cities in the County of Riverside as the State Director for the League of California Cities. During his term Steve was proud to improve public safety by voting to staff and reopen the Rosetta Canyon Fire Station and add peace officers to the City's police force.

Steve has a great passion for economic development and during his term he has actively recruited new businesses—hundreds of new businesses have opened in Lake Elsinore since 2012, bringing over one thousand new jobs. He has been a relentless, unapologetic ambassador for the City. Steve is a devoted volunteer and charitable contributor having served at the local school district, his church,

and community. He is a founding member of Lake Elsinore's major disaster Citizen Emergency Response Team.

In light of all that Steve has done for the community of Riverside County and the city of Lake Elsinore, it is only fitting to honor him as Citizen of the Year. Steve has contributed immensely to the betterment of our region and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and a constituent of the 42nd Congressional District of California. I add my voice to the many who will be congratulating Steve Manos on being named Citizen of the Year by the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION WATER PROJECT STREAMLINING ACT OF 2017

HON. DAN NEWHOUSE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my legislation, the Bureau of Reclamation Water Project Streamlining Act. This legislation will help many communities in the west that have been severely impacted by the recent droughts affecting the western United States. The legislation requires the Bureau of Reclamation to accelerate studies and provide more accountability in the agency's process to study the feasibility of new and/or expanded surface water storage, rural and Title XVI water projects, as well as water recycling projects. By streamlining Reclamation's environmental planning and study process for these water projects, the bill will ensure that communities in the arid West can address the critical need for water supplies that grow with demand. This is accomplished by applying the same streamlined water project development process used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which were established under the Water Resources Reform Development Act of 2014, to the Bureau of Reclamation for surface water, storage, infrastructure, and recycling projects.

Water is an indispensable resource in Central Washington and is the foundation on which our future will be built. However, water has become increasingly limited and the current supply and infrastructure is unable to meet existing human and environmental needs. The droughts and water shortages that have impacted much of the western U.S. highlight the critical need for new water supplies that are able to meet this growing demand. A streamlined process for new water storage projects is vital to prepare effectively for droughts and provide adequate water resources for future development. This bill improves the Bureau of Reclamation's permitting process to create new opportunities for water storage, recycling, and rural water projects. Put simply, my bill reforms the current cumbersome and lengthy process so that there is a mechanism to build new water and infrastructure projects in Central Washington and across the west.

I welcome all members to join me in supporting this legislation and I urge its swift passage through the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 460, IMPROVING RURAL CALL QUALITY AND RELIABILITY ACT OF 2017

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 460, the Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2017, which amends the Communications Act of 1934 to require voice communications that charge users to register with the FCC and comply with service quality standards to be established by the FCC.

The bill, should it become law, prohibits long-distance providers from using an internet provider to transmit voice communications and signals unless the intermediate provider is registered.

H.R. 460 would require the FCC to:

1. Ensure the integrity of voice communications to all customers in the United States

2. Prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination across areas of the United States in the delivery of voice communications; and

3. Make a registry of intermediate providers publicly available on the FCC website.

H.R. 460, the Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2016, would seek to ensure that calls to Americans living in the rural areas of our country actually make it through to the intended receiver.

Making sure a call goes through, regardless of where it is being made, is fundamental to our communications system.

H.R. 460 that would require the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to establish basic quality standards for providers that transmit voice calls to consumers, among other things.

The Senate Commerce Committee adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute (AINS) that made the following changes:

1. Extends deadlines for service quality standards for intermediate providers from 180 days to one year,

2. Exempts intermediate providers that have been certified as a safe harbor provider; and

3. Amends the definition of intermediate provider.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 460, the Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2017.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, due to a conflict, I unavoidably missed the following vote on February 2. Had I been present I would have voted as follows: On roll call No. 77, I would have voted "nay" on H.J. Res. 40, Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Social Security Administration relating to Implementation of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GEORGE BELOZ

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to Riverside County, California, are exceptional. After ten years of exemplary service, Dr. George Beloz is stepping down as President of the Greater Corona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Beloz was born in Chicago and grew up in an ethnically diverse neighborhood, where he was interested in fine arts and fishing. At an early age he sold daily newspapers on South Lakeshore Drive in Chicago, worked for Fannie Mae as a teenager and played the piano at church. After a couple of years in college, George was drafted into the Army and was assigned to Heidelberg, Germany where his wife joined him and they lived off-post and traveled throughout Europe while stationed there. After his military service he returned to college and completed his Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degrees, the latter two with the assistance of the GI Bill. He received his PhD from Southern Illinois University. After college, Dr. Beloz was recruited into the Foreign Service and worked for the U.S. Department of State for seven years learning the ropes in the Asian, the Middle Eastern and Latin American regional areas.

Dr. Beloz left the Foreign Service and held several administrative and educational assignments in the Orange County College District. He and his wife, Ruth, moved to Corona in 1983. Since moving to Corona, he was a candidate for the School Board in 1989 and served on the Board of Trustees for the Corona Public Library from 1993 to 1997. Dr. Beloz was appointed to the Citizens Oversight Committee for Measure C, the $169 million bond issue affecting Riverside City College, Moreno Valley and Norco campuses. In 2016, Dr. Beloz was appointed to the Corona Regional Medical Center Board of Governors. For the last ten years he has headed up the Greater Corona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GCHCOC) by planning engaging evening meetings at Miguel's restaurant with a wide variety of speakers on topics of community interest that have contributed to increasing GCHCOC membership.

Dr. Beloz has contributed immensely to the betterment of our community and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and my friend. To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Dr. Beloz for his service to Corona—his dedication, insight and passion will be greatly missed.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 511, POWER AND SECURITY SYSTEMS (PASS) ACT OF 2017

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 511, the Power and Security Systems Act of 2017, which will revise energy conservation standards for devices operating in standby mode.

In the early 1970s, I, recall, as many of my colleagues do, the impact to our nation's economy when OPEC nations withheld oil from the United States, causing one of the greatest peace-time energy shortages in United States history.

One of the remedial steps taken by the Carter Administration was the promulgation of regulations that required large appliances and equipment that used electricity to default to a power down mode when not in use.

Today, we take for granted that machines power down when not in use, but this one change in energy policy over the last 40 years has saved taxpayers, which includes businesses and private homes, billions of dollars in energy costs.

This was only one policy solution that was used to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil so that energy could go to vital services like fuel for electricity generation, gasoline, heating fuels, and diesel oil.

H.R. 511, the bill before us, would extend energy conservation to digital technology that can operate in standby mode.

Most digital device technology manufacturers already provide sleep mode on their devices to assist their users in conserving power on cellphones, smartphones, MP3 players, e-book readers, as well as desktop and laptop computers.

Today, 68 percent of U.S. adults own a smartphone, up from 35 percent in 2011, and tablet computer ownership has edged up to 45 percent among adults, according to newly released survey data from the Pew Research Center.

Considering not just smartphones, but all types of mobile phones, Pew notes that cellphones continue to top the list.

Roughly nine-in-ten American adults or 92 percent own a mobile phone of some kind.

Although these mobile devices are ubiquitous today, the share of adults who own one has risen substantially since 2004.

Smartphone ownership is nearing the saturation point with some groups:

1. 86 percent of those ages 18–29;
2. 83 percent of those ages 30–49; and
3. 87 percent of those living in households earning $75,000 and up annually own smartphones.

These facts highlight the importance of energy conservation for mobile communication users.

The battery life for these devices is limited and without power they are of no use to the user.

This bill will help users remain connected as long as possible because the energy consumption on their cellphones and other digital devices will be minimized when they are not in use.

Energy conservation will also assist consumers during times when power outages may occur due to weather or other electricity disruption.

The longer power life for cellphones will benefit consumers by reducing the amount of electricity needed to recharge their personal devices.

This bill will also benefit businesses that often have many computers that when in use can consume electricity if left on after business hours—especially over weekends.

For these reasons, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 511.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, February 7, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 8

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine Inspector General recommendations for improving Federal agencies.

SD–G50

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold an oversight hearing to examine modernizing our nation's infrastructure.

SD–406

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine the current readiness of United States forces.

SR–232A

Committee on Indian Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 39, to extend the Federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, S. 63, to clarify the rights of Indians and Indian tribes on Indian lands under the National Labor Relations Act, S. 91, to amend the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992 to facilitate the ability of Indian tribes to integrate the employment, training, and related services from diverse Federal sources, S. 140, to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund, S. 245, to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self Determination Act of 2005, S. 249, to provide that the pueblo of Santa Clara may lease for 99 years certain restricted land, S. 254, to amend the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to provide flexibility and reauthorization to ensure the survival and continuing vitality of Native American languages, S. 269, to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Tanana Tribal Council located in Tanana, Alaska, and to the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation located in Dillingham, Alaska, and S. 302, to enhance tribal road safety; to be immediately followed by an oversight hearing to examine emergency management in Indian Country, focusing on improving the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Federal-tribal relationship with Indian tribes.

SD–628

FEBRUARY 9

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Afghanistan.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the United States, the Russian Federation, and the challenges ahead.

SD–419

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management

To hold hearings to examine empowering managers, focusing on ideas for a more effective Federal workforce.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary

Organizational business meeting to consider committee rules, and S. 178, to prevent elder abuse and exploitation and improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases.

SD–226

2 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.

SH–219

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S685–S760

Senate continued in the session that began on Monday, February 6, 2017. See next volume of the Congressional Record.

Measures Introduced: Fifteen bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 306–320, and S. Res. 48–52. **Pages S745–46**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 48, authorizing expenditures by the Select Committee on Intelligence.

S. Res. 52, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Finance. **Page S745**

DeVos Nomination—Cloture: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Elisabeth Prince DeVos, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Education. **Pages S685–S741**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 91 yeas to 4 nays (Vote No. 53), Senate agreed to the motion to instruct the Sergeant at Arms to request the attendance of absent Senators. **Page S716**

Executive Communications: **Page S745**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page S746**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S746–51**

Additional Statements: **Pages S744–45**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S751**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S751**

Quorum Calls: One quorum call was taken today. (Total—2) **Page S716**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—53) **Page S716**

Evening Session: Senate convened at 12 noon, on Monday, February 6, 2017, and continued in evening session. (For complete Digest of today's proceedings, see next volume of the Congressional Record.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Finance: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

An original resolution (S.Res. 52) authorizing expenditures by the Committee; and adopted its rules of procedure for the 115th Congress.

Also, Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments:

Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness: Senators Cornyn (Chair), Grassley, Roberts, Isakson, Thune, Heller, Casey, Stabenow, Nelson, and McCaskill.

Subcommittee on Taxation and IRS Oversight: Senators Portman (Chair), Crapo, Roberts, Enzi, Cornyn, Thune, Burr, Isakson, Toomey, Scott, Warner, Carper, Cardin, McCaskill, Menendez, Bennet, Casey, and Cantwell.

Subcommittee on Health Care: Senators Toomey (Chair), Grassley, Roberts, Enzi, Thune, Burr, Isakson, Portman, Heller, Cassidy, Stabenow, Menendez, Cantwell, Carper, Cardin, Brown, Warner, and Wyden.

Subcommittee on Energy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure: Senators Heller (Chair), Grassley, Crapo, Enzi, Cornyn, Burr, Scott, Cassidy, Bennet, Cantwell, Nelson, Menendez, Carper, and Warner.

Subcommittee on Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Growth: Senators Scott (Chair), Hatch, and Wyden.

Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions, and Family Policy: Senators Cassidy (Chair), Portman, Crapo, Toomey, Brown, and Casey.

Senators Hatch and Wyden are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 27 public bills, H.R. 871–897; and 6 resolutions, H.J. Res. 64; H. Con. Res. 20–21; and H. Res. 92–94, were introduced. **Pages H1011–12**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1013–14**

Reports Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 91, providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976; providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 57) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to accountability and State plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 58) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues (H. Rept. 115–9). **Page H1011**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Smith (NE) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H979**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:01 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H979**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:06 p.m. and reconvened at 4:45 p.m. **Page H980**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Crags, Colorado Land Exchange Act of 2017: H.R. 618, to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado; **Pages H980–82**

Elkhorn Ranch and White River National Forest Conveyance Act of 2017: H.R. 698, to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado; **Pages H982–83**

Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment Act of 2017: H.R. 688, to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado; **Pages H983–94**

Bolts Ditch Access and Use Act: H.R. 689, to insure adequate use and access to the existing Bolts Ditch headgate and ditch segment within the Holy Cross Wilderness in Eagle County, Colorado, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 409 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 79; **Pages H984–85, H993**

Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act: H.R. 337, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 407 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 80; **Pages H985–87, H993–94**

Fort Frederica National Monument Boundary Expansion Act: H.R. 494, to expand the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia; and **Pages H987–88**

Email Privacy Act: H.R. 387, to amend title 18, United States Code, to update the privacy protections for electronic communications information that is stored by third-party service providers in order to protect consumer privacy interests while meeting law enforcement needs. **Pages H988–92**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Aguilar wherein he resigned from the Committee on Armed Services. **Page H992**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Peters wherein he resigned from the Committee on Oversight and Armed Services. **Page H992**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:58 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H992**

Permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Con. Res. 18, permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust. **Page H994**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Castro (TX) wherein he resigned from the Committee on Armed Services. **Page H994**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H980.

Senate Referral: S. 305 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. **Page H1010**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H993 and H994. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 9 p.m.

Committee Meetings

PRIORITIES OF THE HOUSE OFFICERS AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ENTITIES FOR FY 2018 AND BEYOND

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Priorities of the House Officers and Legislative Branch Entities for FY 2018 and Beyond''. Testimony was heard from Stephen Ayers, Architect of the Capitol; Carla Hayden, Librarian, Library of Congress; Davita Vance-Cooks, Director, Government Publishing Office; and Matthew Verderosa, Chief of Police, U.S. Capitol Police.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DISAPPROVING THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR RELATING TO BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS THAT ESTABLISH THE PROCEDURES USED TO PREPARE, REVISE, OR AMEND LAND USE PLANS PURSUANT TO THE FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976; HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE PLANS UNDER THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965; HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO TEACHER PREPARATION ISSUES

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.J. Res. 44, disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976; H.J. Res. 57, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to accountability and State plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and H.J. Res. 58, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues. The committee granted, by record vote of 8–3, a closed rule for H.J. Res. 44. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the joint resolution. The rule provides that the joint resolution shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the joint resolution. The rule provides one motion to recommit. Additionally, the rule grants a closed rule for H.J. Res. 57 and H.J. Res 58. The rule provides one hour of debate on each joint resolution equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of each joint resolution. The rule provides that each joint resolution shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in each joint resolution. The rule provides each joint resolution one motion to recommit. Testimony was heard from Chairman Bishop of Utah, and Representatives Rokita, Guthrie, and Scott of Virginia.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to receive a closed briefing on the recent Yemen operation; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on cyber threats, 9 a.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the plan to defeat ISIS, focusing on key decisions and considerations, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: business meeting to consider the nomination of David J. Shulkin, of Pennsylvania, to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The State of the Military'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, markup on H.R. 829, to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to clarify the treatment of lottery winnings and other lump sum income for purposes of income eligibility under the Medicaid program, and for other purposes; and H.R. 181, to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to count portions of income from annuities of a community spouse as income available to institutionalized spouses for purposes of eligibility for medical assistance, and for other purposes, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the committee's authorization and oversight plan for the 115th Congress, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Countering the North Korean Threat: New Steps in U.S. Policy'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Ending the Crisis: America's Borders and the Path to Security'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Priorities of the House Officers and Legislative Branch Entities for FY 2018 and Beyond'' (continued), 11 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Full Committee, markup on H.R. 634, the ''Election Assistance Commission Termination Act''; H.R. 133, to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of Presidential election campaigns; and a committee resolution regarding views and estimates for FY2018, 12 p.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 732, the ''Stop Settlement Slush Funds Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, organizational meeting for the 115th Congress, 11 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Accomplishing Postal Reform in the 115th Congress—H.R. 756, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 428, the ''Red River Gradient Boundary Survey Act''; H.J. Res. 42, disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to drug testing of unemployment compensation applicants, 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, organizational meeting for the 115th Congress, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Making EPA Great Again'', 11 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Reimagining the Health Care Marketplace for America's Small Businesses'', 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Assessing the VA IT Landscape: Progress and Challenges'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security, organizational meeting for the 115th Congress, 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Social Security; and Subcommittee on Oversight, joint hearing entitled ''Examining the Social Security Administration's Representative Payee Program: Determining Who Needs Help'', to follow organizational meeting, 1100 Longworth.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

Tuesday, February 7

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will continue in the session that began on Monday, February 6, 2017. See next volume of the Congressional Record.

At approximately 12 noon, Senate will vote on confirmation of the nomination of Elisabeth Prince DeVos, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Education.

Following disposition of the Nomination of Elisabeth Prince DeVos, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Jeff Sessions, of Alabama, to be Attorney General.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, February 7

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of H.J. Res. 44—Disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.J. Res. 58—Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.J. Res. 57—Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to accountability and State plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Subject to a Rule).

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Congressional Record

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